

Images from the Trenches: A Visual Narrative of the Concerns of Agricultural Education Majors

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Abstract

This study described how agricultural education majors at Louisiana State University visually represented and narrated their concerns about teaching. To accomplish this, students captured photos during early field experiences (EFEs) and then critically reflected on those experiences through focus group interviews during the Fall 2018 and Fall 2019 academic semesters. As a product of our analysis of data, we offered a visual narrative of students' concerns through three themes: (1) Blurred Expectations: Representations of Incompetence; (2) Framing Success: Depictions of Achievement; and (3) The Narrowest Lens: Views of Time. As a result, the first theme represented how students grappled with feelings of incompetence. In the second theme, they depicted success as a secondary agricultural education teacher as winning banners and awards, from which emerged key tensions. As students assigned meaning to this concern through the co-construction of knowledge, their perspectives began to mature and evolve. The final theme spoke to how the EFEs opened students' eyes to the realities of teaching, especially regarding the time required to be effective. As such, we offered recommendations and implications for teacher preparation programs to better respond to the concerns of agricultural education majors preparing for careers as secondary teachers.

Keywords: early field experiences; teacher preparation; teaching concerns; visual narrative

Introduction and Literature Review

The discipline of agricultural education is experiencing a crisis regarding the recruitment and retention of highly qualified and effective teachers (Kantrovich, 2010; Smith, et al., 2018; Talbert et al., 2007). For example, in the 2017-2018 school year, it was reported that 868 teachers were not returning to the profession, with retirement accounting for only 18.2% of the individuals leaving (Smith et al., 2018). To complicate this matter further, more than one-fourth of graduates who were license-eligible, program completers of teacher preparation programs in agricultural education chose to not enter the profession (Smith et al., 2018). Unfortunately, such trends do not appear to be changing and have remained relatively consistent in recent reports commissioned by the *American Association for Agricultural Education* (Foster et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2018).

As a consequence, teacher preparation programs in agricultural education are tasked with not only recruiting high-quality candidates but also ensuring they are prepared to successfully enter the workforce (Torres et al., 2010). However, preparing individuals for such responsibilities remains

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complicated because the job duties of school-based, agricultural education (SBAE) teachers far exceed classroom instruction. For example, Roberts and Dyer (2004) reported that seven characteristics of effective agricultural education teachers gained 100% consensus among a panel of experts: (1) cares for students, (2) planning for instruction, (3) evaluate student success, (4) promotes morals and honesty, (5) effectively advises the program's FFA chapter, (6) communicates with stakeholders, and (7) uses and maintains laboratory spaces. Despite these expectations, one of the challenges of teacher preparation programs is equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in their future careers and, thereby, reduce subsequent desires to leave the profession (Stair et al., 2012).

It is imperative, therefore, for teacher preparation programs to better understand the concerns of agricultural education majors so they can respond by providing tailored coursework, experiences, and programming designed to meet their needs (Alston et al., 2019, 2020; O'Conner & Taylor, 1992). In response to such needs, Fuller (1969) introduced the concerns based adoption model (CBAM). The model helped describe the evolution of teachers' concerns as they adopt research-based practices introduced through teacher preparation (Fuller, 1969). In particular, Fuller (1969) theorized that as education majors mature, they evolve through three specific developmental stages – self, task, and impact – of concern. In the first stage, *self*, university students begin to question their capabilities and how various forces will affect them as teachers (Fuller, 1969). In the second phase, *task*, they become more concerned with process-based variables that may affect them in the classroom, such as organization and implementation. The final stage, *impact*, reflects the maturation of students' concerns as they begin to question how various factors will affect their future students and how they can make their teaching more impactful (Fuller, 1969).

Despite such insights, more work is needed to understand the initial teaching concerns of agricultural education majors. In this regard, Stair et al. (2012) called for a deeper investigation into the phenomenon. So far, the literature has illuminated a number of intersecting concerns for agricultural education majors and beginning SBAE instructors across several states (Claycomb & Petty, 1983; Edwards & Briers, 1999; Fritz & Miller, 2003; Garton & Chung, 1997; Hillison, 1977; Johnson et al., 1989; Paulsen et al., 2015). In particular, evidence has demonstrated that students' concerns are grounded in a lack of confidence in their teaching abilities, perceived deficiencies in their content knowledge, and little self-efficacy to deliver agricultural education's comprehensive, three-circle model in a balanced way (Fritz & Miller, 2003; Paulsen et al., 2015; Stair et al., 2012).

