

Tempering with Purpose: California Early Career Agriculture Teachers' Experiences with Emotional Intelligence Professional Learning

Erin Gorter¹
Ashlee P. Sullivan²
Hannah C. Parker³

Abstract

This qualitative study explored the experiences of early career school-based agricultural education teachers in California who participated in a multi-part professional development series focused on emotional intelligence. Rooted in Guskey's model for teacher change, the study aimed to examine how emotional intelligence-based learning influences teacher attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of impact on student learning. Using a phenomenological approach, seven teachers participated in semi-structured interviews after completing a workshop series that included the EQ-I 2.0™ assessment, group debriefing, and individualized coaching. Findings revealed three central themes: empowered practice, balanced identity formation, and relational mindfulness. Teachers reported greater confidence in classroom management, improved stress tolerance, and more intentional student engagement. The workshop prompted deeper self-reflection, contributing to an increased awareness of wellness, professional identity, and the value of boundary-setting. Participants also noted improved relationships with students and colleagues, emphasizing empathy, accountability, and a shared humanity in the profession. The study highlights the utility of emotional intelligence as a structure for mitigating burnout and fostering sustainable teaching practices in the high-demand school-based agricultural education environment. Implications suggest that emotional intelligence-centered professional learning may support teacher retention, well-being, and instructional effectiveness. Recommendations include replicating this approach with mid- and late-career teachers and incorporating structured reflection protocols into school-based agricultural education teacher development programs. By integrating emotional intelligence into both pre-service and in-service learning, educators may be better equipped to navigate the personal and relational complexities of agricultural education.

Introduction

While thermometers merely reflect their environment, thermostats take active measures to set the temperature and influence the environment around them (Daneels, 2016). With unpredictable classrooms, added responsibilities, and extracurricular tasks tied to the job description, today's educators, particularly in the realm of school-based agricultural education (SBAE), may feel like they are reacting as thermometers

Note. Partial funding for this project has been made available by the California State University Agricultural Research Institute (ARI).

¹ Erin Gorter is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education in the Agricultural Education & Communication Department at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, 1 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA, 93407, ekthomps@calpoly.edu. ORCID# 0000-0002-3001-2251

² Ashlee P. Sullivan is a Doctoral Student in the Department of Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education at Virginia Tech, 175 West Campus Drive, Litton-Reaves Hall 2390, Blacksburg, VA 24061, asullivan@vt.edu. ORCID# 0009-0005-5425-0165

³ Hannah C. Parker is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education in the Department of Agricultural Education & Communication at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, 1 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407, hparke07@calpoly.edu. ORCID# 0000-0002-3290-3840

rather than proactively regulating as thermostats. This distinction illustrates emotional intelligence (EI) in teaching; like thermostats, emotionally intelligent educators actively adjust and influence the emotional climate around them, rather than merely reacting, thereby fostering a sustainable environment for themselves, their students, their classrooms, and their relationships.

Historically, EI has been defined as a set of skills utilized to contribute to the awareness and expression of emotions in oneself and others; the effective regulation of those emotions in oneself and others; and the use of feelings to motivate, plan, and achieve in one's life (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). A more current definition states that EI is the capacity to recognize one's feelings and the feelings of others, while navigating emotions and relationships (Goleman, 2005). EI has been widely popularized in various industries, including healthcare, construction, and education (Karimi et al., 2021; Kukah et al., 2021; Parrish, 2013). Numerous studies have shown that people with higher levels of EI typically experience greater job satisfaction, less stress, and lower turnover (Bru-Luna et al., 2021; Miao, 2016).

Across industries, successful entrepreneurial endeavors are often fueled by creativity stemming from higher EI levels (Boren, 2010). Within the agriculture industry, a hierarchical regression study found EI factors could help prevent conflict in small family farming operations (Paskewitz, 2021). Extension leaders in agriculture have indicated EI to be of higher importance in their daily work and rated the need for EI higher than the need for technical skill (Moore & Rudd, 2004, 2005). Proposed models for sustainable food systems leadership include the domain of interpersonal traits, central to EI, as items of importance (Lamm, 2023). The California Agricultural Leadership Foundation (CALF) has over 50 years of experience in providing advanced leadership development to mid-career agriculturalists across the agriculture industry in California (CALF, 2023). Their program includes a focus on EI to improve the performance and leadership ability of Fellows involved in the program (CALF, 2023).

Within broader education literature, Zysberg et al. (2017) found EI had a moderate negative association to burnout in elementary, middle, and high school teachers, yet also concluded individual factors, like the scope of work, may affect EI and stress interactions. The degree of EI also impacts classroom instruction and teaching effectiveness (Siddique et al., 2020; Taseer, 2020). With specific regard to career and technical education (CTE), a meta exploration identified EI attributes as indicators of future success stating, "The future will reward those who possess a tool kit of relevant skills certified by credentials and the social, emotional, and behavioral attributes demanded by the social context of the workplace" (Stringfield & Stone III, 2017, p. 177). CTE-focused research seeking to explore EI and student employability skills found interpersonal skills necessary to assist in the regulation of EI, and found the role of teachers in student EI development to be critical (Martin-Davis, 2022).

SBAE teacher responsibilities extend beyond the classroom, where they serve as career development event coaches, project managers, and FFA advisors (Roberts et al., 2020). Greiman et al. (2005) found that the added responsibilities and limited experience pose challenges that act as job stressors for early career SBAE teachers. These stressors can further lead to burnout and ultimately, to leaving the profession early if not addressed (Smith & Smalley, 2018). Studies looking at SBAE teacher success revealed emotions playing a major role in teachers finding balance within their careers (Traini et al., 2019). Gohm (2004) suggested EI may predict how individuals cope with difficult events. Houghton et al. (2011) developed a model where emotional regulation and self-leadership have the potential to increase undergraduate students' stress coping abilities. Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and empathy were found to have a notable relationship with stress management of secondary teachers (Apar & Rodzalan, 2022), while teachers with lower EI levels were found to have greater incidences of emotional exhaustion, anxiety, depression, and stress (Martinez-Monteagudo et al., 2019).

Concerning EI and SBAE, a search of the *Journal of Agricultural Education* revealed some literature concerning students (Hains & Hains, 2021; McElravy & Hastings, 2014) and even less

specifically addressing the EI competencies and needs of teachers, where most literature alludes to EI in the discussion concerning social and emotional learning (SEL), a way to discuss emotional processes, interpersonal skills, and self-regulation (Jones et al., 2013). Akers et al. (2004) explored the inclusion of EI in existing agriculture curriculum and found eight EI competency areas for SBAE teachers, with one competency area (conflict resolution) as a critical need. Via the lens of SEL, Yopp et al. (2017) found that SBAE teachers perceived the construct as important and claimed to be able to teach students emotional competence. Researchers have emphasized the need to provide SBAE teachers with more professional development to help them recognize the importance of incorporating and refining EI development in their programs (Akers et al., 2004; Yopp et al., 2017).

