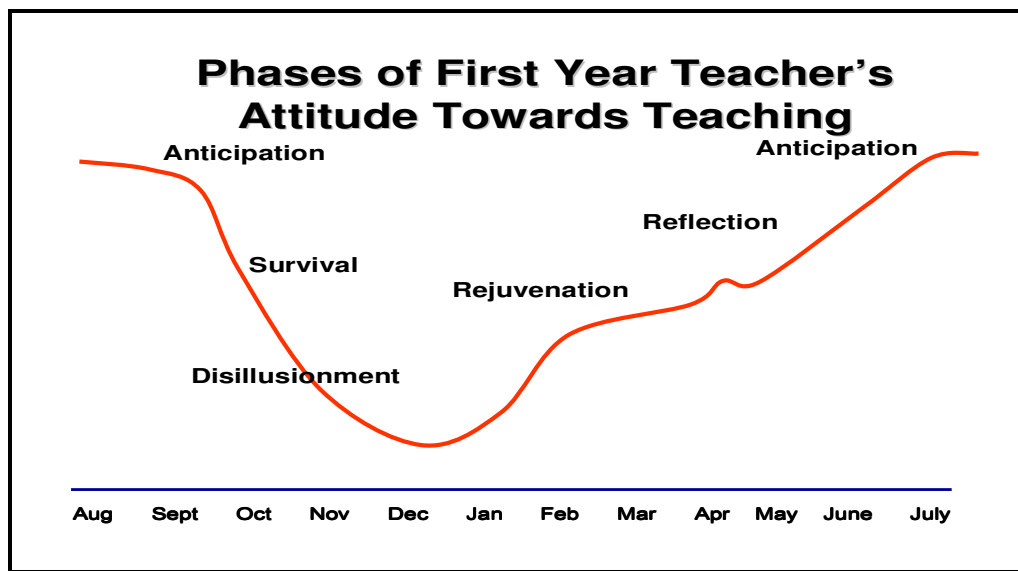


## **Promising Support and Assistance Activities for Use When Working With Entry-Level Teachers: Recommendations from Agricultural Education Teachers**



National FFA Teacher Induction and Mentoring Project  
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## Introduction

Project personnel desired to know what different stakeholders involved in the life of the entry-level agricultural education teacher should do to assist the entry-level teacher as they proceed their initial year of teaching. An on-line instrument was selected as the mechanism to collect data.

The forms of assistance listed in the instrument for each phase of the attitudinal development were derived from interviews with 8 agricultural education teachers from across the United States. Fifteen female and 45 male teachers of agricultural education completed an on-line or hardcopy of an instrument that sought to determine how strongly they recommend use of selected forms of support and assistance. On the average, the teachers had hosted five student teachers and formally mentored two entry-level teachers. The teachers, who averaged nearly 20 years of teaching experience, reported informally mentoring an average of eight teachers each.

Table X

*Characteristics of Agricultural Education Participants (N=60)*

Characteristics	M	SD
No. of student teachers hosted	5.2	8.3
No of entry-level teachers formally mentored	2.1	3.2
No. of entry-level teachers informally mentored?	8.3	7.1
No. of years of experience teaching middle, secondary, or post secondary Agricultural Education	19.7	9.3

What follows is an initially listing of the forms of support and assistance activities that 60 agricultural education teachers *strongly or very strongly recommended* they and peers use at different phases during the attitudinal development of entry-level agricultural education teachers. The phases for which forms of assistance were developed in the instrument were anticipation, survival, disillusionment, rejuvenation, reflection, and anticipation.

Table 1

*Strength of the Recommendation for Agricultural Education Teachers Use of Selected Forms of Assistance and Support During the Anticipation Phase (N=60)*

