Starting Out: Experiences of New Faculty at a Teaching University

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Most faculty find their first years at an institution stimulating but stressful. Little is known about how faculty cope during this critical time in their lives or what kinds of institutional support would be most useful to them. Within the last ten years, however, new faculty have come increasingly under study. Fink (1984) interviewed 83 first-year geography faculty and pinpointed six factors that significantly affected both their performance and their professional satisfaction: the type of contract they had, the completion of their dissertations, the size of their initial teaching load, the strength of their identification with the institution, the degree to which it was possible for them to find companionship with colleagues, and the extent to which they could relate successfully to students.

In 1985, Turner and Boice (1987) began a longitudinal study of all newly hired faculty at a large, commuter, teaching-oriented university. Interviews with an initial sample of 66 new faculty indicated these faculty were experiencing significant job-related stress growing out of a lack of anticipated collegiality, less than satisfactory student evaluations of their teaching, and anxiety about meeting minimal requirements of scholarly activity. By 1988, 185 new faculty had participated in this study. Analysis of the cumulative data on collegiality (Boice, in press) revealed that the new faculty felt neglected and overworked for a surprisingly long period of time, taking up to four years before experiencing satisfactory levels of job comfort; that faculty, like corporate employees, became more autonomous and less affiliative with age; and that the ease with which new faculty adjusted appeared to be related to the extent to which they were resilient when faced with...
frustrations, had insight into their situations, and identified with their institution.

Sorcinelli (1988) conducted a study of 54 new faculty at a large research-oriented university. She found that although the majority of the new faculty were enthusiastic about their work and the opportunities it provided, their generally high level of morale was tempered with concerns about heavy workloads, lack of collegiality, low levels of scholarly productivity, incongruities between the demands of teaching and the reward structure, inequities in resource allocation, and the balancing of work and personal life.

Although informative and thought-provoking, the value of these studies is limited by their being restricted to specific groups, single campuses, and/or one year of inquiry. More recent works are beginning to overcome these shortcomings. One study of approximately 200 new faculty as teachers (Boice, 1991b) analyzes data gathered on two campuses over a period of three years. Boice determined that new faculty, both those on a teaching campus and at a research institution, were slow to develop personally satisfying and effective teaching styles. Fearful of receiving poor student evaluations, they taught cautiously and defensively, limiting themselves to conservative teaching strategies and over-preparing for lectures at the expense of other professional activities. Tending to blame external factors for their problems, the new faculty were unlikely to seek help. Those who did, however, showed measurable improvements in job satisfaction, student evaluations, and overall productivity.

A companion study of new faculty as scholarly writers (Boice, 1991a) is based on nine years of work with over 325 new faculty on three campuses. It shows that the majority of new faculty at both teaching and research institutions spend significantly more time preparing for their classes than they do engaging in scholarly writing, putting off writing until they feel their teaching is under control; that when they do write, they tend to work in counter-productive binges; and that they publish fewer manuscripts than the number expected for tenure. Study of the new faculty who prove to be successful as publishers indicates that they display a positive attitude toward their students, colleagues, and work; become members of active collegial networks; and learn to balance the time they spend on teaching-related activities and scholarship.

These longitudinal, cross-campus studies provide a more comprehensive view of the initial stage of an academic career than was previously available. The investigations, however, continue to be somewhat limited in scope. Researchers need to broaden further their inquiries to include new faculty at other types of institutions not yet studied if they are to differentiate with
confidence between general characteristics and idiosyncratic patterns on individual campuses.

This report describes the first semester of a longitudinal study of new faculty at a comprehensive, residential, coeducational state university that enrolls approximately 11,500 students, most of whom are traditional students between 18 and 22 years of age. The purpose of the study is to provide information of both practical and theoretical value. On one level it seeks to discover how the new faculty at a particular university are faring in terms of establishing collegial relationships, developing effective teaching styles, and becoming productive scholars, so that the institution may better support their efforts to master the professorial role. On another level it attempts to augment the literature on faculty career patterns by comparing faculty at a residential, teaching university with their colleagues at other types of institutions.