To help agricultural education majors navigate such concerns, several researchers have advanced early field experiences (EFEs) as an essential component of teacher preparation (Rank & Smalley, 2017; Retallick & Miller, 2007a, 2007b; Smalley & Retallick, 2012; Wells et al., 2018). EFEs occur before students engage in student teaching and include an array of observations, microteachings, and other opportunities “to immerse themselves into the complex world of teaching and serve as a means for students to think as teachers” (Retallick & Miller, 2007b, p. 20). As a result, EFEs have been shown to help improve individuals' self-efficacy, desire to enter the profession, and ability to conceptualize the multifaceted characteristics of effective teaching and learning (Guyton & Byrd, 2000; Miller & Wilson, 2010). It is important to note, however, Fritz and Miller (2003) argued that critical reflection on EFEs was essential to help agricultural education majors process their concerns so they can understand better how to navigate the complexities of teaching SBAE. One approach used to facilitate critical reflection on EFEs has been through the formation of a community of practice (Cumming-Potvin, 2009; Paulsen et al., 2015).

A community of practice is a constructivist approach to teaching and learning that emphasizes the role of social interaction, discussion, and reflection on topics and issues to socially construct knowledge and develop new solutions to problems (Wenger, 1998). One way that communities of practice have been used is by having education majors socially reflect on the concerns they encounter

during EFEs (Paulsen et al., 2015). Then, through critical reflection, students co-construct meaning and develop a strategy to overcome these concerns moving forward. Communities of practice have been used in an array of educational settings; for example, such have appeared in classrooms, online forums, and social media groups to provide resources and support to education majors as they grapple with teaching concerns (Ferriter, 2010; Lock, 2006; Lieberman & Miller, 2011). However, more work is needed to explain how this approach could assist agricultural education majors in processing their concerns as they co-construct the meaning of their EFEs. Such an understanding could illuminate the ways in which discourse, social processes, and conceptualizations of concerns merge to influence the professional identity development of postsecondary agricultural education students (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999). This deficit in knowledge motivated the current study.

Epistemological Lens and Theoretical Perspective

We approached this investigation from the epistemological lens of *constructionism*, which advances the notion that individuals construct reality internally (Crotty, 1998). However, such constructions are influenced by engagement with others and interpreted through a lens heavily influenced by societal, cultural, and historical forces. Ultimately, therefore, an individual's worldview is shaped by their upbringing, prior experiences, and exposure to divergent perspectives. In designing this investigation, we posited that agricultural education majors' concerns were internally constructed and foregrounded by a number of contextual forces. We also maintained that such contextual influences were the result of students' interactions with objects in their environments. As such, when investigating this phenomenon, we also drew on the theoretical perspective of *symbolic interactionism*.

Through the lens of symbolic interactionism, individuals engage through multiple, intersecting lines of action. And, objects positioned within this social environment hold distinct meanings for each individual; however, shared meanings emerge as individuals interact socially (Crotty, 1998). We also placed particular value on the *objects* and *symbols* that represented agricultural education majors' concerns about teaching SBAE. For example, during students' EFEs, we were interested in understanding whether the items, relics, architectural features, and other objects they encountered elicited visceral responses of concern. As such, we were keenly attuned to their visual representations of concerns, which supported our primary interest to understand how students' co-constructed meanings of such visual representations through narrative discourse as they critically reflected on their EFEs.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to describe the ways in which agricultural education majors at Louisiana State University *visually represented* and *narrated* their concerns of teaching as they critically reflected on an EFE. Because identifying and addressing postsecondary students' concerns is critical to teacher retention and success, it addressed the American Association for Agricultural Education's Research Priority Area 3: *Sufficient Scientific and Professional Workforce that Address the Challenges of the 21st Century* (Stripling & Ricketts, 2016). Two research questions framed the investigation: (1) How did agricultural education majors visually represent their teaching concerns encountered during an EFE? (2) How did students co-construct a narrative of their teaching concerns as they critically reflected on their EFEs?