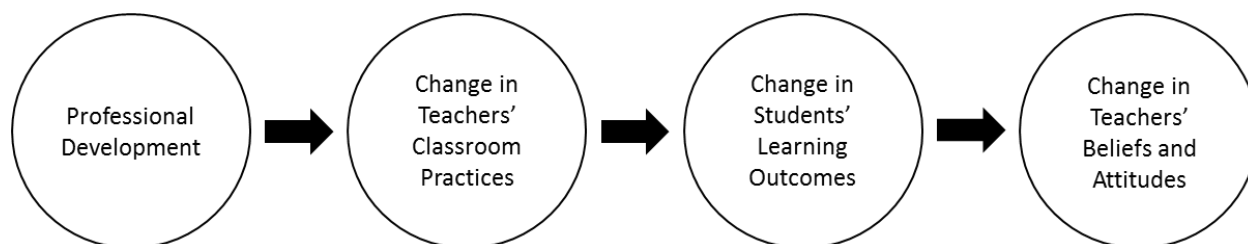
Teacher professional learning presents a space where EI might be developed (Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014). The inclusion of EI in teacher professional development supports literature calling for more well-rounded teacher training, rather than solely focusing on classroom practices (Gorter et al., 2020). Further, research has indicated the need for increased self-reflection during in-service teacher professional learning (Gorter et al., 2025). However, early career teachers have reported feelings of inadequacy when employing long-term reflection (Meder et al., 2018), and while there is much literature on pre-service teacher reflection, research focused on the reflection of in-service SBAE teachers is sparse. In considering these gaps in reflective efficacy, the limited literature concerning EI and SBAE teachers, and the impact of EI on workplace success, there is room to explore how targeted EI professional learning might aid early career teachers. The purpose of this study was to explore the experience of early career SBAE teachers in California participating in a multi-part workshop focused on EI. Given the relevance of job satisfaction, stress, and turnover in SBAE literature (McKim & Velez, 2015), early career SBAE teachers may use EI as a critical framework to proactively set the tone for their professional careers, like thermostats.

Theoretical Perspective

Guskey's model for teacher change (2002) was used as a theoretical perspective to guide this exploration of EI in SBAE teachers in California. The model posits that teacher professional learning changes not only classroom practices but also teacher beliefs and attitudes; changes that become evident through shifts in student behavior. (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Guskey's Model of Teacher Change



Note. Guskey's (2000) model of teacher change scaffolds effective professional development as a process leading to change in teachers' beliefs and attitudes.

Teacher professional development, where student learning outcomes scaffold change in teachers' beliefs and attitudes, is likely to result in sustained teacher change (Herbert, 2019). Teachers who see student improvement in response to implemented professional learning have more favorable opinions about teaching when there is visible impact on student learning (Guskey, 2002). Further, educators should structure and sequence professional learning opportunities with an intentional end goal (Guskey, 2000).

Within this model, the pivotal point in the effectiveness of professional learning relies on the teachers' personal experience applying what they have learned (Guskey, 2002).

An additional factor influencing the effectiveness of professional development, according to Guskey (2002), is the framing of professional learning sessions as a process opposed to stand-alone events. Learning often unfolds over time, and educators may realize its usefulness only after implementation. Additionally, the utility may be seen outside of the traditional classroom setting and may impact more than student content acquisition, where items such as increased student attendance, improvement in student behavior, and enhanced social-emotional awareness may also be indicators of student learning (Guskey, 2021). Given the complexity of quantifying the effectiveness of some of these additional student outcomes, evaluating teacher professional learning can be complex (Guskey, 2024). One strategy for assessment evaluates professional learning at multiple levels (Guskey, 2014, 2016, 2024):

1. *Participant Reactions*- Focuses on questions about whether participants enjoyed the learning experience.
2. *Participant Learning*- Measures new knowledge of skills attained by the learners.
3. *Organizational Support and Change*- Documents whether the participants' organization supports the professional learning experience.
4. *Participant Use of New Knowledge and Skill*- Delineates whether what was learned was implemented by the participant, and to what degree.
5. *Student Learning Outcomes*-Seeks to distinguish specific impact on students.

These levels assess different aspects of professional learning experience, thus requiring different approaches in their assessment. Whereas levels one and two (Participant Reactions and Participant Learning) can be assessed immediately following a specific session, levels three, four, and five (Organizational Support and Change, Participant Use of New Knowledge and Skill, and Student Learning Outcomes) are indicative of the process-oriented approach of the model for teacher change, requiring evaluation after attempted implementation (Guskey, 2014). Additionally, when progressing through the evaluation levels, the more advanced levels involve more nuanced approaches to data collection, including personal reflections and interviews.

Given the process-driven approach used to create the professional learning event of interest in this study, as well as the intricacies and individuality of EI, Guskey's (2000) model for teacher change provides an appropriate lens for exploring teacher beliefs and attitudes. This position creates a mechanism for researchers to identify social irregularities (Boylan et al., 2018), allowing for the discovery of challenges or issues within the SBAE space that may not be uncovered through conventional models focused solely on changes in teacher practices. In this study, we position EI as the central construct, explored within the context of professional learning for early career SBAE teachers. We used Guskey's model of teacher change to frame how EI-focused professional learning may influence teacher beliefs, attitudes, and practices, ultimately shaping both teacher growth and student experiences.

Methodology

We used a hermeneutic phenomenological approach (van Manen, 2016; 2023) to explore early career SBAE teachers' experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) participating in a multi-part workshop focused on EI. This approach allowed us to investigate what participants experienced and how they experienced it (van Manen, 2016; 2023). By employing a qualitative methodology, we were able to approach participants with an open mind in an attempt to gain a new understanding (Crotty, 1998; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2002).

Limitations

The purpose of this study was to explore how EI may impact early career SBAE teacher professional growth in California. This study was intentionally bound to a small group of early career teachers who completed the EI workshop and opted to participate in interviews. While we invited all teachers in the state in their first through third year of teaching, not all elected to engage, and we did not collect reasons for non-participation. This reflects a common characteristic of phenomenological inquiry, where depth of experience is prioritized over breadth or representation. To support trustworthiness, we followed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) guidance by maximizing the value of collected data while minimizing redundancy, aligning our approach with the criteria of credibility (through peer debriefing), transferability (via rich descriptions of participant perspectives), dependability (through maintaining an audit trail), and confirmability (through collaborative coding and reflexive practices). With this in mind, we acknowledge the results of this study may not be generalizable but contribute to discussions focused on the professional growth of early career SBAE teachers in California and how EI may play a role in that development.

Subjectivity Statement

We used an interpersonal approach, prioritizing relational connection during participant interactions, to support investigator and participant interaction, upholding a constructivist lens (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Further, we recognized and bracketed our biases (Creswell & Poth, 2018), as the research team consisted of a university faculty member and a graduate student. Each of us has our own background in agricultural education and leadership, either from being a past SBAE student or teacher in California. As such, we acknowledge that our experiences influenced not only our perspective but also specific aspects of the study's design, such as our choice of topic, the framing of interview questions, and our interpretation of findings. Additionally, one of us holds an appointed position focusing on agricultural leadership development in the agriculture industry. A focus of this leadership development program is the exploration of EI, and they are an EQ-I 2.0™ certified practitioner who delivered the EI workshop series, which served as the focus of this study. Therefore, their interactions with the participants during the workshop may influence the way participants responded in their interviews. To mitigate this, the student researcher, who was not a part of the workshop series, conducted the participant interviews.

