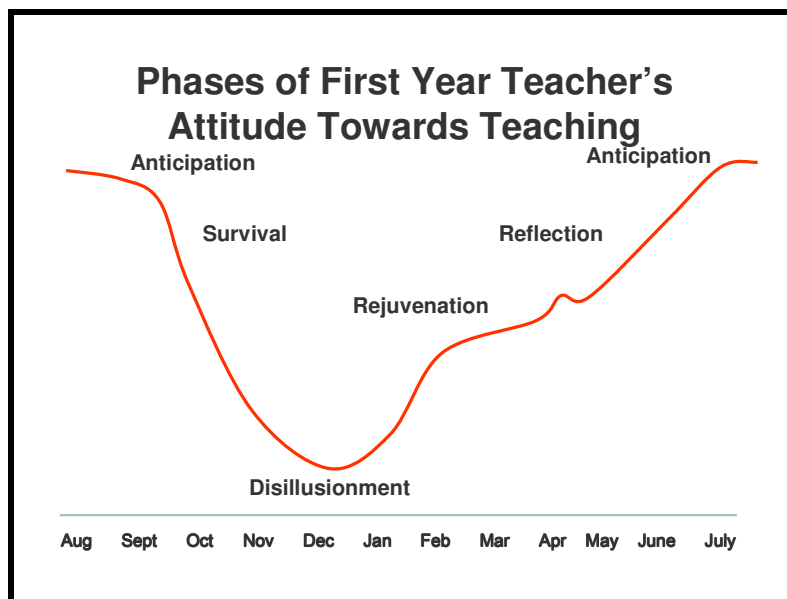


Promising Professional Support and Assistance Activities for Entry-Level Teachers: *What State Supervisors Can Do!*



Source: Moir, E. (1990, 1992)

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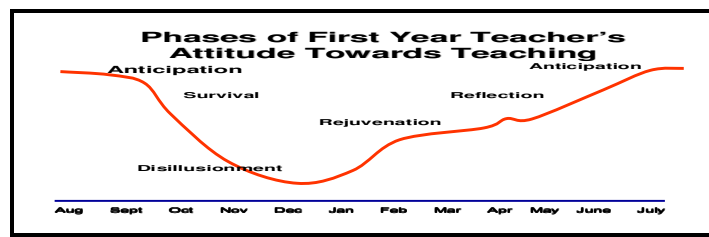
Promising Professional Support and Assistance Activities for Entry-Level Teachers: *What State Supervisors Can Do!*

Introduction

Recommendation for support and assistance of ELTs following each phase of changing attitudes (Moir, 1992) were secured from 33 state supervisors from across the USA. The forms of assistance listed in the instrument for each phase of the attitudinal development were derived from interviews with state supervisors from across the United States. Thirty-three state supervisors of agricultural education completed an on-line or hardcopy of an instrument that sought how strongly they recommended state supervisors use selected forms of support and assistance.

What follows is an initial listing of the forms of support and assistance activities that the 33 state supervisors *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.

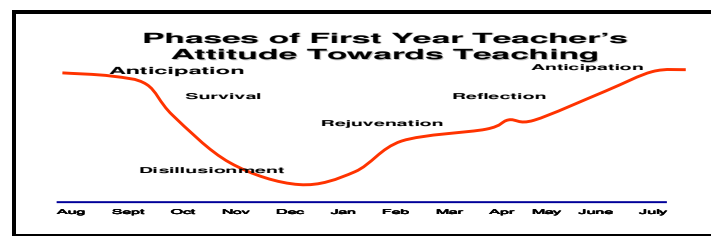
The characteristic feature of each phase will be initially presented; immediately following will be the forms of assistance that the state supervisors strong or very strongly recommend state supervisors conduct in each phase of attitudinal changes of the ELTs.



Anticipation Phase. The entry-level teacher (ELTs) has a tendency to romanticize the role and position of the teacher. ELTs initiate 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 days to weeks of school. They often believe they are going to be the best teacher their program has ever had, and that they have the skills, attitude, and dispositions to complete the role!