Background of the Study

Foundations of Agricultural and Extension Education is the first in a series of courses for agricultural education majors at Louisiana State University. The course traditionally is completed during students' freshmen or sophomore years; however, exceptions exist due to scheduling and

because some students transfer later in their academic careers. According to the course syllabus, it is designed to “provide an introduction to of the philosophical foundations for agricultural education” (Roberts, 2018, p. 1). Further, students gain practical experience through EFEs by which they complete 10 required hours of observation at two different secondary agricultural education programs. Data for the current study were collected from students enrolled in the course during the Fall 2018 and Fall 2019 semesters. At the beginning of each semester, the course’s lead instructor required students to capture two photographs at each EFE site, i.e., *in the trenches of SBAE*, that represented their teaching concerns. Then, at the end of the course, students reflected through a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) approach and expounded on their photos and captions through two-hour focus group interviews. As a consequence, our beliefs about teaching and learning and the value we placed on students reflecting on their teaching concerns encountered during EFEs influenced this investigation’s conceptualization.

Reflexivity

Before offering our methodology and interpretation of the study’s findings, it is critical to disclose our relevant backgrounds, experiences, and bias that may have influenced this study. To begin, it is important to acknowledge that we are former SBAE teachers. Further, the lead researcher also served as the primary instructor for the course under investigation. As such, our views on teaching and learning and relationships with students could have influenced the data collected and our interpretation of such. Further, because we held a position of power over the participants, they may have chosen to not provide honest responses because they perceived that might have negatively affected them. To mitigate such power imbalances, we ensured students that what they shared would not affect their grades or their standing in our teacher preparation program. We also attempted to foster an open atmosphere during the focus group interviews so the students were comfortable sharing and providing ideas about how to navigate teaching concerns with their peers. Despite such attempts, we recognize that students’ perceptions of vulnerabilities may have persisted. Therefore, in the description of our methodology, we provide more detail regarding how rigor and trustworthiness were emphasized throughout each phase of the investigation.

Methodology

In this study, we used a visual narrative approach (Pink, 2012). Visual narratives are premised on the idea that humans interact in the world using symbols and imagery that are assigned socially constructed meanings (Rose, 2016). As an illustration, when engaging with others, individuals often refer to a range of objects and metaphors to add critical layers of meaning and evoke vivid imagery as they story critical events and experiences (Pink, 2012; Rose, 2016; Roberts & Edwards, 2018). Therefore, visual narratives focus on how individuals use imagery to depict aspects of their beliefs, perceptions, and lived experiences (Pink, 2012; Rose, 2016). In particular, the approach allows researchers to examine how visual representations, and the meaning individuals assign to such, influence the social world (Riessman, 2008). Although it shares similarities with the photovoice approach, visual narratives do not place emphasis on critiquing issues of power and injustice (Rose, 2016). Instead, researchers attempt to story the ways in which participants use imagery to co-construct knowledge and narrate shared meanings regarding issues, problems, and concerns (Pink, 2012). Therefore, a common procedure used to facilitate visual narratives is to invite individuals to capture and discuss photographs through focus group interviews (Pink, 2012). A description of our participants and use of the visual narrative approach follows.

Participants, Data Sources, and Procedures

Participants ($N = 30$) in this study were students enrolled in the *Foundations of Agricultural and Extension Education* course at Louisiana State University during Fall 2018 ($n = 9$) and Fall 2019

($n = 21$) academic semesters. Twenty-two participants identified as female and eight as male. Regarding classification, there were 12 freshmen, 14 sophomores, and four juniors. It is also important to note that data for this investigation were furnished from three primary sources: (1) 120 participant submitted photographs and captions, (2) video recordings from three focus group interviews, each lasting two hours in length, regarding agricultural education majors' teaching concerns, and (3) teachers' observations and fieldnotes.