Methods

Subjects

The subjects in this study were all new faculty hired to fill full-time, tenure-track positions at a medium-sized, comprehensive state university. Due to a budget crisis at the institution in which the inquiry was initiated, only 12 such faculty were hired for fall 1990—approximately one-third the usual number. Ten of the new faculty agreed to participate in the study; one maintained he was too busy to do so; and another had unresolvable concerns about confidentiality. Of the 10 who agreed to participate, four had three or more years of full-time teaching experience at other campuses, five had taught less than two years since receiving their doctorates, and one was beginning a teaching career after having worked in business. In this report, the new faculty with three or more years of experience will be referred to as “experienced”; the others will be grouped together and referred to as “inexperienced.”

The new faculty represented a wide range of disciplines from all colleges on campus. Five of the six inexperienced faculty were women. Three of the four experienced faculty were men. Five of the inexperienced and three of the experienced new faculty were hired at the assistant professor level. One inexperienced new person, the individual with the business background, and one person with prior teaching experience, were hired as associate professors. None was hired with tenure.
Interview Protocol

The new faculty in this study were interviewed during fall 1990 to determine how they were functioning as colleagues, teachers, and researchers and how their first semester experiences on campus compared with those of their peers at other institutions.

Initial contact was made with each new faculty member by letter: the nature of the study was described, measures to ensure confidentiality were explained, and the faculty member's assistance was requested. The researcher then set up appointments by telephone and sent confirmation letters. Each interview was held in the faculty member's office and lasted approximately one hour.

The interview protocol was designed to elicit both qualitative and quantitative data.* Qualitative data were collected with open-ended questions ("How does this campus differ from the others you have been on?"). Quantitative data were gathered through the use of questions asking the faculty either to specify numbers of things ("How many hours do you typically spend per week writing manuscripts for publication?") or to rate their experiences using a 10-point Likert scale ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 10 ("Rate yourself as a teacher compared to your peers"). Depending upon the individual faculty member's interests, any question could prove to be the springboard for a more in-depth discussion. The interviews did, in fact, tend to be conversational rather than "question and answer" in style.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected during these interviews were categorized according to theme and tone to reveal common areas of concern and patterns of behavior. Medians and percentages were computed for the quantitative responses to determine relative significance and to facilitate comparison. In this paper, all reported ratings are the medians of the responses given by the new faculty in answer to questions requiring the use of the Likert scale.

The data gathered in this present study were analyzed in two contexts. From an intra-institutional perspective, the interview questions sought to determine how successful the new faculty were at establishing collegial relations, developing effective teaching styles, and becoming productive scholars. Similarities and differences between the responses of inexperienced and experienced faculty at the university were noted.

*Copies of the interview instrument may be obtained from the author.
From an inter-institutional perspective, the interviews elicited information that allowed comparisons to be made between the faculty at this university and those at previously studied institutions (Boice, in press, 1991a, 1991b; Boice & Turner, 1989; Fink, 1984; Sorcinelli, 1988; Turner & Boice, 1987). In some cases (Fink, 1984; Sorcinelli, 1988), such comparisons could only be general in nature given the different research designs used in the various studies. However, since the interview format in the present study was essentially the same as that used by Boice (1991b), it was possible to draw specific analogies between the new faculty in his samples and those interviewed in this study.

Results

Workloads

There was considerable variety in the number of courses each new faculty member was teaching during his or her first semester on campus. Although the standard teaching load is 12 credit hours per semester, the actual number of hours the new faculty had been assigned ranged from 6 to 12. The median number of hours assigned the inexperienced new faculty was 8.5; experienced new faculty were assigned a median of 9 hours. Release time, when granted, was usually for specific duties such as supervision of student teachers and administration of departmental programs; it was not routinely given due to new faculty status although some departments did arrange for new faculty to have reduced loads their first semester.