Support and Assistance Activities	M	SD
Answer the questions posed by the ELTs	5.4	1.0
Inform ELTs of individuals who can assist with expected tasks	5.4	0.7
Listen to the concerns, ideas, frustrations, joys, and solutions of the ELTs	5.4	0.8
Make sure that the ELTs are aware of various reports (e.g., annual FFA report, program standards, annual report of student enrollments) they must complete along with the corresponding deadlines	5.3	0.8
Assist the ELTs in selecting a suitable agricultural education teacher mentor	5.3	1.0
Provide ELTs with instructional materials and resources	5.1	0.9
Provide strategies for dealing with the pressures of teaching and advising the FFA	5.1	1.0
Share proven strategies for effectively managing time	5.0	1.1
Participate in informing ELTs about the nature and expectations of teaching	4.9	0.9
Provide a “who’s who checklist” within the state (department of education, NAAE) and the individual school district; this also includes “chain of command”	4.9	1.1
Provide the ELTs with a prioritized “things to do list” (survival guide) that will help them prioritize their daily efforts	4.8	1.1
Share ideas of how to effectively work with community members	4.8	1.0
Encourage the ELTs to attend the National FFA Convention	4.7	1.2
Observe the ELTs teaching, then provide encouragement	4.6	1.1
Encourage them to participate in the Dodge “Turn the Key” program	4.5	1.5

*Note:* Scale: Strength of Recommendation 6 = Very Strong, 5=Strong, 4 =Somewhat Strong, 3=Somewhat Weak, 2=Weak, 1=Very Weak.

Table 2

*Strength of the Recommendation for Agricultural Education Teachers Use of Selected Forms of Assistance and Support During the Survival Phase (N=60)*

Support and Assistance Activities	M	SD
Be accessible to listen and respond to the questions and concerns of the ELT	5.4	1.0
Offer and provide support and assistance	5.3	0.8
Take the ELTs along to professional teacher meetings and related events	5.3	0.9
Encourage them to communicate with peers, administrators, and other teachers	5.3	0.9
Express interest in the personal well-being	5.3	0.8
Encourage ELTs to communicate and interact on a regular basis	5.3	0.8
Ensure that the ELTs have copies of contact information for all members of the Ag Education team of the state	5.2	0.9
Encourage them by providing belief in their abilities to be a successful teacher and FFA advisor	5.2	0.8
Assist them in creating and or completing program forms (e.g., FFA rosters, state degrees, proficiency applications, officer applications, annual FFA reports, POAs, annual state department of education reports)	5.2	1.0
Assure them that they are having experiences that are typical for many ELTs	5.1	0.8
Assist ELTs with finding and securing teaching resources and materials	5.1	0.8
Express interest in their program	5.1	0.8
Discuss and share different instructional strategies that enhance student interest, engagement and achievement (e.g., different teaching strategies, assessment techniques, strategies for teaching reading, student behavior management)	5.0	0.9
Supply ELTs with proven strategies of how to effectively manage their time	5.0	0.9
Provide strategies of how to address the pressures of teaching	4.9	0.9
Assist by providing ideas for teaching and supervising SAE/WBL programs	4.9	0.9
Discuss the usefulness of various curriculum items with the ELTs	4.9	0.9
Assist in setting up a group meeting for ELT's	4.8	1.2
Ensure that the mentoring component of the teacher induction program is meeting the needs of the ELTs	4.7	1.5
When feasible, assist ELTs in getting to know their community	4.7	1.0

*Note:* Scale: Strength of Recommendation 6 = Very Strong, 5=Strong, 4 =Somewhat Strong, 3=Somewhat Weak, 2=Weak, 1=V. Weak.

Table 3

*Strength of the Recommendation for Agricultural Education Teachers Use of Selected Forms of Assistance and Support During the Disillusionment Phase (N=60)*

Support and Assistance Activities	M	SD
Provide encouragement and support	5.5	0.7
Be readily accessible to the ELTs in person or via telephone, and/or e-mail	5.4	0.9
Provide ELTs with requested instructional materials, information, and contact information	5.3	0.7
Clearly express that you and most other teachers had similar feelings and experiences as an entry-level teacher	5.3	1.0
Remind them that sometimes they need to take time for themselves and forget about being a teacher (learn to clock out occasionally as other jobs do every day)	5.3	1.0
Encourage them to take time for exercise, personal health, and wellness	5.1	1.1
Talk with the ELTs and find out what types of assistance and support you can provide	5.1	0.9
Encourage them to persevere and work hard	5.0	0.8
Personally meet or ensure that their assigned mentors meet with ELTs on an as-needed basis	5.0	1.4
Encourage the ELTs to focus their energies on effective student management	4.9	0.9
Encourage them by informing them that students likely appreciate them more than they show	4.9	0.9
Encourage the ELT to use the trimester or semester break to make changes to ensure the presence of a classroom atmosphere that supports student learning	4.8	1.1
Assure that the NAAE-affiliate sponsors a mid-year professional development activity for ELTs to address their challenges and needs	4.7	1.2
Encourage the ELTs to constantly improve their lesson planning efforts	4.6	1.0

*Note:* Scale: Strength of Recommendation 6 = Very Strong, 5=Strong, 4 =Somewhat Strong, 3=Somewhat Weak, 2=Weak, 1=Very Weak.