As a requirement for the course under investigation, students visited two secondary agricultural education programs. During this experience, students captured four photos that represented their concerns about teaching. Participants were informed at the beginning of the semester that their photos and captions would be shared with other students in the course to facilitate a voluntary focus group interview for the current investigation. The preservice teachers were also given specific instructions *not to* take photographs of the students they interacted with during their EFEs, as mandated by the Internal Review Board (IRB) at Louisiana State University. After IRB approval, students were directed to take photographs of their concerns during EFEs at secondary agricultural education programs. The students then submitted the four photographs, accompanying captions, and other required artifacts through the course's online learning platform three weeks before the end of the course. After students submitted the assignment, the course's instructor compiled the 120 photographs and captions into a single document and removed all identifying information. Then, the students were given the option to earn bonus points in the course by engaging in a focus group interview; however, their attendance was not mandatory. One focus group interview occurred in Fall 2018 and had nine participants; however, due to a large number of students enrolled in the course in the Fall 2019 semester, the focus group was divided into two sessions, i.e., focus group interview #2, 10 participants; focus group interview #3, 11 participants.

After the lead instructor introduced the concept of a focus group interview, the photographs and captions were distributed to each student. Participants were then asked to share their photographs and describe (a) what the photograph depicted, and (b) why it represented a concern they had about teaching SBAE. During this phase, we encouraged the other participants to respond by sharing similar or divergent perspectives and experiences. We also asked participants to reflect critically on ways they could address such concerns as they progressed in their teacher preparation. As a result, the process was highly interactive as the students' co-constructed knowledge and assigned meaning to the concerns depicted in the photographs. However, the discussion would occasionally pause and we would restart the conversation by posing a probing question. Each focus group interview lasted two hours and was captured using a Sony video recorder. Throughout the exercise, we also took fieldnotes to record key interactions and critical moments in which students exchanged visceral responses.

Data Analysis

After data collection, we transcribed the video recordings verbatim. All data sources were then uploaded to NVivo® qualitative analysis software to examine complexities. To facilitate analysis, we systematically engaged the data through the use of coding (Saldaña, 2016). In particular, we began our initial cycle of analysis using an *in vivo* coding approach by which participants' words were used to create textural codes (Saldaña, 2016). This process allowed us to become familiar with the participants' language and the concerns they emphasized. Further, we were also provided unique insights into emotional journeys that participants endured during the meaning-making process (Saldaña, 2016). A product of this process was the development of a textural description of the students' concerns that depicted the intersecting storylines that emerged from the data corpus through the use of participants' words (Riessman, 2008).

For the second cycle of coding, we used Labov's (1972) narrative structure coding to

conceptualize each source of data – photographs, captions, narrative responses, and fieldnotes – as storied units, that when considered together, formed a rich narrative. Such was accomplished by interrogating the data in the following ways: *What and who was involved in this story? What is the central issue? What was the result? and What does the story mean?* (Labov, 1972). Through this structural analysis of the data, we dissected confirming and disconfirming evidence and began to distill participants' co-constructed meanings, as derived from visual representations of their teaching concerns. As a result, we created a structural description that portrayed the ways in which the data functioned as a storyline (Labov, 1972). In our final level of analysis, we used Saldana's (2016) notion of code weaving to merge findings from the two previous coding cycles while also negotiating existing discrepancies. To accomplish this, we approached the data using a symbolic interactionism lens (Crotty, 1998) to synthesize and integrate the textural and structural descriptions. As a consequence of this process, a narrative of participants' teaching concerns emerged through three themes. Before offering our interpretation of the findings, we next provide insight into how we imbued rigor and trustworthiness in the study.

Building Quality into the Study

For this investigation, we used Tracy's (2010) criteria for qualitative quality to ensure that our findings were honest and valid. For example, we began this process by designing an investigation that focused on the concerns of students, which was relevant, timely, and significant for the discipline of agricultural education. We instilled *rich rigor* by using sufficient data collection and analysis techniques. In this phase, we also promoted *sincerity* by recognizing our biases and minimizing such when possible. Meanwhile, *credibility* was achieved by providing a rich description of our procedures and triangulating data sources. We also provided evocative descriptions of our participants and findings to promote *resonance*. Further, we stressed *ethics* throughout each phase of the investigation to ensure our work provided a *significant contribution*. We feature this contribution in the study's findings.