Participants

This study is part of a broader investigation focused on utilizing EI to develop early career SBAE teachers in California. We invited all third-year teachers in California to participate in a workshop series focused on EI. The series included the EQ-I 2.0™ assessment, a 1-hour group debriefing session with a certified practitioner, where their results of the EQ-I 2.0™ were disseminated and discussed; and a follow-up 30-minute 1-on-1 coaching session with the EQ-I 2.0™ certified practitioner. We obtained a list of participants' names and contact information from the California SBAE professional development coordinator. After the initial request for participants only generated interest from four teachers, we elected to open the workshop experience to all first-, second-, and third-year teachers, representing a broader segment of early career teachers. Thirteen teachers elected to begin the workshop series, with 11 teachers completing all 3 portions.

After completing the workshop series, we invited the 11 teachers to participate in interviews, with 7 electing to participate. Rather than describe each participant, we have opted to discuss the participants as a group to reduce the threat to anonymity associated with deductive disclosure, where readers may be able to de-identify data based on knowledge of the population of interest (Surmiak, 2018). Four participants were in their third year of teaching, one in their second, and two in their first. Two identified as male and five as female. The schools they taught at represented three geographical regions across California. We did not ask if they had taught in different regions before this study.

As the participants completed a workshop focused on EI via the administration of the EQ-I 2.0™, we have included a summary of the assessment and participant results to further describe the participants.

The EQ-I 2.0™ uses 133 items to measure the 5 composites, and their subscales, of self-perception (self-regard, self-actualization, and emotional self-awareness), self-expression (emotional expression, assertiveness, and independence), interpersonal (interpersonal relationships, empathy, and social responsibility), decision-making (problem-solving, reality testing, and impulse control), and stress management (flexibility, stress tolerance, and optimism). An overall well-being indicator is also provided as a composite of the subscales self-regard, optimism, interpersonal relationships, and self-actualization. Researchers have used the instrument for 20 years and often cite it as one of the most accurate tools for EI (Multi Health Systems [MHS], 2023). Instrument reliability is strong, and the internal consistency of the total EI instrument is more than acceptable (Cronbach, 1951), where $\alpha = .97$ (MHS, 2024).

According to the EQ-I 2.0™, participants scored highest in the interpersonal dimension, followed by self-perception, well-being, stress management, decision-making, and self-expression (Table 1). The total EI, calculated from all 5 EI composite scores, was $M = 97.71$ ($SD = 10.06$). Scores between 90 and 110 represented 50% of the general population on the EQ-I 2.0™ (MHS, 2024), and the participants in this study averaged in this range of standardized scores on all composites. They were above average ($M > 100$) for interpersonal relationships and self-perception and below average ($M < 100$) for stress management, decision-making, well-being, self-expression, and total EI.

Table 1

Description of EQ-I 2.0™ Composite Scale Items in California Early Career SBAE Teachers (n = 7)

Composite Scale Items	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Total EI ^a	87.00	119.00	97.71	10.06
Interpersonal	87.00	117.00	104.14	13.07
Self-Perception	79.00	117.00	100.57	12.37
Well-being ^b	83.00	123.00	99.14	14.93
Stress Management	81.00	131.00	96.57	16.46
Decision-Making	80.00	112.00	94.29	10.78
Self-Expression	83.00	107.00	94.29	9.18

Note. ^aTotal EI calculated as a combination of all five EI composite scores.

^bWell-being is calculated as a combination of self-regard, optimism, interpersonal relationships, and self-actualization subscale items.

Design

To allow participants to directly share their experiences and perspectives, we used semi-structured interviews as a method to thoughtfully provide structure with an opportunity to redirect questioning and probe deeper in alignment with our research line of inquiry (Rosch et al., 2023). The semi-structured interview questions (Table 2) were created based on Guskey's (2000) framework for evaluating teacher professional development and included an introductory section focused on the participant's background (e.g., name, years teaching, region located).

Table 2*Semi-Structured Interview Questions^a*

Theme	Questions
Participant Reactions	<p>Described what you enjoyed most about participating in this emotional intelligence project?</p> <p>Discuss what you thought about the materials presented during the emotional intelligence programming?</p> <p>Describe your perceptions and interactions with others who participated in this programming?</p>
Participant Learning	<p>Describe the relevance of the knowledge and skills you acquired from this emotional intelligence programming in regards to your current teaching position.</p> <p>Discuss what you found to be the most valuable information you obtained from this experience.</p>
Organization Support and Change	<p>Describe any barriers to the implementation of strategies/ideas you learned concerning emotional intelligence.</p> <p>Describe your current administrative support of your participation in this project or the content learned.</p>
Use of New Knowledge and Skills	<p>Describe the impact of the information you have learned concerning emotional intelligence on your classroom.</p> <p>Describe the impact of the information you have learned concerning emotional intelligence on your program.</p> <p>Describe the impact of the information you have learned concerning emotional intelligence on your physical or emotional well-being.</p>
Student Learning Outcomes	<p>Describe how you have seen your emotional intelligence learning impact your students as learners.</p> <p>Describe how you have seen your emotional intelligence learning impact your students' performance.</p> <p>Describe how you have seen your emotional intelligence learning impact the physical or emotional well-being of your students.</p>

Note. ^a Adapted from Guskey's (2000) model for evaluating teacher professional development

Data Collection

Participants used an online calendar system to sign up for 30-minute semi-structured interviews, which took place via the Zoom video conference platform. We recorded and transcribed all interviews verbatim. During the interviews, which ranged from 14 to 41 minutes long, we took handwritten field notes. Although the interviews ranged in length, our semi-structured approach prompted focused, reflective engagement with participants. After each interview, a Zoom transcript was generated, and pseudonyms were assigned to each participant to protect confidentiality.

Data Analysis

We evaluated all transcripts using a three-cycle coding process (Saldaña, 2021). The initial coding cycle was conducted In Vivo to capture participant voices as a way to deepen understanding (Saldaña, 2021), where each of us analyzed the transcripts independently and identified individual codes. Together, we conducted axial coding as the second coding cycle, reassembling individual codes into 13 categories based on context and alignment (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Saldaña, 2021). From there, we identified relevant themes and conducted a third round of selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). We employed a three-cycle coding process not to construct theory, but to interpret the essence of participant lived experience, consistent with the interpretive phenomenological tradition (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). We deemed data saturation was met as emerging themes were consistent among participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Trustworthiness and Validation

Trustworthiness with attention to reflexivity was intentionally kept at the forefront of our study design. We recognized that each of us brings a unique interpretive lens to the subject matter, a key tenet of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and reflexivity can be used to create meaningful conversations addressing these innate biases and ensure emergent themes authentically represent our participants' experiences, rather than our expectations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Discussions between our research team included member checks, challenging our assumptions, and peer debriefing played a role in examining our motives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checks occurred through regular weekly check-ins between us where codes and themes were shared and discussed. Our regular conversations provided rich collaboration and were supported by time to review interview transcripts and reflect independently between scheduled meetings.

Findings

Three themes emerged: Empowered practice, balanced identity formation, and relational mindfulness. Empowered practice represented the intentional use of EI to pragmatically move forward and implement strategies to enhance teaching and teacher effectiveness. The ongoing process of integrating personal professional roles to support a sustainable teacher identity described balanced identity formation. Finally, relational mindfulness was expressed as the conscious attention to reflection on interpersonal relationships, enhanced with empathy and responsiveness to student and collegial connections. We present these themes below, along with supporting quotations. We lightly edited participant quotations to remove filler words such as "like" and "um" (Saldaña, 2021).