Table 1 gives the median number of hours the new faculty estimated they spent per workweek on various professional activities. As the table indicates, the new faculty's schedules were dominated by teaching and teaching-related activities: lecture preparation, grading, and contact with students outside of class. The latter included academic advising, working with student clubs and organizations, and informal counseling of students having personal or course-related problems. Little time was spent on scholarly writing, even less on such activities as reading, research, and grant-writing.

When asked to rate their current level of busyness, inexperienced new faculty gave a rating of 8; experienced new faculty, of 8.5. Although these ratings were high, 80% of the new faculty described some previous time in their lives as having been clearly more stressful. These included such situations as working part time while trying to finish a dissertation, having to meet the externally imposed deadlines of administrative jobs, and past events in their personal lives like having a new baby and a new job at the
same time. Nonetheless, the new faculty were frustrated by the lack of time. They could not do all the course preparation they felt was necessary; they greeted questions on how much time they were spending on scholarly work with laughs; and they were concerned about not having time to meet people and make friends. For example, one faculty member said she had turned down a number of invitations to go out to lunch because she was "just too busy."

Collegial Support

The new faculty reported being quite satisfied with the collegial support they had found on campus so far. None of the new faculty felt ignored or isolated. When asked to rate the quality of support they were getting on campus, 33% of the inexperienced new faculty and 75% of the experienced ones reported receiving high levels of overall collegial support, giving a rating of 8 or above. Even those reporting lower levels of collegiality were not dissatisfied; all the remaining new faculty gave a rating of 7 when asked to evaluate the quality of collegial support they were receiving.

The new faculty estimated that over half of their collegial interactions involved small talk and gossip about department and university politics. Almost one third, however, centered around teaching. Sixty-seven percent of the inexperienced new faculty said they were part of a network that discussed teaching; 75% percent of the experienced new hires said they were. These networks were all departmentally based. Typical comments made during the interviews were: "Teaching is the main topic of discussion in my

<table>
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<th>Academic Activity</th>
<th>Background of New Faculty</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inexperienced</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture preparation:</td>
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<td>Grading:</td>
<td>7.00</td>
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<td>Student contact:</td>
<td>6.00</td>
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<td>Reading:</td>
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<td>Research:</td>
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<td>Grants:</td>
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<td>Writing:</td>
<td>2.25</td>
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department”; “My whole department commonly talks about teaching”;
“Teaching is job number one—there’s lots of discussion about it in the
department.” The new faculty also frequently described themselves as col-
laborating in teaching with senior colleagues, 67% of the inexperienced new
faculty and 100% of the experienced ones saying they were doing so.

To the disappointment of most of the new faculty, collegial interactions
were unlikely to focus on topics relating to research. The new faculty often
mentioned that no one on campus shared their particular research interests.
New and senior faculty rarely talked about scholarly work; new faculty
occasionally did so among themselves. Thirty-three percent of the inexperi-
enced and 50% of the experienced new faculty could describe a network for
discussing research, scholarship, and writing. However, while the teaching
networks were all departmentally based, faculty often had to go farther afield
to find people with whom to discuss research activities. One of the research
networks mentioned was a Women’s Studies group, another was a college
research group that one joined by invitation only; the new faculty member
had not been asked to participate. New faculty were also less likely to be
collaborating with senior faculty in research than in teaching. Only 17% of
the inexperienced and 67% of the experienced new faculty reported being
engaged in some collaborative research or writing project.

High levels of collegial support appeared significantly more desirable
to the inexperienced new faculty than to their experienced newly hired
colleagues. When asked to rate their own need for collegiality, 67% of the
faculty new to academe rated it as being important to them (a rating of 7 or
above); only 25% of those with previous experience did so.

The new faculty seemed relatively proactive and effective in estab-
lishing collegial interactions. All had substantive weekly interactions with at
least three people in their departments. Eighty-three percent of the inexperi-
enced and 50% of the experienced new faculty said they had sought out senior
faculty for advice. One inexperienced new faculty member noted that no one
had “butted into her business,” but that she had been the one to ask for
suggestions on how to handle problems she was having. She felt this was
appropriate. All but one of the new faculty had campus colleagues with whom
they pursued off-campus friendships.