Findings

Findings from this investigation emerged through a code weaving process by which we wove our textural and descriptions together and narrated the final product as three themes: (1) *Blurred Expectations: Representations of Incompetence*; (2) *Framing Success: Depictions of Achievement*; and (3) *The Narrowest Lens: Views of Time*. These themes tell the story of the concerns that students encountered from the *trenches* of secondary agricultural education during their EFEs. In particular, the themes draw on the visual representations that the students captured through photographs while also using their words to describe the ways in which they co-constructed knowledge and assigned new meaning to their teaching concerns during interviews.

Theme 1: Blurred Expectations: Representations of Incompetence

Figure 1

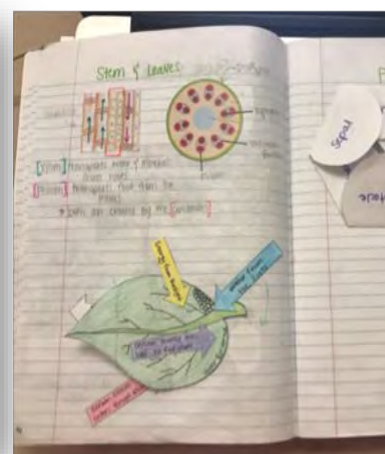
Photos and Captions from Participants #7, #13, and #28



I am concerned about helping students with their SAE's. This is a student's aquaculture SAE. The reason I am concerned is that I want my students to be successful. Many of the possible projects my students could have, I may know nothing about. That's my biggest concern. – Participant #7, Photo Caption



My concern is about SAEs. This program ha[d] a lot of livestock, cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, and I have no experience in those areas. I majored in ag because I really like the type of people that these programs attract and produce. So, I'm just worried I won't be successful because I do not have the right skills. – Participant #13, Photo Caption



One of my concerns is having enough knowledge. When you are an ag teacher you have to know a lot about different subject and be able to teach in creative ways. I just am not sure I know enough yet. – Participant #28, Photo Caption

The students encountered a host of concerns about teaching during their lived experiences of EFEs in secondary agricultural education. They represented their concerns photographing items, relics, and other salient objects that elicited emotional responses of concern. Although the photos the agricultural education majors captured were largely high quality in regard to resolution and pixel strength, their interpretations of such were often *blurred*. For example, the photos and captions exhibited in Figure 1 stoked emotive exchanges from the students in the meaning-making process by which they expressed concerns about whether they were “*knowledgeable enough*” (Participants #1, #3, #6, #7, #10, #13, #17, #23, #28, & #29) to be a successful SBAE teacher.

As an illustration, Participant #13 shared, “These photos represent a concern of mine. I feel like there is so much that I do not know, especially for SAEs. I just feel disadvantaged because I did not have much ag experience, so I feel unprepared.” Participant #17, who shared “agricultural education is just so broad,” also echoed feelings of incompetence. She continued “During my early field experience, I just felt overwhelmed. I mean how am I going to be able to do all of this in a few years?” (Participant #17). These sentiments appeared to form the basis of most students’ concerns, but they also provided scaffolding for intense moments of co-construction of knowledge, and, in turn, shaped the ways in which the students planned to move forward. Participant #1 explained:

When I saw these pictures, I was straight up like, yup, that's me, that's exactly where I am at right now. But I think we also have to remember that like nine times out of ten, this is going to happen to us everyday. I think we just have to start taking these moments as learning experiences because you'll learn something from it that you can use in the future.

In essence, the representations of incompetence captured by the agricultural education majors helped elicit the meaning they collectively assigned to this concern as a result of their EFEs. However, after recognizing that other peers “shared this concern” (Participants #6, #10, #17, & #23) the students began to negotiate meaning and develop ideas and strategies for addressing their apprehensions. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that sentiments of “incompetence” (Participants #2, #4, #15, #19, & #24) appeared to serve as a foundation for other concerns narrated by the students, especially regarding how they framed success.