Empowered Practice

Belief in EI served as the starting point for teachers' conception of EI's impact on their career and program, with specific regard to the impact on their own classroom management practices. The theme of empowered practice emerged first from SBAE teachers' application of their knowledge of EI. This theme could be seen across the facets of classroom management, actionable strategies, and specific implementation:

When it comes to how they [students] express their emotions, or how they express how they're feeling, or you know how they are in a classroom setting, sometimes it's not the most positive way, but I give them options, and I communicate with them, and I'm able to work through whatever is going on in the classroom. A little bit of emotional intelligence has been super, super, helpful. I think it has helped impact my students' performance, because when they're in a setting where they understand, and they know that they can be people who have emotions and who have feelings. (Cindy)

Teachers' desire to utilize EI to manage their classroom surfaced within their empowered practice. For these participants, many expressed how their newfound knowledge of EI translated into the classroom through positive student-teacher and class-wide experiences:

But those relationships they have created amongst their peers, because my classroom, especially, it being a floral design curriculum, is very group work hands-on. And you see those relationships flourish whenever they're in the lab, designing with their groups. So, I would say that EQi helped in the sense that my interpersonal relationships grew, and that made a more comfortable collaborative classroom environment for my students. (Bethany)

While some teachers observed that using EI as a classroom management strategy promoted student autonomy, others recognized the need to set higher expectations for their students and themselves:

My classroom is structured and rigid for a reason that I'm a little flexible with IEP students...in general, I have expectations, and the kids need to meet them...if they learn one thing from my class, it's that I have expectations. But I do think I have improved empathy and that I am a lot more understanding of students' excuses. (Haley)

Participants recognized that becoming stricter and more assertive in the classroom helped boost their confidence as teachers. Natalie stated: "...before I was scared to be mean or scared to be strict. And I realized, like, I'm unhappy because I'm not strict, so I need to be more strict, because then I'm happier in the long run." Others reflected on how they have changed their approach, like Ryan:

I think that I've been more assertive... I've been a little bit more decisive...But in terms of the overarching stuff, how do I discuss with my whole class what's going on that you have a problem with, while noticeably excluding those people who aren't causing the issues? You know? How do I implement something that's going to work? And how do I improve what I'm doing so that I can make it work... If I want there to be good structure, then I need to be decisive. (Ryan)

Participants viewed their understanding of EI as a tool for developing actionable strategies and a newfound confidence in interactions with students:

I've also learned how to communicate with students when they're having those bad days or when they're having those days where, you know, they might not be able to give 100%. And with those connections, I feel like they're also learning how to grow emotionally because they're still teenagers, and they still don't know how to 100% express themselves. But it's definitely helped a lot in the classroom when it comes to emotional intelligence. (Cindy)

Bethany reiterated this feeling of confidence, where the actions they took led to a more positive classroom environment. They also reflected on how this positivity may transfer outside of the classroom:

...it's kind of funny to see your students pick up some of the things that you do... But you've allowed to create that comfortable classroom environment where it's instead of like pessimistic or negative, it's very positive, and where they're allowed to like critique designs and whatnot. That's something that they take with themselves outside of the classroom, with their relationships, with their peers, friends, and family. (Bethany)

Increased participation levels from students also highlighted the feelings of empowerment that teachers felt. Ryan said, "It's [EI] helped me communicate with those students and make a difference, even if it's a small thing, where it's like, all right, they're a little more participatory in class." He went on to indicate observed shifts in student grades: "I'm noticing their grades shift just a little bit, or some of those

larger changes, where it's like, you know, people care.” Others felt more empowered in their day-to-day interactions with students and how they were responding to students:

It helped me with my reactivity when it comes to dealing with students. Because sometimes they will come at you sideways with questions and comments, or they'll tell you something, and you're already doing something else. So, looking at how I respond to things from this little packet with all my stuff in it, it's helped me take a step back... So, I've gotten better at responding to students... And then like they've gotten better at letting me know, or knowing that I'm not going to respond to them right away... So, I can give you the best possible answer. (Heather)

As teachers recognized strategies they could act upon, they desired to act given their newly recognized strengths and weaknesses in EI. The idea of implementation was apparent, as were the identified barriers to implementation:

Depending on the context of a classroom, you know, some of those emotional intelligence traits may swing the other way from the current issue... depending on what's happening. You know, if I have to deal with students, for discipline, or we're working together, or I'm doing direct instruction. Emotional intelligence is a snap of a finger for how we're going to deal with situations at the end of the day. (Mark)

Some SBAE teachers also recognized specific incidences where their weaknesses were causing them to struggle and worked to make quick adjustments:

It was really hard, my impulsiveness. I was like, “Oh, okay, I want to start working on them right away.” But that's just not what happens. It takes time, it took time for me to be like, “Okay, I need you to email me that.” And it took time for the students to be like, “Oh, why can't we just do it right now?” ... I think that was just the most barriers that I was working on, something that made me not get to do things right away, even though that's what I wanted. (Heather)

Overall, having strategies to implement helped overcome specific barriers. Some of these strategies were as simple as leaving a note on the desk as a reminder:

Definitely having them [actionable strategies] in the forefront [of their mind]. I know one goal we had was to rewrite narratives in our brains about why people are acting that way. And I have a constant reminder on my computer. But I can't remember our second goal because I didn't write it down and put it in my everyday life, so I think that was definitely a barrier. (Haley)

Balanced Identity Formation

The theme of balanced identity formation emerged as well. This identity formation influenced their attention to wellness, how they compared themselves to other SBAE teachers, their accountability, and their confidence. As participants recognized their EI strengths and areas for growth, they gained a deeper understanding of their identities and how to integrate and adapt their various facets of self into a more cohesive whole. The realization of the need for increased attention to one's wellness emerged from the participants' application of EI in the classroom. Participants attributed this awareness to the strategies they used to manage stressful situations:

I was severely stressed out because I just started teaching, even though I had my own classroom, and I was stressed out with that. And then we had just moved to a new place from where we used to live, and so I was having a lot of doubt in myself and doubt in my abilities, because ... I wanted everything to go right. (Heather)

Acknowledging that stress is a part of daily life was also evident as participants reflected on how they used EI to navigate stress and feelings of burnout:

And it's very easy to get super burnt and stressed out. And I think the action items for how I can be more flexible and stress tolerance in my classroom helped the most. I check myself in my head a little bit more... I know, I'm stressed, but let's not take that out on my students... But where's the switch? When it comes to starting class, there needs to be that switch or balance. And I think I've reflected on that more because of this process. (Bethany)

This idea of wellness was also addressed from a physical and mental space. As teachers began to place more emphasis on their occupational wellness, this priority change enacted a shift towards their physical and mental wellness and focused those wellness efforts on personal growth beyond a professional setting:

I have pushed myself to go on a lot of walks because of this, I realized that I'm not getting to do that. So, on Sundays, I have to go and walk, because I know there's no FFA or school thing preventing me from doing it. And then, after school, it's like, 'Okay, I have 20 minutes 'til the sun sets. I'm going on a day walk, like making it a priority, because I know that makes me happier,' Because when I'm on a walk, then I have time to call a friend or someone at home. That makes me feel better. When I don't do that stuff, it makes me feel really disconnected and really alone. I know I'm not. I know of people who love me, but sometimes, when you think of it, you can forget. (Natalie)