Teaching

As previously noted, all the new faculty spent the majority of their
workweeks engaged in teaching and teaching-related activities. During the
interviews they were asked to label their teaching styles as (1) a “lecturer/fact
and principles” style in which the teacher lectures in order to explain
important facts and principles; (2) a “lecturer/interactive” style in which the teacher lectures but elicits significant student interaction; or (3) a “facilitator/class discussion” style in which the teacher serves as a facilitator of class discussions. The new faculty most often described their teaching styles as “lecturer/interactive,” 83% of the inexperienced and 25% of the experienced new faculty doing so. None of the inexperienced, but 25% of the experienced, new faculty reported using a “facilitator/class discussion” style of teaching. The remaining new faculty all said their subject areas demanded that they devote their time to imparting facts and principles to their students.

All the new faculty were able to respond quickly to questions about their strengths and weaknesses as teachers and to describe what plans they had to change how they were handling their classes. New teachers most commonly noted as strengths their enthusiasm and enjoyment of teaching; as weaknesses, their lack of experience and tendency to be disorganized. The new faculty with teaching experience stressed their skill at organizing and presenting their subjects. The weaknesses they described were varied, but all expressed concern about failing to engage students in the most productive manner. For example, one experienced faculty member said, “I mistake teaching for just getting out information. I’m torn between this and having students learn to think.”

The new faculty all expressed a desire to excel at teaching and believed that good teaching was expected of them. When asked to rate the level of campus pressure they felt to succeed as teachers, inexperienced faculty gave a rating of 7, experienced faculty of 8. When asked to consider the level of their own desire to do well in this area, inexperienced faculty gave a rating of 9, experienced ones of 8.25.

Given these figures, it is not surprising that every new faculty member talked at length about plans to improve his or her teaching. Both inexperienced and experienced teachers most frequently described wanting to change their teaching methods to be more interactive. Following this, they had plans to modify the content of their courses and, occasionally, to completely redesign them.

In discussing their plans to improve their teaching, the new faculty, especially those without prior teaching experience, often mentioned consulting senior colleagues. Fifty percent of the inexperienced new teachers said they were modeling themselves after colleagues in their departments, and 83% had asked senior faculty for advice on their teaching. As one might expect, these percentages were lower for the experienced new hires: 25% reported modeling themselves after colleagues, 50% had asked for teaching-related advice.
None of the new faculty had received any feedback on their teaching. Although one third of the inexperienced and one half of the experienced new faculty had participated in peer reviews of teaching at other institutions, none had had their teaching evaluated by colleagues on their new campus. Lack of time, worries about imposing on others, and feelings of self-consciousness were all given as reasons for not requesting such collegial sharing. Formal student evaluations were still weeks away and no one had considered designing and using their own in-course evaluations. Most faculty believed they could gauge how their courses were going by noting how their students behaved in class.

Scholarly Writing

No faculty member reported spending a significant percentage of his or her workweek engaged in research or scholarly writing. Although one or two of the new faculty mentioned wanting to devote more time to writing in the future, none expressed particular anxiety about their current level of activity or felt that they had a significant problem with writing blocks. When asked to compare the amount of pressure they felt from their colleagues to publish with their own internal desire to do so, inexperienced new faculty gave a moderate rating of 5.5 for the amount of campus pressure they experienced, and a fairly high rating of 7.5 for the amount of internal pressure they felt. Experienced faculty rated the levels of pressure at 2.5 and 10, respectively.

Inexperienced new faculty had published a median of 1.5 articles before arriving on campus; their experienced new colleagues had published 5.5. The inexperienced new faculty hoped to publish between one and two articles per year and felt fairly confident of their ability to do so, giving a rating of 7 to the question of how realistic their publication plans were. In fact, 67% had manuscripts they expected to have published during the fall semester. The remaining 33% all had articles they planned to complete and submit to refereed outlets within the next several months. These papers were all based on work in progress when the faculty came to campus.