Theme 2: Framing Success: Depictions of Achievement

Figure 2

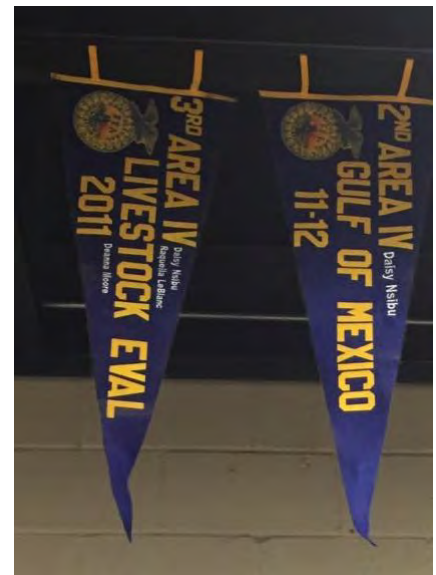
Photos and captions from Participant #9, #21, and #29



“My biggest concern is making sure students are successful. I want to make sure they are proud of their program and this is best achieved by hanging up banners. But achieving this is my biggest concern.” – Participant #9, Photo Caption



“My biggest concern is I want them [my students] to feel the success of winning their desired contest. But I am worried that all of hard work and commitment it takes to win will make me burned out.” – Participant #21, Photo Caption



“This picture represents my concern because I am worried that I might not be competitive enough for this job. I see a lot of banners hanging on the walls of ag buildings but I am just not that competitive” – Participant #29, Photo Caption

As the students began to come to terms with feelings of incompetence regarding their lack of technical knowledge, their tensions reemerged after viewing photographs (see Figure 2) submitted by their peers that depicted success in agricultural education. As an illustration, many of the participants

reported the “banners” (Participants #1, #4, #8, #9, #14, #18, #19, #20, & #29), “trophies” (Participants #2, #3, #11, #16, #21, & #23), and other artifacts of success they observed concerned them during their EFEs. As an illustration, Participant #18 shared:

The idea that you have to win banners to be considered successful is a big concern for me. My FFA chapter was really competitive in high school and we brought home a lot of banners, but I kind of saw some downsides. One of my ag teachers actually got divorced... I guess it just makes me realize you have to really protect family time while also figuring out how to be a successful ag teacher.

Other students also echoed these views. For instance, many participants revealed they felt “pressure” (Participants #7, #10, #17, #18, & #24) from various individuals of influence in their lives to “win and make sure their [future] students get recognized” (Participants #1, #3, #4, #6, #10, #18, #20, #21, #22, #23, & #24). As the students wrestled with such depictions, they began to acknowledge that, perhaps, the parameters of success could be expanded. Participant #6, for instance, argued, “Obviously winning is important, but I think we just have to keep reminding ourselves to see the big picture.” In response, the students collectively considered how definitions of success and achievement could be reframed in agricultural education. In particular, the students in all three focus group interviews came to a consensus that more “empathy” (Participants #1, #5, #12, #14, #26 & #30) should be shown when “representing” (Participant #8, #16, #17, #19, #20 & #27) and “talking” (Participants #2, #3, #6, #7, #10, #13, #17, #23, & #29) about successful teachers in SBAE. Participant #26 explained:

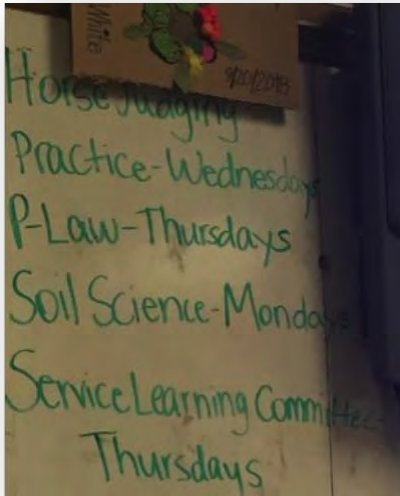
These photos made me realize that I need to change my perspective on what it means to be a successful ag teacher. I place too much value on winning... and maybe, I need to quit idolizing those ag teachers with big winning chapters. It is just a different way of thinking I guess.