Some SBAE teachers found keeping track of items and separating their work responsibilities from their personal lives to be a helpful, actionable strategy:

One of the goals [the certified practitioner] and I came up with was how to...mitigate taking on too much, which causes stress, and track items that you decline. Keep a 'no' list on your computer to monitor when you turn down a request; treat these no responses the same way you would, say yes, as they are equally as valuable. I think something as simple as saying 'no' has helped me physically and emotionally, because it's freed up a little bit more of my schedule to do things that I enjoy. (Bethany)

Other teachers identified specific mechanisms they used to keep themselves on track, monitoring the goals they had set:

I carried around a little notebook... I try to keep my school things off my personal phone... And I don't have my school email on my phone, either. So, when I have kids email me, I'm not checking that on my school phone because I'm trying to keep those separate. Just so... when I go home, like, I'm home... One of the things was, I was going through some medical stuff. So, I was forgetting a lot of stuff. And so, the notebook helped me to just jot things down when I needed to, so that I could look back at them later. (Heather)

As participants realized the importance of consistency, they also noted the difficulties hindering them from steady application. These difficulties arose as challenges to fully implement the strategies in their personal and professional lives, but participants were more aware of their need for change. Some identified modifications to strategies they had previously tried to employ. Concerning journaling, Cindy said, "I have not done that because it's not really my style...But I get these little notification reminders on my phone...And so, it's a good way to see if I'm feeling stressed out or overwhelmed, and what can I do to ask my team for help?" Others acknowledged that they did not stick to all of their goals, but they were aware of their implementation gaps:

I didn't really follow all of them, but I feel like I was aware I wasn't following them, trying to make up like she told me I had to spend one contract today, going home at contract time. I would decide the day, you know, the beginning of the week, and then it'd be that day, and it'd be 5 o'clock. I'm like, "Okay, well, I'm leaving at 5 and usually leave at 7. So, it's actually better"... I wasn't making the goal, but it was making me more aware. (Natalie)

Some participants also addressed how they compared themselves to others in the profession. This idea of comparison was also acknowledged during the workshop, where participants were able to debrief their results and have discussions together. Participants noted the collaboration at the debriefing session as a positive experience:

When we were at a workshop together at the [group debriefing session] that allowed us to collaborate and to kind of look at everyone else's results, and to kind of not necessarily compare and contrast, but it gave room for peer evaluation... to be like, 'Oh, okay, I do see that in you. And I do agree with these strategies for action,' or vice versa. (Bethany)

Participants found the debriefing session to be collaborative amongst their peers, which helped to mitigate prior feelings of comparison in the profession:

The most interesting part was comparing scores with friends. As an ag teacher, sometimes you feel like you have so many people to depend on and so many people to reach out to. And then sometimes you see stuff on social media, and you're like, 'Oh, my gosh! They're so much better than I! They're doing so much better than me,' and I don't want to tell them I'm struggling, and realizing that... There are a lot of ag teachers who are struggling." (Natalie)

Other participants also recognized feelings of competitiveness coupled with their feelings of comparison as a younger teacher in SBAE:

I think in ag teaching things can get a little bit dicey... there's the competitiveness. And there's also that comparison a lot when you're a younger teacher. So, it's been nice to have something to reflect back on and pull from. (Cindy)

In the same regard, this session also shed light on their lower self-confidence and greater significance on the comparison of one another in the profession and as early career teachers. Ryan acknowledged the perception that they were the only ones struggling and others appeared to be more successful:

I mean, you go into this industry, and you get so focused. And you see everybody's successes, and not necessarily their struggles, and it kind of makes you feel like you're the only guy or the only person, who's sitting there and fighting for his life to stay above water, and it was definitely pretty enlightening to see that that's sort of the whole collective experience. (Ryan)

Participants shared the areas they felt specifically confident in, and the spaces where they felt like they were lacking. Ryan said, "You have thousands of decisions you have to make a day as an educator, ...it's [EI] definitely helped me to be a little bit more sure of myself." This confidence also gave participants strength to move forward with self-improvement in mind:

I kind of knew where the areas were that I needed improvement, but at the same time... How much of this falls back on my practice, and how much of this falls back on my emotional intelligence? Right? Am I just stressing myself out over nothing? And I need to work with my stress and my personal stuff? Or is it really about my practice? Is it really about the things that I'm doing? (Ryan)

As teachers realized the composites and subscales of EI they could develop, some participants utilized the space as an opportunity to reflect on prior experiences:

Or if I have stuff going on at home..., that's carrying into work. I need to communicate that with my team members, so it's not taken out on them or so it's not a big bubble up effect, so I would say it has helped a lot in terms of reflecting on how I feel, because before I would just be like, 'Oh, I'm just going to get stuff done,' and I'd push through the tunnel if you want to imagine it that way. (Cindy)

Some participants shared their EI results with their coworkers as a mechanism to help hold them accountable. Bethany said, "He reminds me very often about my goals, and he will keep me in check." Natalie also used this strategy:

So, the 2 of us got to have a lot of real talks about this. Why is it saying that my self-regard is in 81 out of 140, right? Why is it so much lower than it could be? So, she's [colleague] been like, "Hey, you said you said you need to go home one day this week. Why are you still here?" So that's been helping. (Natalie)

The idea of each participant being human and focusing on development as humans, rather than just elements within the system of SBAE, was also evident:

It has actively made me try to be a better teacher and better human and it was nice to be able to meet with people to know who took the test at [the debriefing session] cause, you know, if we did this all online and through a Zoom meeting, we probably wouldn't have talked with each other about our scores; but doing that actually helped and helped keep us in check with each other. (Natalie)

This idea of humanity also translated to how they treated other participants in the group. Haley said, "One of my friends was so hard on himself for his score. And I'm like, 'No, you're awesome...I have very little patience with people, you are so kind.' I think that was really valuable. I think it was really cool to talk about what it means." The awareness and implications of humanity revealed by EI bore noticeable results for the participants as they began shifting their perspective on growing their students into more well-rounded individuals outside of their classroom:

They're [students] stressed out about their work, or they're stressed out about their grades. Whatever else is going on in their life might be impacting that. So, I try to... take a step back and realize that they're just people trying to figure out how their emotions work and trying to learn how to express them. And at the end of the day, what I teach them in the class in terms of science and DNA is not as important as what they're learning as humans in my classroom, right? How to be better people or how to communicate better. And it's not like I have lessons on that, but it's instances or moments where... they might react or act in a certain way to a certain situation, where I can have them reflect on those instances. (Cindy)

Relational Mindfulness

The final theme to emerge was relational mindfulness. Within this space, attention to relationships and connectedness was apparent. Participants found that their relationships and connections grew because they acknowledged EI. With their students, relational growth occurred because of their own EI and their intentional exercise of their personalized actionable strategies in their classroom:

They're performing more because they're working and collaborating and self-critiquing with their group members, I have them self and peer critique their arrangements, and it's a very specific answer. But I feel, because they've gained that interpersonal, mutual relationship with one another, they're more susceptible to critique. But they use that to, I call it, learn by failing to grow as a [floral] designer. (Bethany)

Other participants further recognized their personal growth in how they respond to students, where Heather mentioned, "It's helped me better my relationship with the students, because I'm able to respond with a clear head and with my exact response." Participants were also able to see their relational growth transfer to their students:

