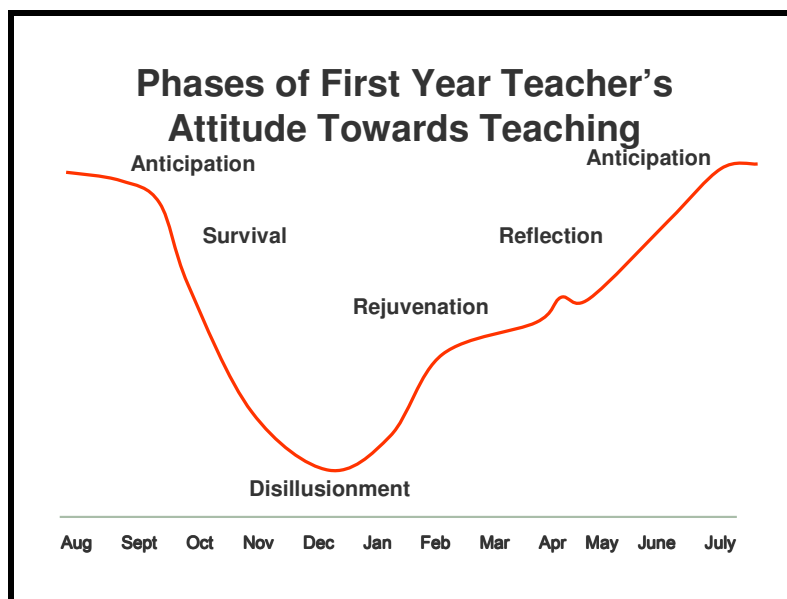


## Promising Psychosocial Support Activities For Entry-level Agricultural Education Teachers: *What State Supervisors Can Do!*



Source: Moir, E. (1990, 1992)

Richard Joerger, Lyle Westrom, Brad Greiman, Brian Warnick,  
Greg Thompson, Barry Croom, Jim Armbruster, and Brad King

2007

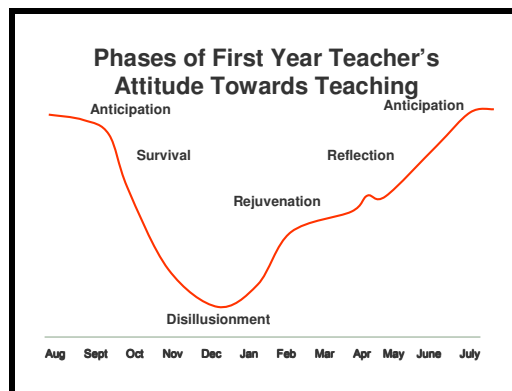
This is a product of the National Teacher Induction and Mentoring Project. This special project was funded  
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# Promising Psychosocial Support Activities For Entry-level Agricultural Education Teachers: *What State Supervisors Can Do!*

## Introduction

Recommendations for promising psychosocial support and assistance activities for entry-level teachers ( ELTs) were secured from 33 state supervisors from across the USA. The psychosocial forms of assistance included in the instrument were adapted from a valid and reliable instrument developed by Greiman (2002).

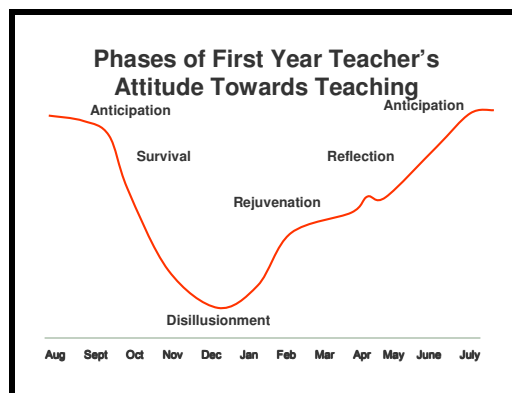
The characteristic feature of each phase of first year teacher's attitude towards teaching (Moir,1990;1992) is initially presented in this report. Following the description is an alphabetical listing of the psychosocial forms of support and assistance activities (Greiman, 2002) that 50% or more of the respondents indicated were highly important for practicing agricultural education teachers to implement with the ELTs. A complete summary of the recommendations for use of suggested psychosocial forms of assistance are located in the appendix.