As students came to understand the role that their representations played in shaping their teaching concerns, they began to “reevaluate” (Participants #11, #16, #23, & #25) their assumptions. For example, Participant #7 explained, “I think if we start picturing it [success] differently maybe it will help relieve some of our worries and stress when we become ag teachers.” As such, the students navigated new understandings and acknowledged that their original perspectives should, perhaps, be “reframed” (Participants #3, #4, #5, #8, #9, #10, #17, #20, #23, #27, #28, & #29)

The Narrowest Lens: Views of Time

Figure 3

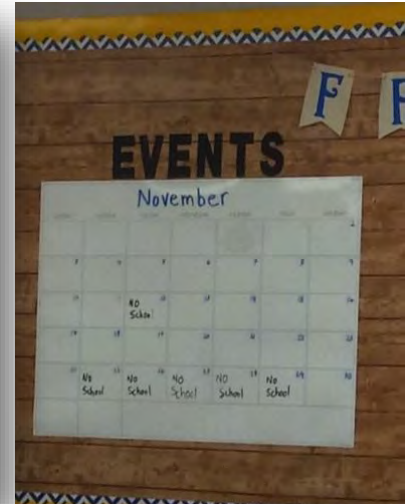
Photos and Captions from Participant #1, #14, and #30



This is a photo of the white board in Ms. Brown's room. It has her after school schedule. My main concern is the time it takes to ensure students are successful in similar activities.
– Participant #1, Photo Caption



Mr. Reed's schedule represents my biggest concern because time seems to be the biggest constraint when teaching. Depending on how much time you are given affects what activities you can do. And this does not even take into account time after school. – Participant #14, Photo Caption



One of my big concerns is just how busy ag teachers are. It seems like their schedules are crazy. – Participant #30, Photo Caption

As the students witnessed glimpses of everyday lives of teachers and programs during their EFEs, the “realities of teaching” (Participants #7, #14, #23, & #27) became more real. As a consequence, they began to reject their neat and tidy views of teaching and, instead, represented it in more authentic ways. This notion was especially prevalent regarding the issue of “time” (Participants #1, #2, #4, #5, #9, #12, #14, #19, #23, #24, #27, #28, #29, & #30). Participant #2 expanded on this notion: “These photos make me think about how realistic it is to teach ag. Your schedule is so packed you have very little free time.” And, Participant #24 added:

Basically teaching ag is almost like a 24-7 job. Yes, you get to go home, eat, and sleep, but then you wake up, go to school, have class all day, then there is always something going on after school. You've got to work with your students, do stuff for your program, schedule this and that. You have a certain time that you teach, but you still are going to have a way longer day than most people.

The students also felt pressure to emphasize work over their personal time once they enter the teaching profession. Participant #25 elaborated: “I worry that if I am not willing to sacrifice my personal life, someone else will, and I might be out of a job.” However, Participant #13 emphasized the importance of coming to terms with this concern. In a moment of critical reflection, she revealed, “[W]hen thinking about the big picture, I think this concern could be really good for me. I now recognize that I need to work on my time management and learn how to say no” (Participant #13). As

the students began to internalize the realities of time constraints and management, they articulated that engaging in social reflection catalyzed key shifts in their perspectives regarding their teaching concerns. And, as a result, they would approach their remaining teacher preparation experiences with a new sense of resolve.

Conclusions

The purpose of this investigation was to describe the ways in which agricultural education majors at Louisiana State University visually represented and spoke about their teaching concerns as they critically reflected on EFEs. To accomplish this, we narrated our findings through three themes: (1) *Blurred Expectations: Representations of Incompetence*; (2) *Framing Success: Depictions of Achievement*; and (3) *The Narrowest Lens: Views of Time*. If interpreted through the lens of social interactionism (Crotty, 1998), the findings suggested that students encounter a range of teaching concerns during EFEs (Fritz & Miller, 2003; Paulsen et al., 2015).

Moreover, we concluded that for students in this study, participation in a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) allowed them to reflect more critically on their EFEs, and as a result, helped to broaden and expand their perspectives on their teaching concerns in productive ways – a notion supported by other researchers (Ferriter, 2010; Lock, 2006; Lieberman & Miller, 2011). These findings are encouraging in light of calls for teacher preparation programs in agricultural education to discover ways to help students better navigate their teaching concerns and be more inclined to enter the teaching profession (Claycomb & Petty, 1983; Fritz & Miller, 2003; Garton & Chung, 1997; Hillison, 1977; Johnson et al., 1989; Stair et al., 2012).