But I think, because I've kind of chilled out a little bit more, their friends talk like, 'Oh, hey! This is my teacher, and she's pretty chill. We can go in her classroom during lunch.' And so, I think that it's [EI] helped me better my relationships with students, or it's made me a little bit less intimidating because I've heard that I could be really intimidating to students, especially when I first got here. (Heather)

Some teachers recognized the strengths of their colleagues and how they relied on their current professional community. This provided the opportunity to self-reflect on where they stand currently and give themselves grace for the personal growth they have had thus far. Haley said, "So, [colleague] is the empathy person. She is the personal story person. I'm more of a paperwork, expectations person. I do think with this, I've had a little bit more lenience with students." The participants' relationships with others in the study set the tone for further discussing and connecting the pieces of EI. This prompted participants to explore how they could use this process to further develop their EI and relationships with one another:

When we were at a workshop together at [the debriefing session] that allowed for us to collaborate and to kind of like, look at everyone else's results, and to kind of not necessarily compare and contrast. But it gave room for peer evaluation... to be like, 'Oh, okay, I do see that in you. And I do agree with these strategies for action,' or vice versa. Or 'I don't know if I necessarily agree with that response,'... It was great to have that peer collaboration and to feel that I wasn't alone when it came to scoring, maybe low on some items, or feel like I wasn't alone when I had like a lot of strategies for action. (Bethany)

Participants' relationships with one another shaped the tone for deeper discussions while connecting the pieces of EI with their peers, and how this process may be used for additional EI development:

Well, I was pretty fortunate. I knew, you know, most of the people, doing the instrument as well, for the most part... We were willing to share our perspectives on emotional intelligence, maybe some of our setbacks, too... And to see each other's... what kind of biases, or what kind of things that they think they were going to score on their instrument, and what they actually got. Those types of conversations were great as well. (Mark)

As Haley reflected on connections with their students, they recognized the increased human and emotional connection with their students while reemphasizing the importance of their responsibilities as an SBAE teacher: "I think maybe in the day-to-day, I have more human connection, but they [students] still have to learn what they have to learn, and they have to get there."

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of early career SBAE teachers in California after participating in a multi-part workshop focused on EI. We framed our exploration using Guskey's (2002) model for teacher change, where the effectiveness of professional learning is measured by a change in teacher beliefs and attitudes, gleaned via change in students. The exploration revealed three themes concerning empowered practice, balanced identity formation, and relational mindfulness. Empowered practice highlighted the participant's application of EI for classroom management and actionable strategies for implementation in other various spaces. As participants apply EI knowledge to their various environments, their reflections show the impacts of this application. The theme of balanced identity formation influenced participants' attention to their wellness, comparison to others, and their confidence in the profession. Through self-reflection, the group identified areas where they needed to grow. Relational mindfulness emerged from a recognized growth in relation and connectedness with others through their self-reflection in EI. The participants were working toward forming meaningful relationships, practicing empathy, and showing social responsibility.

Implications

Using Guskey's (2002) model provided insight into how early career SBAE teachers' EI has impacted both themselves and others in various spaces of the profession. Through awareness of EI and self-reflection, early career SBAE teachers used their EI results and training as a basis to grow and develop further. This may help combat the feelings of stress and burnout attributed to the limited experience and added responsibilities of early career SBAE teachers (Greiman, 2005). As participants in this study interpreted their EI results and their implications via the workshop series and implementation afterward, they noted that their classrooms became more structured and collaborative, which increased their confidence. Similarly, when participants applied their EI results to student relationships, they felt more positive about their teacher-student interactions.

As the participants placed greater emphasis on EI, they contributed more to their own mental, physical, and emotional wellness than previously. This contribution varied between the group, but participants found that efforts to increase their self-wellness helped create career balance, aligning with previous findings by Traini et al. (2019). Considering feelings of comparison within SBAE, the participants discussed how EI has played a role in reducing feelings of low self-confidence in the profession. This may offer a way for SBAE teachers to enhance their self-esteem by balancing upward social comparison and emotional exhaustion (Hui et al., 2022). Likewise, concerning relationships with others, participants recognized the importance of accountability as a method to accomplish goals they set for themselves following their EI discussions, supporting the importance of multiple accountability partners to meet the varying demands and expectations of the career and its multitude of stakeholders (e.g., administrators, community members, students, etc.; Traini et al., 2021).

Participants in this study paid closer attention to their relationships and connectedness with students, peers, and colleagues, highlighting the importance of relationships in SBAE teachers' ability to perform their job effectively (Doss et al., 2023). Early career SBAE teachers found the professional learning sessions collaborative and actionable, where they felt empowered to use what they had learned in their classrooms and programs. In digging into the theme of balanced identity formation, while SBAE literature addresses the ideas of balance in SBAE careers (Clemens et al., 2021; Hainline et al., 2015; Murray et al., 2011; Sorensen et al., 2014; Sorensen et al., 2016; Traini et al., 2019; Traini et al., 2020) and SBAE teacher identity (Gates et al., 2020; Pozderac et al., 2022; Roberts et al., 2020; Shoulders, 2018; Shoulders & Myers, 2011), there is little overlap in the two constructs. The results of this study allude to the fact that, while SBAE teacher identity is strong, consistent with previous findings (Shoulders, 2018), the need to balance this identity formation across all aspects of early career SBAE teachers' lives is also of importance. While existing literature supports the value of EI in education broadly, our findings demonstrate how EI, when

situated in a tailored, reflective professional learning setting, can foster empowerment, identity formation, and relational capacity for early career SBAE teachers.

Recommendations

Recommendations for future research include a replication of this workshop series with teachers who are in their mid- or late-career range. Understanding how EI impacts teachers at different phases of their careers may be of interest and provide insight into the ideal timing for EI development. This timing may be important given the frequency that stress and burnout surfaced across SBAE literature and were notably mentioned among the participants in this exploration. Replication may also be of interest in different states, as the experiences of teachers may differ state to state. Also, following up with participants in this study may supply more robust findings. Considering the importance of student influence in affirming changes in teacher beliefs and attitudes (Guskey, 2000), collecting information longitudinally would be of value in determining the long-term impacts of EI professional learning on the students themselves. Further, a model for agricultural leadership development in California looks at personal contexts impacting leadership (e.g., spirituality, character, community, and organization) (Lattore, 2021). Exploring how these contexts impact SBAE teachers and their EI development, as well as the effective application of acquired skills, may also be of importance. Given that the center of Lattore's (2021) model focuses on feedback and reflection, understanding how SBAE teachers regularly implement reflection, concerning EI or other self-focused topics, would also be of interest.

Concerning the themes that emerged in this study, there is space to ask additional questions and explore them further as individual constructs. In looking at balanced identity formation, exploration of how SBAE teachers create their identities across all facets of their lives is also of interest. If SBAE teachers have sturdy identity ties to their professional role, how can we create that strengthened identity across all aspects of their lives? Would this balanced sense of identity help mitigate early career exit? In considering empowered practice, teachers in this study only discussed this empowerment in their classrooms. What does having a sense of empowerment look like in other aspects of their life? Likewise, in looking at relational mindfulness, previous research has indicated SBAE teachers feel more connected to their curriculum and other teachers like them, while connection with other content area teachers and administrators is felt less (Moser & McKim, 2020). How do these early career SBAE teachers see their awareness of relationships help them build connections with those outside of their most immediate purview? These questions also help to scaffold practice recommendations, assisting pre-service teachers in considering a holistic approach to their identity formation and thinking about how they can impact and have great relationships with broader groups.

