

MAKING AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER

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Who is responsible for making an effective teacher? This is a perplexing problem, and one where an initial hypothesis based on the usual generalizations could easily be in error. One tends to assume that those most directly concerned with the shaping of a new teacher would have the greatest influence, yet investigation reveals that this is often not the case. Those persons who have influenced teacher effectiveness form a broad spectrum of occupations and relationships and perhaps the most that can be said is that the reaction people have to one another is mysterious and especially difficult to categorize.

In an attempt to shed some light on this relationship, new teachers of agriculture were asked to list the four persons who were most responsible for contributing to their development toward an effective teacher. No conditions were attached to the selection, so that the new teacher would be free to name any person in any occupation and/or of any relationship. Only teachers who had been teaching less than five years were surveyed, so that those persons directing them into and helping them in teaching would be fresh in their memory. The table summarizes their responses.

Ranking of Persons Who Have Influenced New Teachers
Most in Helping Them Become an Effective Teacher

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>First Choice</u>	<u>Second Choice</u>	<u>Third Choice</u>	<u>Fourth Choice</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Teacher Educator	5	3	4	3	2
Parent	3	1		1	
Businessman or Farmer	1	1	1	2	
Principal or Superintendent		3		2	
Former Ag. Teacher	5	2	4	1	
College Teacher	4	7	7	8	
Supervising Teacher	5	6	4	3	
Elementary Teacher		1			
Military Personnel			1		
Colleague (student)	1		2		
Regional Supervisor (Agr.)			2	1	
Former High School Teacher (non-agriculture)		1	1	1	
Students	1				

It might be assumed that the teacher-educator and supervising teacher would be the most important people in helping a student develop into an effective teacher. However, in the group studied such is not necessarily the case, even though it might be argued that a different teacher-educator or a different supervising teacher, in any specific case, would show other results. Not to be overlooked is the influence of other college teachers and former agriculture teachers. While not mentioned in large numbers, parents were also indicated, so that some tie-in with home values and basic concepts of living seems important.

The study will be continued and will be expanded to determine more about how persons influenced new teachers in becoming effective.