In our analysis of students' emergent concerns, the first theme suggested that students grappled with feelings of incompetence. This finding aligns with those reported by Stair et al. (2012) concerning the role that self-concerns play in shaping agricultural education majors' perceptions of self-efficacy. We concluded, therefore, that building their self-efficacy and competence through critical reflection on EFEs is a crucial strategy to help ensure that students enter the profession confident in their abilities. Perhaps this strategy also could be useful for other teacher preparation programs as they seek to address SBAE's national teacher shortage (Smith et al., 2018). In our second theme, students' depictions of success as *winning banners and awards* fomented key tensions. As they assigned new meaning to this concern through the co-construction of understanding the agricultural education majors embraced a more sophisticated view of success. On this point, Trani et al. (2019) reported that early career teachers struggle to find symmetry between success and work-life balance. However, little evidence exists regarding the role that social reflection on EFEs plays in shaping agricultural education majors' views of success as inservice teachers. The final theme illuminated how the EFEs opened the students' eyes to the realities of teaching, especially regarding the time required to effectively deliver agricultural education's comprehensive, three-circle model. This notion aligns with some existing evidence reported by other researchers (Smalley & Retallick, 2012). As such, we also concluded that a critical reflection on the concerns that students encountered during EFEs allowed them to glean valuable insights and, perhaps, matured their perspectives on teaching – a notion not currently reflected in the literature.

Implications, Recommendations, and Discussion

Because of the critical need for teacher preparation programs to enhance the recruitment and retention of SBAE teachers (Kantrovich, 2010; Smith et al., 2018; Talbert et al., 2007), this study's findings illuminated a number of possibilities for future research and practice, including the need to understand better how society, culture, attitudes, interactions, and previous experiences shape students' concerns. For instance, future research should examine the ways in which agricultural education majors' concerns may influence their use of teaching methods, learning assessments and

evaluative practices, as well as coaching strategies after becoming SBAE teachers (Roberts et al., 2016; Roberts & Montgomery, 2017). Additional effort is also needed to understand how students' concerns influence the outcomes of EFEs. In this investigation, for instance, we described three critical dimensions of agricultural education majors' concerns. Moving forward, we recommend that teacher educators emphasize these concerns in their teacher preparation courses. Such a practice could instigate critical conversations by which agricultural education students disclose more profound concerns, which may allow teacher educators to respond better through targeted resources and support.

This study also demonstrated how students' teaching concerns formed an evocative narrative. Additional examination, however, is needed to determine whether this storyline can be applied across agricultural education's diverse teacher preparation programs. Therefore, we recommend that future investigations explore how students' concerns influence the discourse, curriculum, and EFEs in teacher preparation. Our findings also suggested that social reflective practices helped the students narrate and negotiate their teaching concerns. For example, students articulated the importance that the co-construction of knowledge played in facilitating their new changes in perspectives. As such, additional research should explore the reflective techniques that most profoundly help students to successfully process and make meaning of their teaching concerns over time. We also recommend that professional development opportunities be created for teacher educators so that they can acquire a better understanding of effective strategies that can be used to assist students in navigating their teaching concerns (Roberts & Ramsey, 2017; Stair et al., 2012). Further, teacher educators should also consider new ways to engage students in EFEs to help mitigate their concerns before entering the profession. For example, perhaps the use of video and augmented reality could be used to enhance agricultural education majors' EFEs in the future. Such could be achieved by teacher preparation programs partnering with agricultural education state supervisors, inservice teachers, and agricultural education majors to create content in which students could engage and reflect on more purposefully.

To this point, existing research in agricultural education has largely measured students' concerns (Fritz & Miller, 2003; Stair et al., 2012). However, by interrogating the phenomenon from a visual narrative approach, this study provided unique insights into how students capture and story their teaching concerns. Further, symbolic interactionism (Crotty, 1998) served as a flexible and useful lens for narrating our emergent findings. Nonetheless, we recommend that future investigations design research studies using a variety of conceptual and theoretical perspectives. Perhaps by examining this phenomenon with a different lens and sets of assumptions, more complex dimensions of agricultural education majors' concerns could be discovered. Through our intent to story students' concerns, we also demonstrated how such helped broaden opportunities for future research and practice. By more deeply investigating how such concerns emerge, intensify, conflate, or collide in diverse settings, the concerns of agricultural education majors' concerns could be revealed in more meaningful and nuanced ways.

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