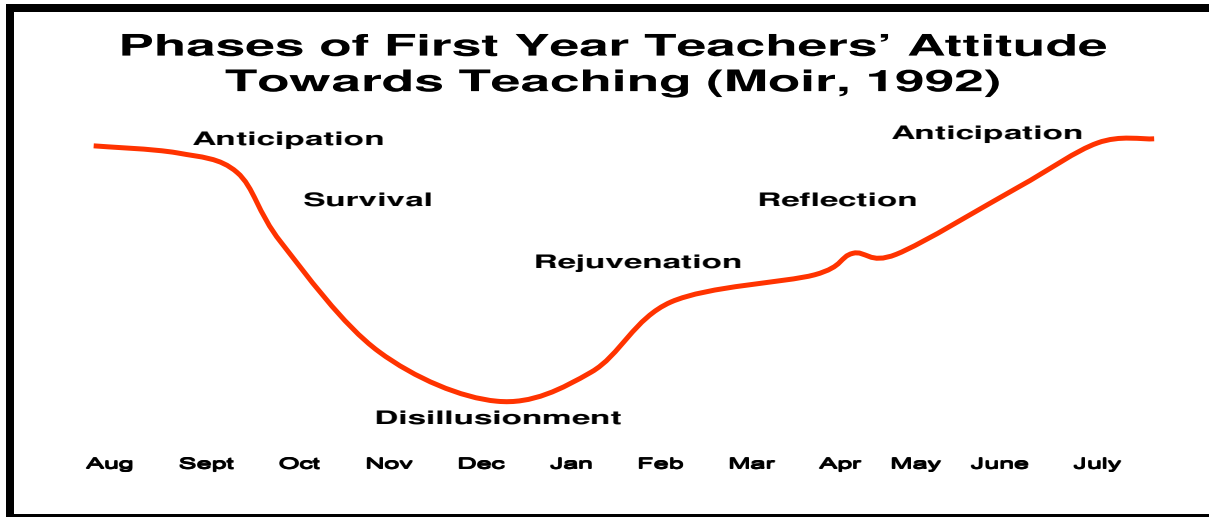


## Attitudinal Changes of Entry-Level Teachers: Explanations Provided by the Moir Model

Many people proclaim that attitude is everything—perhaps they are right! Moir and her staff studied the experiences of over 1000 teachers and established a summary and graphic representation of the changing attitudes of the teachers during their initial year of teaching. Many teachers and administrators affirm the face validity, phases or stages, and respective descriptions of each stage.



Moirs (1992) Change in Attitudes Curve for Entry-Level Teachers<sup>1</sup>

**The initial *anticipation* phase** begins during the student teaching experience. As discussed by Furlong and Maynard (1995), the beginning teacher has a tendency to romanticize the role and position of the teacher. Beginning teachers enter their jobs with a tremendous commitment to making a difference and a somewhat idealistic view of how to accomplish their goals. Feelings of excitement carry the new teachers through the first few weeks of school. They believe they are going to be the best teacher ever!

**The second phase is called *survival*.** After the anticipation experience ceases, reality strikes and the following month is often perceived as overwhelmingly difficult. The new teachers are learning a lot and at a rapid pace. Beginning teachers are instantly bombarded with a variety of problems and situations they had not anticipated, and are caught off guard by the realities of teaching. They struggle to keep their heads above water and become very focused on the day-to-day routine of teaching, with little time available to stop and reflect on their experiences. They often report spending up to 70 hours per week on schoolwork. In addition, they are overwhelmed by constant need to develop curriculum and instructional materials. They are not sure which instructional materials and strategies will work and many expend considerable effort thinking about and developing their lesson plans for the first time. During this time they will experience the negative consequences of poorly prepared lessons. Beginning teachers in this phase are surprised by the amount of work involved in being a teacher. These teachers usually are able to maintain a high level of energy through this phase. They report being hopeful the

stress and strain will subside and maintain belief in a light at the end of the tunnel. During this phase new teachers often feel alone and really desire that others will reach out to them.

**The *disillusionment* phase.** The beginning teachers realize things are not going as smoothly as earlier envisioned. Low morale leads to disenchantment with the job. They question their competence and commitment. The level of stress and worry often leads to bouts with illness. The situation is compounded by new events including back-to-school nights, parent-teacher conferences, and initial evaluations by the administrator. Many of the beginning teachers find that classroom management is more stressful than anticipated. The unexpectedly large time commitment brings complaints from family members and friends. Teachers in this phase express self-doubt, have lower self-esteem, and question their professional commitment. This is the toughest phase for many new teachers.

**The *rejuvenation* phase.** During this phase, beginning teachers experience a gradual improvement in their attitude toward teaching. This phase usually occurs after a break, when new teachers find time to reflect and invest more time in planning curriculum and instruction. They make an effort to prepare new and better instructional materials, and are ready to acknowledge their accomplishments while putting past problems behind them. Better understanding of the school system occurs along with an acceptance of the realities of teaching. Experience has taught them coping strategies and skills to prevent, reduce, or manage many problems they are likely to encounter in the second half of the year. The teachers experience some sense of relief as they realize only half of the year remains before they can take a break. During the rejuvenation stage, novice teachers focus more on curriculum and instructional materials development, long-term planning and teaching strategies. This phase often lasts into spring. As the phase starts to come to a close, the beginning teachers become more concerned about getting everything (i.e., units, tests, competency exams) completed by year's end as well as student performance and levels of achievement on various assessments.

**The *reflection* phase.** This is a somewhat invigorating time. Comments and feelings expressed in Moir's (1990) study reflected the personal assurance and satisfaction of completing the first stretch of teaching. During this phase the novice teacher can think back over the student teaching experience and highlight what did and didn't work. The teachers begin to think more about what they will do differently with regard to management, curricula, teaching strategies, resources, and any intra or extracurricular activities. They start to anticipate what it will be like with all of the changes they are envisioning.

***Anticipation, the final phase.*** As they finish student teaching and prepare for their first year of teaching, student teachers express a heightened sense of what they hope to accomplish in the classroom and laboratory settings. They have less concern for survival. They focus more on their impact on students, and less on themselves. They have greater concerns with quality instructional materials and teaching strategies than they did during the initial time of anticipation that occurred before and during the first couple of weeks of teaching.

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from: Joeger, R. M. & Bremer, C. (2002). *Teacher Induction Programs: A Solution for Retaining Secondary Career and Technical Education Teachers, Improving the Quality of Instruction, and Enhancing Student Achievement*. National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education, Ohio State University, Columbus:OH.