The experienced new faculty were both somewhat more ambitious and less confident than their inexperienced peers; they hoped to publish a median of two articles per year and rated their chances of doing so at 6.5. All the experienced faculty had manuscripts they expected to have published during the fall semester; all also had articles or books they hoped to complete and submit in the near future.

The new faculty were not readily able to discuss their strengths and weaknesses as writers. "Well, I'm not sure," was often the first response. After reflection, most of the new faculty decided that their main strength as
writers was their ability to be clear and well-organized. Although expressed in various ways, their perceived weaknesses tended to center around not being sufficiently disciplined: "I'm not systematic"; "I only work in binges"; "I don't want to revise."

The new faculty had a long list of strategies they used to help themselves write. Experienced new faculty most often mentioned the importance of getting something down on paper first and then doing extensive revisions. Inexperienced faculty most often mentioned (and mentioned with equal frequency) scheduling time to write, thoroughly planning and outlining papers, and being deadline driven. The desirability of having lengthy periods of time in which to write went almost without saying. Most of the new faculty were planning to write during their fall and Christmas vacations.

The new faculty often mentioned they had been hired with the expectation that they would be engaged in more scholarly work than their senior colleagues. Although no one thought that he or she was expected to be solely a researcher, all of the experienced and 50% of the inexperienced new faculty believed they had been hired to give equal weight to research and teaching activities. Although this campus has instruction as its primary mission, with

| TABLE 2 |
|------------------|------------------|
| Percentage of New Faculty Indicating Primary Interest in Teaching or in Research and Their Perceptions of Senior Faculty Preferences |
| Area of Primary Interest Faculty Group | Background of New Faculty |
| Inexperienced | Experienced |
| Teaching New faculty | 33% (N=2) | 0% |
| Senior faculty | 50% (N=3) | 75% (N=3) |
| Research New faculty | 17% (N=1) | 25% (N=1) |
| Senior faculty | 0% | 0% |
| Equal interest New faculty | 50% (N=3) | 75% (N=3) |
| Senior faculty | 33% (N=2) | 0% |
| Interests vary New faculty | 17% (N=2) | 25% (N=1) |
scholarship playing a complementary role, none of the experienced and only 33% of the inexperienced new faculty said they were primarily interested in teaching. As Table 2 reveals, the new faculty perceived themselves as being different from their senior colleagues in this respect: 50% of the inexperienced and 75% of the experienced new faculty believed that the senior faculty were primarily interested in instruction.

The new faculty were uniformly unclear about departmental expectations for promotion and tenure. They were unsure how much publication was expected of them and how Departmental Personnel Committees would evaluate and weigh teaching activities and scholarly work. Table 3 is a comparison of the percentage of new faculty who believed DPCs should either emphasize teaching or research and their perceptions of what DPCs actually did consider to be most important. As the table shows, most new faculty thought that teaching and research should be given equal consideration in retention, tenure, and promotion decisions, but few believed this was likely to occur. When asked what they thought DPCs would value most when making promotion and tenure decisions, new faculty usually expressed befuddlement: “I don’t know. I asked people and got mixed messages”; “I would like to know the answer to that question”; “I wish I knew. You have

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<th>Experienced</th>
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<td>Ideal DPCs</td>
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<td>25% (N=1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Real DPCs</td>
<td>33% (N=2)</td>
<td>50% (N=2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Ideal DPCs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Real DPCs</td>
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<td>Equal value</td>
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<td>25% (N=1)</td>
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<td>Ideal DPCs</td>
<td>33% (N=2)</td>
<td>25% (N=1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Real DPCs</td>
<td>33% (N=2)</td>
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to teach at a certain level but you are evaluated based on your publications"; "I don’t know. I think you have to teach well and that publishing is just the icing on the cake." Despite this confusion, most of the new faculty felt quite confident they would be granted tenure in due course. When asked to rate the likelihood of this occurring, experienced faculty gave a rating of 9.5, inexperienced faculty of 8.