Table 4

*Strength of the Recommendation for Agricultural Education Teachers Use of Selected Forms of Assistance and Support During the Rejuvenation Phase (N=60)*

Support and Assistance Activities	M	SD
Be available to listen	5.5	0.8
Share syllabi or materials from your program	5.3	0.7
Share instructional resources with the ELTs	5.3	0.7
Encourage the ELTs to participate in activities of the NAAE-affiliate organization	5.2	0.9
Offer a variety of forms of support and assistance	5.2	0.8
Remind them of the importance of maintaining a balance among their teaching, FFA advising and SAEP supervisory roles.	5.2	0.7
Encourage them to communicate with other agricultural education teachers about needs for instructional materials and resources for the second half of the year	5.2	0.8
Discuss important and timely activities for managing the program with the ELTs (e.g., marketing, recruitment, retention, reflection, and SAE)	5.1	0.7
Assist the ELT with information and strategies for completing state degrees & proficiency applications	5.1	1.0
Encourage participation in school and/or NAAE-sponsored professional development activities such as the NAAE "Dodge Turn the Key Program"	4.9	1.4
Ask state, university, and/or NAAE-affiliate officers to provide for regional or professional meetings to discuss needs and challenges of ELTs	4.8	1.0
Remind them to assess the progress they are making on their annual professional goals	4.8	1.0
Inform the ELTs of the importance of creating curricula and identifying related teaching resources for the upcoming year	4.7	0.9
Remind them to have the materials prepared for course registration for the upcoming year	4.6	1.1
Encourage them to create a curriculum map (scope and sequence document with dates) for viewing their instructional activities for the remainder of the academic year	4.5	1.0
Encourage use of the NAAE technology website	4.5	1.2

*Note:* Scale: Strength of Recommendation 6 = Very Strong, 5=Strong, 4 =Somewhat Strong, 3=Somewhat Weak, 2=Weak, 1=Very Weak.

Table 5

*Strength of the Recommendation for Agricultural Education Teachers Use of Selected Forms of Assistance and Support During the Reflection Phase (N=60)*

Support and Assistance Activities	M	SD
Remind them of the importance of being present at the professional development activities of the upcoming summer conference that is sponsored by the NAAE-affiliate	5.6	0.7
Encourage them to have a recognition banquet to showcase the success of their students	5.4	0.9
Encourage the ELTs to stay and become more involved in the teaching profession if they have experienced a reasonable amount of success and satisfaction	5.4	0.7
Share ideas with the ELTs for officer training and preparation for CDE's, FFA banquet, and the state convention	5.3	0.8
Stress the importance of community involvement with the ELTs	5.2	0.8
Encourage the ELTs to use the advisory committee to assist with planning for the upcoming year	5.1	0.9
Celebrate the professional and FFA achievements of the ELTs	5.1	0.8
Stress the importance to ELTs of taking time to reflect and prepare for the upcoming academic year	5.0	0.9
Be sure the ELT continue to meet with their mentor(s)	5.0	1.1
Assist the ELTs in establishing realistic goals for the upcoming year	5.0	1.0
Ensure that the ELTs convene as a group to reflect upon their year, celebrate their successes, and plan for their futures	5.0	1.1
Advise ELTs to focus upon developing and delivering quality daily lessons and activities	5.0	0.9
Meet with the ELTs and model how to reflect upon the activities and outcomes of the year	4.8	1.1
Encourage the ELTs to express their appreciation to mentors, guides, teacher induction program personnel, and others who have assisted them throughout their initial year of teaching	4.6	1.0

*Note:* Scale: Strength of Recommendation 6 = Very Strong, 5=Strong, 4 =Somewhat Strong, 3=Somewhat Weak, 2=Weak, 1=Very Weak.