Additional practitioner recommendations include advice for those responsible for pre-service and in-service teacher professional development. Incorporating EI into teacher preparation may help train SBAE teachers to proactively manage career challenges, who are prepared to proactively address challenges within their career rather than reacting to difficulties as they arise. Further, continuing teacher learning for those who are already in the classroom full-time may help reinforce skills to recognize incidents that may cause stress and act accordingly. Scaffolding learning segments that include intentional opportunities for developing reflective practices, where the outcome of reflection is action-based, may also be of importance. Using reflection protocols rooted in hierarchy of evidence (Rolfe, 2002) where personal knowledge, experiential knowledge, and propositional knowledge (Borton, 1970; Driscoll, 2006) are used to create forward-thinking implementation plans, could provide a foundation for lifelong, purposeful, and solutions-focused reflection.

The implementation of EI-focused professional development for SBAE teachers can intentionally shape the climate of classrooms and programs by empowering teachers with tools to balance their professional and personal identities while fostering strong relationships. The findings of this study reinforce the earlier metaphor: emotionally intelligent teachers act more like thermostats than thermometers.

Centering EI as a strategy to help SBAE teachers regulate rather than merely respond to challenges supports their resilience and sustainability in the profession.

References

- Akers, C., Miller, K., Frazee, S. D., & Haygood, J. D. (2004). A tri-state needs assessment of emotional intelligence in agricultural education. *Journal of Agricultural Education, 45*(1), 86–94. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2004.01086>
- Apar, N., & Rodzalan, S. A. (2022). The relationship between emotional intelligence and stress management among teachers in secondary school. *Research in Management of Technology and Business, 3*(2), 98–112. <https://doi.org/10.30880/rmtb.2022.03.02.009>
- Boren, A. E. (2010). Emotional intelligence: The secret of successful entrepreneurship? *Faculty Publications: Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communication Department, 2*. 55–61. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/aglecfacpub/55>
- Borton, T. (1970). *Reach, touch and teach: Student concerns and education*. McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Boylan, M., Coldwell, M., Maxwell, B., & Jordan, J. (2018). Rethinking models of professional learning as tools: a conceptual analysis to inform research and practice. *Professional development in education, 44*(1), 120–139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2017.1306789>
- Bru-Luna, L. M., Martí-Vilar, M., Merino-Soto, C., & Cervera-Santiago, J. L. (2021). Emotional Intelligence Measures: A Systematic Review. *Healthcare, 9*(12), 1696. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare9121696>
- California Agricultural Leadership Foundation. (2023). *About the program*. <https://www.agleaders.org/programs/about/>
- Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative sociology, 13*(1), 3–21. <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/bf00988593.pdf>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *psychometrika, 16*(3), 297–334. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02310555>
- Crotty, M. J. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Sage Publications.
- Daneels, M. E. (2016). Thermometers to thermostats: Designing and assessing informed action. *Social Education, 80*(6), 370–374. https://www.socialstudies.org/system/files/publications/articles/se_8006370.pdf
- Doss, W., Rayfield, J., Lawver, D. (2023). A national study assessing the influence of perceived challenges faced by school-based agricultural education teachers on their ability to do their job. *Journal of Agricultural Education, 64*(3), 184–202. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.v64i3.2476>

- Driscoll, J. (2006). *Practising clinical supervision: A reflective approach for healthcare professionals*. Elsevier Health Sciences.
- Gates, H. R., Shoulders, C. W., Johnson, D. M., Edgar, D., & Blythe, J. M. (2020). Preservice agricultural education and secondary education teachers' self-efficacy and professional identity. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 61(3), 112–127. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.v61i3.2332>
- Gohm, C. L. (2004). Moving forward with emotional intelligence. *Psychological Inquiry*, 15(3), 222–227. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20447231>
- Goleman, D. (2005). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Bantam.
- Gorter, E., Ray, N., De Lay, A., MacDonald, L., Lopez, I., Crabtree, A., & Rodriguez-Ruiz, D. (2025). What Does that Even Look Like? Professionalism in School-Based Agricultural Education. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 66(1), 11. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.v66i1.2830>
- Gorter, E. K., Sorensen, T., Russell, J., Taylor, S., & Henderson, T. M. (2020). Perceived changes among second-stage agriculture teachers following a professional development experience in Ecuador. *Advancements in Agricultural Development*, 1(3), 68–80. <https://doi.org/10.37433/aad.v1i3.69>
- Greiman, B. C., Walker, W. D., & Birkenholz, R. J. (2005). Influence of the organizational environment on the induction state of teaching. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 46(3), 95–106. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2005.03095>
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2, 105–117. Sage Publications.
- Guskey, T. R. (2000). *Evaluating professional development*. Corwin Press.
- Guskey, T. R. (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Teachers and teaching*, 8(3), 381–391. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135406002100000512>
- Guskey, T. R. (2014). Evaluating professional learning. In S. Billett, C. Harteis, & H. Gruber (Eds.), *International handbook of research in professional and practice-based learning*, (pp. 1215–1235). Springer.
- Guskey, T. R. (2016). Data: Gauge impact with 5 levels of data. *The Learning Professional*, 37(1), 32. <https://learningforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/february-2016-jsd.pdf#page=34>
- Guskey, T. R. (2021). Professional learning with staying power. *Educational Leadership*, 78(5), 54–59. https://uknowledge.uky.edu/edp_facpub/52
- Guskey, T. R. (2024). Look beyond the satisfaction survey: A framework to evaluate results of professional learning. *The Learning Professional*, 45(1), 28–33. <https://tguskey.com/wp-content/uploads/LP-24-Prof-Lrng-Eval-PDF.pdf>
- Hainline, M. S., Ulmer, J. D., Ritz, R. R., Burris, S., & Gibson, C. D. (2015). Career and family balance of Texas agricultural science teachers by gender. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 56(4), 31–46. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2015.04031>