Discussion

Workloads

Two aspects of the workload on the campus under study are noteworthy. One is that there was a considerable range in the number of hours the new faculty were assigned to teach. Most of this resulted from the new faculty being granted various amounts of release time for other assigned duties; some, however, arose from their being given lighter loads to help ease the transition into their new careers. Since there is no official campus-wide policy sanctioning release time due to new faculty status, departments differed with respect to what they were able and willing to work out for their new faculty.

A second point worth noting is that new faculty on this campus, like their peers in other studies (Boice, 1991b; Boice & Turner, 1989; Fink, 1984; Sorcinelli, 1988; Turner & Boice, 1987) expressed concerns about their heavy workloads and described workweeks dominated by lecture preparation. Since faculty tend to overestimate the amount of time they are spending on scholarly activities and underestimate the amount of time they are spending on teaching-related activities (Boice, 1991b), this lack of balance is probably even more marked than it appears.

Previous research suggests that new faculty usually respond to the pressures and anxieties arising from heavy workloads and unbalanced workweeks by developing patterns of behavior that have long-term negative effects on their interactions with their colleagues (Boice, in press), their teaching styles (Boice, 1991b; Fink, 1984), and the way they conduct research and write (Boice, 1991a). In many cases new faculty never go back to reexamine the patterns of behavior they have established (Boice, 1991a, 1991b; Fink, 1984) or to seek help in changing them (Boice, 1991a, 1991b).

These negative influences were apparent during the interviews described in this paper. The new faculty felt they could not take time to meet people and make friends. They tended to over-prepare for their classes and to strive for content mastery and control in the classroom. Their research and writing were usually on the shelf waiting for Christmas vacation. Like new faculty
on other campuses (Boice, 1991b), they saw these patterns as “temporary aberrations.” Previous research on new faculty (Boice, 1991b; Fink, 1984) suggests that this will not prove to be the case.

**Collegial Support**

The new faculty in this study reported feeling quite satisfied with the level of collegial support they were receiving and none felt isolated or ignored. In this regard they were notably different from the new faculty on the campuses previously studied. In her interviews with new faculty at a large research university, Sorcinelli (1988) found that lack of collegial relations was “the most surprising and disappointing aspect of [the new faculty’s] first year.” In their study of new faculty at a teaching university, Boice and Turner (1989) noted that “relationships with colleagues were the most salient and pervasive source of dissatisfaction among all . . . new faculty.”

What accounts for the different levels of collegiality found at the three institutions under review? One variable that has not been measured is the amount of time faculty spend on campus. Anecdotal information suggests that this varies considerably. For example, the teaching university mentioned above is a commuter campus where many of the faculty hold second, off-campus jobs. The university now under study is a residential campus; faculty are prohibited from holding off-campus jobs and required to have extensive office hours. It is likely that the faculty on the latter campus spend more time in their offices, halls, and lounges than do the faculty on the former, thereby giving them more opportunity to interact with their colleagues.

The importance placed on teaching at the university described in this report may also account for some of the difference in levels of collegial interaction. Boice (1991b) notes that none of the new faculty he interviewed were in departments where colleagues met occasionally to discuss teaching. Compare this to the comment made by a new faculty member at the institution now under study: “If you want to get a conversation going, just bring up something to do with teaching in the coffee room.” Boice found that less than 5% of the new faculty he talked with could identify a social network on their campus for discussing teaching; 67% of the new faculty in this study could. The relative strength of the shared interest in teaching is also suggested by comparing the percentages of faculty who have specific plans to collaborate as teachers. At the other teaching university (Boice, in press) between 7 and 21% of the new faculty expected to coteach a class; at this university, 67% planned to do so. On the campus now under study, teaching appears to provide a common ground where new and senior faculty meet.
The new faculty in the present study were more satisfied than their peers on other campuses with the nature of their collegial interactions. Boice (in press) reports that besides being disappointed by how little support they were receiving from colleagues, the new faculty he interviewed were distressed by the high levels of gossip and political intrigue in their departments and by the fact that they rarely received any teaching-related collegial advice—only 3 to 6% of the new faculty in his study had received useful hints about teaching. The new faculty interviewed in the present study felt that the amount of departmental gossip in their areas was understandable, even appropriate. In addition, 83% had received what they considered to be helpful collegial advice on matters related to their teaching.