Table 6

*Strength of the Recommendation for Agricultural Education Teachers Use of Selected Forms of Assistance and Support During the Anticipation Phase (N=60)*

Support and Assistance Activities	M	SD
Encourage ELTs to attend the summer conference and workshops	5.8	0.5
Encourage ELTs to join professional teacher associations and groups	5.8	0.4
Encourage NAAE & other stakeholders to conduct beginning teacher workshops that fit the needs of ELTs	5.4	0.9
Be professional and develop a relationship with ELTs	5.4	0.8
Provide social opportunities for ELTs at NAAE-affiliate summer conference and meetings	5.2	0.9
Encourage ELTs to examine and revise old and write new curricula	5.1	0.9
Encourage the ELTs to re-evaluate appropriate family time	5.0	1.0
Encourage NAAE to develop and establish a support system that may deal with gender specific issues of ELTs	4.8	1.2
Discuss issues germane to young parents, especially females, such as maternity leave, finding substitutes, and how you give up a program for a lifetime event such as childbirth	4.7	1.3
Ask that the NAAE-affiliate promote spousal involvement and support system by encouraging spouses to attend the summer conference; by providing child care; and explaining how spouses can be involved in the teacher- spouse's teaching efforts	4.6	1.4
Encourage ELTs to attend the summer conference and workshops	5.8	0.5
Encourage ELTs to join professional teacher associations and groups	5.8	0.4
Encourage NAAE & other stakeholders to conduct beginning teacher workshops that fit the needs of ELTs	5.4	0.9
Be professional and develop a relationship with ELTs	5.4	0.8
Provide social opportunities for ELTs at NAAE-affiliate summer conference and meetings	5.2	0.9
Encourage ELTs to examine and revise old and write new curricula	5.1	0.9
Encourage the ELTs to re-evaluate appropriate family time	5.0	1.0
Encourage NAAE to develop and establish a support system that may deal with gender specific issues of ELTs	4.8	1.2
Discuss issues germane to young parents, especially females, such as maternity leave, finding substitutes, and how you give up a program for a lifetime event such as childbirth	4.7	1.3

*Note:* Scale: Strength of Recommendation 6 = Very Strong, 5=Strong, 4 =Somewhat Strong, 3=Somewhat Weak, 2=Weak, 1=Very Weak.

**Agricultural Education Teachers Views of the Qualities of Effective Mentors**  
Winter 2006

<b>Most Important Qualities of a Mentor</b>	<b>Second Most Important Qualities of A Mentor</b>	<b>Third Most Important Qualities of a Mentors</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Good Listener (18)</li> <li>➤ Available (6)</li> <li>➤ Caring (4)</li> <li>➤ Honest (4)</li> <li>➤ Approachable (3)</li> <li>➤ Shows Patience (3)</li> <li>➤ Supportive(3)</li> <li>➤ Encouraging (2)</li> <li>➤ Good Role Model (2)</li> <li>➤ Concerned</li> <li>➤ Cooperative</li> <li>➤ Empathy</li> <li>➤ Great Teacher</li> <li>➤ Informative</li> <li>➤ Initiates the Mentoring Experience</li> <li>➤ Knowledgeable</li> <li>➤ Proactive Communicator</li> <li>➤ Successful Experience as Teacher</li> <li>➤ Understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Available (6)</li> <li>➤ Listening Skills (6)</li> <li>➤ Encourager (5)</li> <li>➤ Knowledgeable (4)</li> <li>➤ Willing to share (4)</li> <li>➤ Empathetic (3)</li> <li>➤ Provide support &amp; assistance (3)</li> <li>➤ Helpful (2)</li> <li>➤ Honest (2)</li> <li>➤ Caring</li> <li>➤ Commitment</li> <li>➤ Confidant</li> <li>➤ Demonstrates understanding and empathy</li> <li>➤ Experienced</li> <li>➤ Friendly</li> <li>➤ Giver of resources</li> <li>➤ Offers constructive criticism</li> <li>➤ Organized</li> <li>➤ Positive influence</li> <li>➤ Professional</li> <li>➤ Responsible</li> <li>➤ Role model</li> <li>➤ Sensitive</li> <li>➤ Support of the teacher</li> <li>➤ Supportive of SAE/FFA Activities</li> <li>➤ Sympathetic</li> <li>➤ Willingness to offer help</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Available/Accessible (5)</li> <li>➤ Supportive (3)</li> <li>➤ Willing To Share (3)</li> <li>➤ Advises (2)</li> <li>➤ Communication Skills (2)</li> <li>➤ Confidant To New Teacher (2)</li> <li>➤ Helpful (2)</li> <li>➤ Professional (2)</li> <li>➤ Provide Options For Problems (2)</li> <li>➤ Role Model (2)</li> <li>➤ Caring</li> <li>➤ Concerned for the Mentee (2)</li> <li>➤ Effective Listener (2)</li> <li>➤ Dedicated Instructor</li> <li>➤ Encouraging</li> <li>➤ Exhibits Wisdom</li> <li>➤ Experience</li> <li>➤ Good Role Model</li> <li>➤ Honest</li> <li>➤ Knowledgeable</li> <li>➤ Maintains Confidentiality</li> <li>➤ Manages Time</li> <li>➤ Past Success</li> <li>➤ Patient</li> <li>➤ Personable Person</li> <li>➤ Proactive</li> <li>➤ Provide Encouragement</li> <li>➤ Provide Help With Curriculum</li> <li>➤ Provide Lessons</li> <li>➤ Provides Sources of Resources</li> <li>➤ Sense Of Humor</li> <li>➤ Shoulder To Rest On</li> <li>➤ Shows Appreciation</li> <li>➤ Sincere</li> <li>➤ Willingness to Assist</li> </ul>