- Hains, B. J., & Hains, K. D. (2021). An Emotional Rollercoaster: The Emotional and Pedagogical Impact of Cultural Experiences on Agricultural Education Undergraduate Students. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 62(3), 232–247. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2021.03232>
- Hen, M., & Sharabi-Nov, A. (2014). Teaching the teachers: emotional intelligence training for teachers. *Teaching Education*, 25(4), 375–390. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2014.908838>
- Herbert, P. A. (2019). *Professional development and sustained change in teachers' practice*. [Master's thesis, University of Southern Queensland]. <https://doi.org/10.26192/hfme-p413>
- Houghton, J. D., Wu, J., Godwin, J. L., Neck, C. P., & Manz, C. C. (2011). Effective stress management: A model of emotional intelligence, self-leadership, and student stress coping. *Journal of Management Education*, 36(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/105256291143020>
- Hui, Q., Yao, C., Li, M., & You, X. (2022). Upward social comparison sensitivity on teachers' emotional exhaustion: A moderated moderation model of self-esteem and gender. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 299, 568–574. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2021.12.081>
- Jones, S. M., Bouffard, S. M., & Weissbourd, R. (2013). Educators' social and emotional skills vital to learning. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 94(8), 62–65. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721713094008>
- Karimi, L., Leggat, S. G., Bartram, T., Afshari, L., Sarkeshik, S., & Verulava, T. (2021). Emotional intelligence: predictor of employees' wellbeing, quality of patient care, and psychological empowerment. *BMC psychology*, 9(93), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-021-00593-8>
- Kukah, A. S., Akomea-Frimpong, I., Jin, X., & Osei-Kyei, R. (2021). Emotional intelligence (EI) research in the construction industry: A review and future directions. *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*, 29(8), 2511–2532. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ECAM-05-2021-0414>
- Lamm, K. W. (2023). Issue leadership: Establishing a domain for a food systems leadership model. *Foods*, 12(13). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/foods12132598>
- Lattore, P. A. (2021). *How we grow leaders*. (n.p.).
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Sage Publications.
- Martin-Davis, L. (2022). *Cultivating the Employability Skills of Secondary CTE Students: A Phenomenological Study*. [Doctoral dissertation, Lamar University-Beaumont]. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2673363373?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true&sourcetype=Dissertations%20&%20Theses>
- Martinez-Monteaquedo, M. C., Ingles, C. J., Granados, L., Aparisi, D., & Garcia-Fernandez, J. M. (2019). Trait emotional intelligence profiles, burnout anxiety, depression, and stress in secondary education teachers. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 142, 53–61. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2019.01.036>
- McElravy, L., & Hastings, L. J. (2014). Profiling the Youth Leader: Personality and Emotional Intelligence Trends and Their Relationship to Leadership Skills. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 55(1), 134–151. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2014.01134>

- McKim, A., & Velez, J. (2015). Exploring the Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Career Commitment among Early Career Agriculture Teachers. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 56(1), 127–140. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2015.01127>
- Meder, A., Smalley, S., & Retallick, M. (2018). Evaluating First Year Agriculture Teachers' Use of Reflection. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 59(2), 289–304. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2018.02289>
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Moore, L. L., & Rudd, R. D. (2004). Leadership skills and competencies for extension directors and administrators. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 45(3), 22–33. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2004.03022>
- Moore, L. L., & Rudd, R. D. (2005). Extension leaders' self-evaluation of leadership skill areas. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 46(1), 68–78. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2005.01068>
- Moser, E. M., & McKim, A. J. (2020). Teacher retention: A relational perspective. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 61(2), 263–275. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2020.02263>
- Multi-Health Systems. (2023). *Emotional Quotient-Inventory 2.0*®. <https://storefront.mhs.com/collections/eq-i-2-0>
- Multi-Health Systems. (2024). *The reliability, validity, and fairness of the EQ-i 2.0*®. https://cdn.mhs.com/mhsdocs/Marketing_Files/Talent/EQ-i/EQ-i_Reliability_Validity_2022_Digital.pdf
- Murray, K., Flowers, J., Croom, B., & Wilson, B. (2011). The agricultural teacher's struggle for balance between career and family. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 52(2), 107–117. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2011.02107>
- Parrish, D. R. (2013). The relevance of emotional intelligence for leadership in a higher education context. *Studies in Higher Education*, 40(5), 821–837. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2013.842225>
- Paskewitz, E. A. (2021). Exploring the impact of emotional intelligence on family farm member conflict experiences. *Sustainability*, 13(15), 8486. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/su13158486>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. Sage Publications.
- Pozderac, M., Casey, T. T., & Kitchel, T. (2022). Insights from second generation agriculture teachers on career choice and identity. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 63(1), 47–61. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2022.01047>
- Roberts, R., English, C. W., & Alston, A. J. (2020). Fostering identity development in teacher preparation: Service-learning's role in empowering agricultural education majors to teach STEM concepts. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 61(3), 214–232. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2020.03214>
- Roberts, R., Wittie, B. M., Stair, K. S., Blackburn, J. J., & Smith, H. E. (2020). The dimensions of professional development needs for secondary agricultural education teachers across career

- stages: A multiple case study comparison. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 61(3), 128–143. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2020.03128>
- Rolfe, G. (2002). Reflective practice: where now? *Nurse education in practice*, 2(1), 21–29. <https://doi.org/10.1054/nepr.2002.0047>
- Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Sage Publications.
- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional Intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9(3), 185–211. <https://doi.org/10.2190/DUGG-P24E-52WK-6CDG>
- Shoulders, C. W. (2018). A Description of the professional identities of Arkansas agriculture teachers. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 59(3), 278–290. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2018.03278>
- Shoulders, C. W., & Myers, B. E. (2011). Considering professional identity to enhance agriculture teacher development. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 52(4), 98–108. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2011.04098>
- Siddique, M., Taseer, N. A., & Ahsaan, S. (2020). Teachers' emotional intelligence and teaching effectiveness: A correlational study. *Elementary Education Online*, 19(3), 2411–2417. <https://doi.org/http://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2020.03.735399>
- Smith, A. R., Smalley, S. (2018). Job Stress, Burnout, and Professional Development Needs of Mid-Career Agricultural Education Teachers. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 59(2), 305–320. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2018.02305>
- Sorensen, T. J., & McKim, A. J. (2014). Perceived work-life balance ability, job satisfaction, and professional commitment among agriculture teachers. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 55(4), 116–132. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2014.04116>
- Sorensen, T. J., McKim, A. J., & Velez, J. J. (2016). A national study of work-family balance and job satisfaction among agriculture teachers. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 57(4), 146–159. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2016.04146>
- Stringfield, S., & Stone III, J. R. (2017). The labor market imperative for CTE: Changes and challenges for the 21st century. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 92(2), 166–179. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2017.1302209>
- Surmiak, A. D. (2018). Confidentiality in qualitative research involving vulnerable participants: Researchers' perspectives. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 19(3). <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-19.3.3099>
- Taseer, N. A. (2020). Teachers' emotional intelligence and teaching effectiveness: A correlational study. *Ilkogretim Online*, 19(3), 2411–2417. <http://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2020.03.735399>
- Traini, H. Q., Claflin, K., Stewart, J., & Velez, J. J. (2019). Success, balance, but never both: Exploring reified forms of success in school-based agricultural education. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 60(4), 240–254. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2019.04240>
- Traini, H. Q., Yopp, A. M., & Roberts, R. (2020). The success trap: A case study of early career agricultural education teachers' conceptualizations of work-life balance. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 61(4), 175–188. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2020.04175>

- Traini, H. Q., Stewart, S., Velez, J. J. (2021). Navigating the Social Landscape of School-Based Agricultural Education: A Hermeneutic Phenomenology. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 62(1), 61–76. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2021.01061>
- van Manen, M. (2016). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action-sensitive pedagogy*. Routledge.
- van Manen, M. (2023). *Phenomenology of practice: Meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing*. Routledge.
- Yopp, A., McKim, B. R., Moore, L. L., Odom, S. F., & Hanagriff, R. (2017). A Multidimensional Needs Assessment of Social Emotional Learning Skill Areas. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 58(1), 186–206. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2017.01186>
- Zysberg, L., Orenshtein, C., Gimmon, E., & Robinson, R. (2017). Emotional intelligence, personality, stress, and burnout among educators. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 24, 122–136. <https://doi.org/10.1037/str0000028>