As noted on the graphic below, the anticipation phase characteristically occurs from the time entry-level teachers sign their contract through the early days of teaching in the fall. The summarized ratings from the state supervisors of agricultural education involved in this case study suggest that they **very strongly to strongly recommend** state supervisors implement the following forms of support and assistance with ELTs:

- Assist the ELT in identifying and selecting a suitable area agricultural teacher mentor.
- Assist the ELT prioritizing activities for successfully completing their job.
- Create a workshop for beginning teachers at the summer conference.
- Encourage ELTs to seek guidance, advise, support, and assistance from veteran agricultural education teachers.
- Enroll ELTs on the state and national list serve for all agricultural education teachers.
- Provide ELTs with a number of occasions to inform state supervisors and what resources they need in order to be effective and successful teachers.
- Provide ELTs with the LPS and other CD-ROMS available from respective states and the National FFA.
- Provide opportunities for ELTs to network with other teachers, state staff, resource people, university faculty, and policy-makers.
- Review the professional teaching, SAE/WBL supervising, and FFA advising responsibilities of the ELT (curriculum, forms, teaching activities, and professional activities).
- Visit the ELT at their school within the first month or two in the classroom.



Survival Phase. Entry-level teacher (ELTs) learn a lot at a rapid pace. They 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 school-related work and activities. In addition, they are overwhelmed by a 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 instructional plans for the first time. Much to their disappointment, they experience the negative consequences of poorly-prepared lessons. ELTs are surprised by the amount of work involved in being a teacher. They usually are able to maintain a high level of energy throughout this phase. They report being hopeful the stress and strain will subside and maintain belief there is 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.

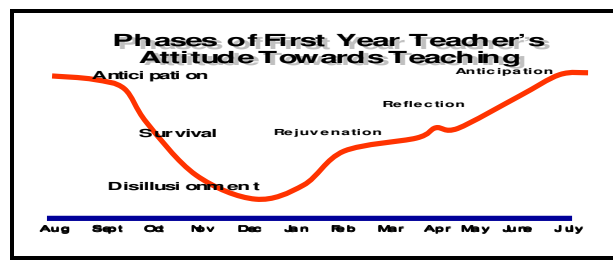
As noted on the graphic below, the survival phase usually occurs during the early days of the fall teaching assignment. The summarized ratings from the state supervisors of agricultural education involved in this case study suggest that they **very strongly to strongly recommend** state supervisors implement the following forms of support and assistance with ELTs:

- Assist ELTs, schools, and colleagues in addressing issues due to differences in the sex of the teachers (e.g., pregnancy and maternity leaves).
- Convey the importance of balancing one's professional and personal life.
- Establish environments at various gatherings for new teachers to build relationships with other ELTs who are having similar professional experiences.
- Establish special workshops for the ELTs to address challenges, gain information, and celebrate progress.
- In collaboration with NAAE-affiliate members, assure that the ELT rides with their mentor or another agricultural education teacher to professional and professional development meetings.
- Promote the value of the knowledge about teaching developed through experience and derived from theory and research.
- Provide access to resources by providing lists of quality vendors & web sites.
- Provide encouragement and advocacy for the ELTs whenever appropriate.
- Refer ELTs to individuals who can assist them with their concerns and needs.
- Supply information about models of teacher development and changes in attitudes during the first year of teaching to principals, ELTs, peers, in-school mentors, professional association members, and family members of ELTs.
- Use a variety of strategies to convince the ELTs the importance of meeting and interacting with the parents of students.
- Visit the ELT in their school.

Disillusionment Phase. The entry-level teacher (ELT) realizes 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 disillusionment phase may occur during the later days of the first and may last until the holiday break of the fall teaching assignment. The summarized ratings from the state supervisors of agricultural education involved in this case study suggest that they **very strongly to strongly recommend** state supervisors implement the following forms of support and assistance with ELTs:

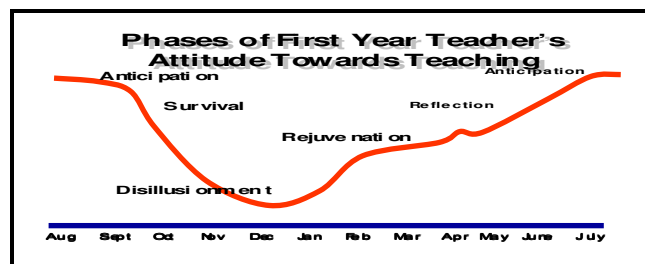
- Ask designated mentors, or guides, to provide support and assistance to ELTs.
- Assist ELTs in developing realistic teaching goals and expectations for their first year of teaching.
- Encourage ELTs to interact with other ELTs with a similar program.
- Encourage ELTs who have extremely high FFA expectations for students in schools without past FFA traditions to have patience.
- Encourage first year teachers to contact their network for support and assistance.
- Provide counselors and principals with ideas of how to provide appropriate support and assistance to ELTs as they proceed through Moir's phases.
- Provide ELTs with instruction regarding how to effectively manage their time.
- Provide instruction regarding how to secure funding for equipment and technology.
- Visit the ELT, if severe problems exist, remedy the challenge(s) immediately.