**Agricultural Education Teachers Views of the Primary Challenges Facing  
Entry-Level Agricultural Education Teachers  
Winter 2006**

<b>Greatest Challenge Faced by Entry-Level Teachers</b>	<b>Second Greatest Challenge</b>	<b>Third Greatest Challenge</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Time Management (19)</li> <li>➤ Student Discipline (6)</li> <li>➤ Class Room Management (3)</li> <li>➤ Developing Teaching Materials (2)</li> <li>➤ Large Work Load (2)</li> <li>➤ Administration</li> <li>➤ Broad Range Of Curriculum</li> <li>➤ Dealing With Students Who Don't Like Change</li> <li>➤ Developing Self-Confidence</li> <li>➤ Family Comes First</li> <li>➤ Feeling Overwhelmed</li> <li>➤ Finding Information Needed About The FFA &amp; Ag</li> <li>➤ Frustrations Of The Job</li> <li>➤ Funds To Buy Instructional Supplies</li> <li>➤ Inadequate Resources</li> <li>➤ Lack Of Knowledge &amp; Skills</li> <li>➤ Lack Of Support From Administration</li> <li>➤ Maintaining Professionalism</li> <li>➤ Mental And Physical Exhaustion</li> <li>➤ Newness Of The Experience</li> <li>➤ Pressure From Self &amp; School To Perform</li> <li>➤ Prioritizing</li> <li>➤ Their Change The World Mentality</li> <li>➤ Understanding The Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Time Management (7)</li> <li>➤ Classroom Management (6)</li> <li>➤ Student Discipline (5)</li> <li>➤ Preparing Lesson Plans (3)</li> <li>➤ Parents (2)</li> <li>➤ Content knowledge (2)</li> <li>➤ Resources (2)</li> <li>➤ School Politics (2)</li> <li>➤ Acceptance By Community (2)</li> <li>➤ Access to Curriculum</li> <li>➤ Being Overwhelmed</li> <li>➤ Classroom Control</li> <li>➤ Conversion Of College Student To Professional</li> <li>➤ Dealing With Administrators</li> <li>➤ Dealing With Everything Else Besides Teaching</li> <li>➤ Duties Outside Of Ag Ed(Class Sponsor, Etc.)</li> <li>➤ Getting Comfortable With Surroundings</li> <li>➤ Insufficient Equipment &amp; Supplies</li> <li>➤ Knowing What To Do Next</li> <li>➤ Lack Of Student Respect</li> <li>➤ Motivating Students</li> <li>➤ Need Curriculum &amp; Instructional Materials</li> <li>➤ Not Being Overwhelmed</li> <li>➤ Other Commitments-Family, Etc.</li> <li>➤ Professionalism</li> <li>➤ Separating Yourself From The Students</li> <li>➤ Students with Diverse Backgrounds</li> <li>➤ Understanding Students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ FFA Knowledge, Activities &amp; Mgmt (6)</li> <li>➤ Understanding &amp; Working With Administration (6)</li> <li>➤ Time Management (4)</li> <li>➤ Community Involvement &amp; Acceptance (4)</li> <li>➤ Student Discipline &amp; Management (3)</li> <li>➤ Working with Parents (3)</li> <li>➤ Curriculum Sources(3)</li> <li>➤ Curriculum Formation (2)</li> <li>➤ Learning Subject Matter (2)</li> <li>➤ Learning How to Teach Subject Matter (2)</li> <li>➤ Achieving Balance In Program</li> <li>➤ Always Being Behind</li> <li>➤ Broad Knowledge Of Subject Matter</li> <li>➤ Burnout From Doing Too Much</li> <li>➤ Communicating With Others</li> <li>➤ Managing Budgets</li> <li>➤ Discipline</li> <li>➤ Feeling That They Must Do Everything In The First Year</li> <li>➤ Feeling Welcome</li> <li>➤ Finding Balance</li> <li>➤ Finding Time For Your Family</li> <li>➤ Keeping Their Head Above Water</li> <li>➤ Lack Of Confidence</li> <li>➤ Lack Of Experience</li> <li>➤ Lesson Planning And Preparation</li> <li>➤ Organization</li> <li>➤ Prioritizing</li> <li>➤ Show You Care</li> <li>➤ Sorting The Paperwork</li> <li>➤ Surviving the first year</li> <li>➤ Student Diversity</li> <li>➤ Need for a Support System</li> <li>➤ Taking Time To Relax</li> <li>➤ Trained In Another State</li> <li>➤ Trying To Do Too Much Too Soon</li> <li>➤ Vision</li> <li>➤ Work Ethic</li> </ul>