Only in the area of research were the new faculty in the present study disappointed with their levels of collegial interaction; all would have liked to have had more discussion of scholarly issues with their colleagues. Whereas 67% of the new inexperienced faculty said they were part of a network of people who talked about teaching, only 33% could describe any networks for sharing ideas about research and, as previously noted, that did not necessarily mean they were participating in them. The new faculty in this study seemed to have fewer collegial interactions involving scholarship than did new faculty on other campuses. For example, only 17% had specific plans to collaborate as researchers compared to up to 40% of the new faculty on the teaching campus Boice (in press) studied. The new faculty in the present study were also sorry that few, if any, colleagues shared their areas of expertise. In this respect they were like their peers at other institutions; even research university faculty report being distressed by the lack of colleagues with similar scholarly interests (Sorcinelli, 1988).

The new faculty in this study often believed they had been hired with the expectation that they would be conducting research and publishing at levels not formerly demanded on campus. New faculty at the other teaching university (Boice, in press) were also hired with this expectation. The first cohort of new faculty that Boice interviewed had joined the university after a ten-year hiring hiatus; these faculty reported very low levels of collegial support. Perhaps the old guard "teachers" were reacting defensively toward the upstart "researchers." There is not the same level of tension between the new faculty in this study and their senior colleagues. Although one new faculty member described feeling that he was being penalized for his interest in publishing, the rest all said they felt comfortable with the different expectations placed on them and had found the senior faculty to be supportive of their research activities. It should be noted, however, that the actions of the new faculty were not reflecting their interests; they were devoting most,
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if not all, of their time to teaching. Future interviews will reveal if the camaraderie between these new faculty and their senior colleagues can be maintained in the face of differing professional roles.

It appears that inexperienced new faculty have a high need for collegiality. In Boice’s (in press) study of new faculty at a large teaching university, the inexperienced faculty reported a higher need for collegiality than their experienced colleagues. This was true also in the present study; new inexperienced faculty rated collegiality as being important to them twice as often as did their experienced colleagues. Boice suggests that such data may indicate that faculty become more autonomous and less affiliative with age. However, we do not know whether inexperienced new faculty are actually less independent than their experienced colleagues or simply feel more “needy” because they are relatively deprived of collegial supports: they are less likely than experienced colleagues to be collaborating in either teaching or research and they are more rarely a member of a teaching or research network.

Boice (in press) also found new faculty to be “notably passive” about seeking collegial support and generally to expect others to come to them. His research indicates that those faculty who do take initiative in establishing collegial relationships tend to be those who thrive. With few exceptions, the new faculty in the present study appeared to be more proactive than many of their colleagues on other campuses, often mentioning seeking out senior colleagues to ask for their help or advice. However, since the climate on the campus seems to be relatively conducive to collegial interactions, little effort would be needed to initiate them. Establishing collegial relationships may, therefore, be less significant on this campus than on others as a predictor of faculty success.

Teaching

The new faculty in this study were like other new faculty in that they spent most of their working hours engaged in teaching and teaching-related activities. As teachers, they most often described themselves as adopting a lecturer/interactive style of teaching. In this regard they appear to differ from their peers on other campuses (Boice, 1991b), who almost invariably reported using a “facts and principles” style of lecturing. At this time it is not known whether the new faculty described in this report actually do encourage greater student participation in their classrooms. Their institution is strongly student-oriented and it is not in keeping with the milieu to present one’s self as being otherwise. The few teachers who did say they used a “fact and
principles” style of lecturing were very careful to give justifications for selecting this method.