Rejuvenation Phase. During this phase, entry-level teachers experience a gradual improvement in their attitude toward teaching. 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 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).

As noted in the graphic, this phase usually occurs after a holiday break, when new teachers find time to reflect and invest more time in planning curriculum and instruction. The summarized ratings from the state supervisors of agricultural education involved in this case study suggest that they **very strongly to strongly recommend** state supervisors implement the following forms of support and assistance with ELTs:

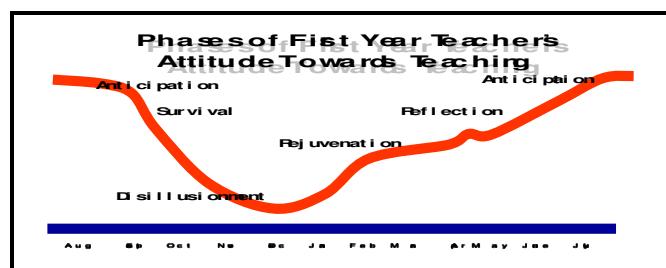
- Ask mentors to provide support and assistance to ELTs.
- Discuss how to justify and secure extended contracts.
- Encourage teachers to review their curriculum to identify ways to more effectively meet student needs.
- Encourage teachers to visit classrooms and programs outside their own program
- In order to improve their teaching, suggest that ELTs observe the teaching of highly-regarded master teachers.
- Offer encouragement to the ELTs.
- Provide a workshop that focuses on their needs surrounding events, CDEs, and applications of the FFA.
- Reflect on the successes, non-successes and events of the first semester.
- Use a list serv to provide materials, information, teaching tips, and encouragement



The Reflection Phase. This is a somewhat invigorating time. During this phase the ELT can reflect upon the successful and least effective instructional strategies and activities. The teachers begin to think more about what they will do differently in the future with regard to management, curricula, teaching strategies, resources, and any intra or extracurricular activities. They start to anticipate what teaching will be like with all of the changes they are envisioning.

During the reflection phase the comments and feelings expressed in Moir's (1990) study reflected the personal assurance and satisfaction associated with the ELT completing the first period of teaching. The summarized ratings from the state supervisors of agricultural education involved in this case study suggest that they **very strongly to strongly recommend** state supervisors implement the following forms of support and assistance with ELTs:

- Assist ELTs in creating a plan for summer activities.
- Continue to provide for the professional development needs of ELTs that were determined throughout the academic year.
- Determine the in-service needs of the ELTs.
- Discuss the implications of changing school districts; remind ELTs that moving will result in two first year experiences.
- Encourage ELTs to attend the state FFA convention.
- Encourage ELTs to identify curricula ideas that can strengthen their future program
- Encourage ELTs to schedule time for self, family, &/or other individuals.
- Encourage new teachers to attend a state wide meeting to get to know their colleagues.
- Encourage new teachers to meet with their advisory committees.
- Guide discussions about the merits of continuing their teaching careers in teaching.
- Instruct ELTs how to set goals and plan for the future direction of the program.
- Provide ELTs with ideas to plan SAE visits during the summer months.
- Provide encouragement and compliment them on their successes to date.
- Provide the setting for ELTs to meet as a group to identify and reflect upon successes and non-successes of their first year of teaching.
- Visit each ELT in their school.



Anticipation Phase II. As they finish their first year of teaching, entry-level 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.

As noted in the graphic, the end-of-year anticipation phase usually occurs toward the end of their first year of teaching. The ELTs express a heightened sense of what they hope to accomplish in the classroom and laboratory settings. The summarized ratings from the state supervisors of agricultural education involved in this case study suggest that they **very strongly to strongly recommend** state supervisors implement the following forms of support and assistance with ELTs:

- Assist ELTs in creating end-of-year evaluations and progress reports that reflect progress that is attributable to the teacher.
- Encourage ELTs to attend state department of education and NAAE-affiliate sponsored summer conferences, as well as other professional development activities.
- Encourage ELTs to be involved in all aspects of summer conference activities including recreational activities, meetings, and social activities.
- Encourage ELTs to collaborate with other teachers in their school.
- Encourage ELTs to schedule time for self, family, and/or other significant individuals.
- Encourage ELTs to set long term program and personal professional goals with advice from mentors in neighboring programs.
- Teach ELTs about the accountability needs of the state department of education. Assist ELTs in completing reports.