Table 7

*Phases During Which It Is Highly Important That Agricultural Education Teachers Conduct Selected Support & Assistance Activities With Entry-Level Teachers (N=60)*

Support and Assistance Activities	Recommended Phases to Conduct Support and Assistance Activities with ELTs						N/A
	Anticipation	Survival	Disillusionment	Rejuvenation	Reflection	Anticipation	
Show that you think highly of the ELT	33 55.0%	50 83.3%	46 76.7%	38 63.3%	31 51.7%	29 48.3%	0 0.0%
Serve as a role model for the ELT	44 73.3%	49 81.7%	44 73.3%	41 68.3%	39 65.0%	34 56.7%	0 0.0%
Interact socially outside of the school setting of the ELT	27 45.0%	32 53.3%	39 65.0%	31 51.7%	31 51.7%	27 45.0%	3 5.0%
Provide support and encouragement	40 66.7%	52 86.7%	51 85.0%	42 70.0%	37 61.7%	33 55.0%	0 0.0%
Show willingness to discuss the questions & concerns of the ELT	43 71.7%	47 78.3%	42 70.0%	38 63.3%	37 61.7%	31 51.7%	0 0.0%
Serve as a sounding board for the ELT	33 55.0%	42 70.0%	46 76.7%	39 65.0%	35 58.3%	27 45.0%	1 1.7%
Convey feelings of respect	36 60.0%	42 70.0%	43 71.7%	41 68.3%	40 66.7%	32 53.3%	2 3.3%
Serve as a confidant	33 55.0%	43 71.7%	46 76.7%	38 63.3%	36 60.0%	30 50.0%	1 1.7%
Be an individual the ELT may desire to emulate	46 76.7%	40 66.7%	36 60.0%	40 66.7%	40 66.7%	33 55.0%	2 3.3%
Show acceptance of the ELT as being a competent teacher & colleague	35 58.3%	39 65.0%	45 75.0%	40 66.7%	40 66.7%	36 60.0%	0 0.0%
Be someone the ELT can identify with	43 71.7%	45 75.0%	46 76.7%	39 65.0%	38 63.3%	32 53.3%	1 1.7%
Socialize with the ELT on a one-to-one basis outside of work	28 46.7%	26 43.3%	28 46.7%	31 51.7%	24 40.0%	24 40.0%	8 13.3%
Get together informally after work	28 46.7%	36 60.0%	32 53.3%	35 58.3%	31 51.7%	26 43.3%	7 11.7%
Share personal experiences as a perspective for informing the problems of the ELT	28 46.7%	41 68.3%	41 68.3%	39 65.0%	34 56.7%	29 48.3%	2 3.3%
Be a trustworthy professional acquaintance	47 78.3%	45 75.0%	45 75.0%	43 71.7%	44 73.3%	40 66.7%	2 3.3%

Note: <sup>1</sup> Frequency <sup>2</sup> Percentage of Second Year Teachers.