**Anticipation Phase.** As discussed by Furlong and Maynard (1995), 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!

The psychosocial forms of support and assistance activities (Greiman, 2002) which 50% or more of the respondents indicated were **HIGHLY IMPORTANT** for state supervisors to implement with the ELTs during the **ANTICIPATION PHASE** were:

- Show that you think highly of the ELT
- Serve as a role model for the ELT
- Provide support and encouragement
- Show willingness to discuss the questions & concerns of the ELT
- Serve as a sounding board for the ELT
- Convey feelings of respect
- Serve as a confidant
- Be an individual the ELT may desire to emulate
- Show acceptance of the ELT as being a competent teacher & colleague
- Be someone the ELT can identify with
- Be a trustworthy professional acquaintance



**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.

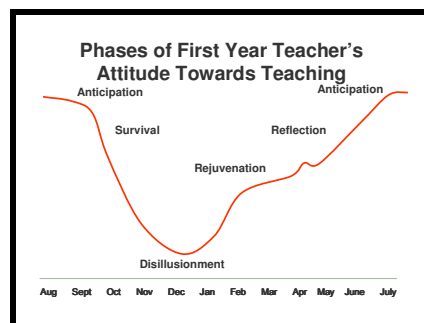
The psychosocial forms of support and assistance activities (Greiman, 2002) which 50% or more of the respondents indicated were **HIGHLY IMPORTANT** for state supervisors to implement with the ELTs during the **SURVIVAL PHASE** were:

- Show that you think highly of the ELT
- Provide support and encouragement
- Show willingness to discuss the questions & concerns of the ELT
- Serve as a sounding board for the ELT
- Convey feelings of respect
- Serve as a confidant
- Be an individual the ELT may desire to emulate
- Show acceptance of the ELT as being a competent teacher & colleague
- Be someone the ELT can identify with
- Share personal experiences as a perspective for informing the problems of the ELT
- Be a trustworthy professional acquaintance

**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 psychosocial forms of support and assistance activities (Greiman, 2002) which 50% or more of the respondents indicated were **HIGHLY IMPORTANT** state supervisors to implement with the ELTs during the **DISILLUSIONMENT PHASE** were:

- Show that you think highly of the ELT
- Provide support and encouragement
- Show willingness to discuss the questions & concerns of the ELT
- Serve as a sounding board for the ELT
- Convey feelings of respect
- Serve as a confidant
- Be an individual the ELT may desire to emulate
- Show acceptance of the ELT as being a competent teacher & colleague
- Be someone the ELT can identify with
- Share personal experiences as a perspective for informing the problems of the ELT
- Be a trustworthy professional acquaintance



**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).

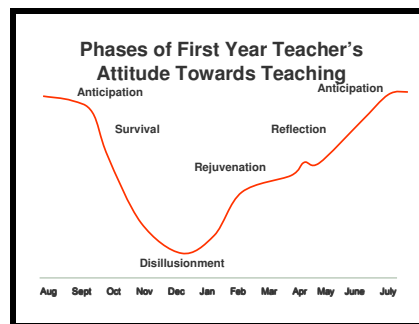
The psychosocial forms of support and assistance activities (Greiman, 2002) which 50% or more of the respondents indicated were **HIGHLY IMPORTANT** for state supervisors to implement with the ELTs during the **REJUVENATION PHASE** were:

- Show that you think highly of the ELT
- Provide support and encouragement
- Show willingness to discuss the questions & concerns of the ELT
- Serve as a sounding board for the ELT
- Convey feelings of respect
- Serve as a confidant
- Be an individual the ELT may desire to emulate
- Show acceptance of the ELT as being a competent teacher & colleague
- Be someone the ELT can identify with
- Share personal experiences as a perspective for informing the problems of the ELT
- Be a trustworthy professional acquaintance

**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 psychosocial forms of support and assistance activities (Greiman, 2002) which 50% or more of the respondents indicated were **HIGHLY IMPORTANT** for state supervisors to implement with the ELTs during the **REFLECTION PHASE** were:

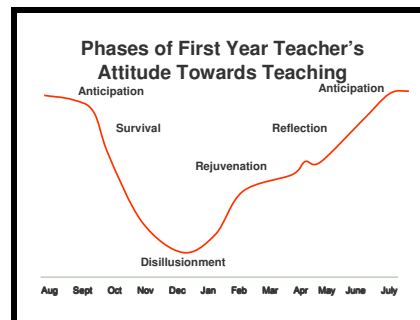
- Show that you think highly of the ELT
- Provide support and encouragement
- Show willingness to discuss the questions & concerns of the ELT
- Serve as a sounding board for the ELT
- Convey feelings of respect
- Be an individual the ELT may desire to emulate
- Show acceptance of the ELT as being a competent teacher & colleague
- Be someone the ELT can identify with
- Be a trustworthy professional acquaintance



**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 psychosocial forms of support and assistance activities (Greiman, 2002) which 50% or more of the respondents indicated were **HIGHLY IMPORTANT** for state supervisors to implement with the ELTs during the **ANTICIPATION PHASE** were:

- Show that you think highly of the ELT
- Serve as a role model for the ELT
- Provide support and encouragement
- Show willingness to discuss the questions & concerns of the ELT
- Convey feelings of respect
- Serve as a confidant
- Be an individual the ELT may desire to emulate
- Show acceptance of the ELT as being a competent teacher & colleague
- Be a trustworthy professional acquaintance



## **Appendix**

Table 1

*Phases During Which It Is Highly Important That State Supervisors Conduct Selected Support & Assistance Activities (N=33)*

Support and Assistance Activities	Recommended Phases to Conduct Support and Assistance Activities with ELTs						
	Anticipation	Survival	Disillusionment	Rejuvenation	Reflection	Anticipation	N/A
Show that you think highly of the ELT	27 <sup>1</sup>	25	26	23	22	22	0
	81.8 <sup>2</sup>	75.8	78.8	69.7	66.7	66.7	0
Serve as a role model for the ELT	25	23	22	22	19	18	0
	75.8	69.7	66.7	66.7	57.6	54.5	0
Interact socially outside of the school setting of the ELT	16	14	13	15	9	12	7
	48.5	42.4	39.4	45.5	27.3	36.4	21.2
Provide support and encouragement	27	26	24	23	22	20	0
	81.8	78.8	72.7	69.7	66.7	60.6	0
Show willingness to discuss the questions & concerns of the ELT	23	25	26	24	21	18	0
	69.7	75.8	78.8	72.7	63.5	54.5	0
Serve as a sounding board for the ELT	18	23	26	19	20	13	0
	54.5	69.7	78.8	57.6	60.6	39.4	0
Convey feelings of respect	22	22	24	23	23	17	0
	66.7	66.7	72.7	69.7	69.7	51.5	0
Serve as a confidant	17	23	25	17	17	15	1
	51.5	69.7	75.8	51.5	51.5	45.5	3.0
Be an individual the ELT may desire to emulate	19	18	17	21	20	22	0
	57.6	54.5	51.5	63.6	60.6	66.7	0
Show acceptance of the ELT as being a competent teacher & colleague	8	21	21	22	22	18	0
	24.2	63.6	63.6	66.7	66.7	54.5	0
Be someone the ELT can identify with	19	17	19	17	19	16	2
	57.6	51.5	57.6	51.5	57.6	48.5	6.1
Socialize with the ELT on a one-to-one basis outside of work	8	6	7	6	7	7	15
	24.2	18.2	21.2	18.2	21.2	21.2	45.5
Get together informally after work	10	9	11	7	9	5	12
	30.3	27.3	33.3	21.2	27.3	15.2	36.4
Share personal experiences as another perspective for informing the problems of the ELT	16	22	20	21	15	13	2
	48.5	66.7	60.6	63.6	45.5	39.4	6.1
Be a trustworthy professional acquaintance	28	26	27	27	26	24	0
	84.8	77.8	81.8	81.8	78.8	72.7	0

Note: <sup>1</sup> Frequency <sup>2</sup> Percentage of State Supervisors.