As previously noted, the new faculty in the present study readily responded to questions about their strengths and weaknesses as teachers. Those new to teaching most frequently described their greatest strength as being their enthusiasm and enjoyment of teaching: their greatest weakness, their lack of experience. This differs from the most common responses given by the new faculty Boice (1991b) interviewed. In his study, the new faculty most often reported as their greatest strength the fact that they were well prepared and knowledgeable; as their greatest weakness, that they tended to ask too much of their students.

At both the teaching and research universities in Boice’s study, the most common or the second most common response to the question about weaknesses was “None.” On the campus now under study, no faculty gave this answer although given the opportunity to do so. Perhaps as a reflection of this, there were also marked differences between the responses faculty on the three campuses gave to questions concerning their plans to improve their teaching. Boice (1991b) reported that a near majority of the new faculty he worked with on both campuses had no plans to improve their teaching. On the campus in the present study, all the new faculty talked at length about how they were planning to do so, both experienced and inexperienced faculty most often reporting a desire to learn new methods of encouraging student involvement in the classroom.

If these new faculty go on to implement their plans they will be unusual: Boice (1991b) and Fink (1984) have both noted that new faculty tend to develop conservative teaching styles and not to change them over time. However, the emphasis placed on teaching at the university described in this study, combined with the relatively high levels of collegial support, do appear to be influencing the new faculty’s attitudes toward their teaching. Whether their enthusiasm and desire to improve will survive student evaluations and the press of time, whether their good intentions will be translated into real changes in the classroom, remains to be seen.

Unfortunately, when describing the changes they expected to make in their teaching, the new faculty in the present study usually displayed little awareness of the campus resources available to assist them or of how the specific strategies they were hoping to implement might actually impact their students. For example, despite expressing an interest in learning how to encourage greater student participation, the majority of the new faculty were actually spending their time striving to master thoroughly their course content and tightly organize their classes. Boice’s research (1991b) suggests
that this common way of attempting to gain control of teaching is usually counterproductive. The new faculty in the present study, however, were still optimistic about the potential efficacy of such behavior.

**Scholarly Writing**

Both Boice (1991a) and Sorcinelli (1988) have found that although new faculty would like to achieve a balance between teaching and research they actually end up giving far greater priority to class preparation than to writing for publication. Boice and Turner (1989) have further reported that while the majority of the new faculty they interviewed had hoped to spend 50% of their time on scholarly writing and had estimated that 30% was probably a more realistic goal, they were, by the end of their first years, actually spending less than 15% of their time writing.

The new faculty in the present study were also devoting little time to scholarly writing; by their own estimates they spent less than 13% of their workweeks engaged in such work. However, the new faculty appeared to differ from their colleagues on other campuses in not being particularly surprised or disturbed by this—perhaps due to the nature of their collegial interactions with the senior faculty and the value their campus places on teaching. Boice (1991a) quotes one new faculty member in his sample as saying, “I know what I should be doing. No doubt about it, all this time I’m spending on teaching isn’t going to have much payoff . . . . I had no idea that teaching would take so much time.” A new faculty member in the present study said, “They told me not to expect to get any writing done during the semester—that’s what summers are for, and I guess they’re right.”

The new faculty described in this study may also have been relatively undisturbed by their failure to do scholarly work because they all had hopes of publishing or submitting papers by the end of the term. Like their first semester peers at other institutions (Boice & Turner, 1989), these hopes were usually based on plans to complete manuscripts that were already in progress when they arrived on campus. However, Boice (1991a) reports that in his experience new faculty tend to do virtually no writing during their first semesters and, thereafter, to write at levels well below the mean of 1.0 to 1.5 published manuscripts per year expected for tenure. The new faculty in this study may well find that it is more difficult to publish at acceptable and personally satisfying rates than they now believe it will be.

A third factor that may contribute to the new faculty’s optimism is that the interviews were held mid-semester when they were looking forward to, but had not yet had, an extended vacation. The faculty frequently mentioned planning to get caught up on their scholarly projects during fall break and
Christmas. But Boice and Turner (1989) discovered that faculty who plan to get work done during vacations rarely are as productive as they had hoped. In one of their samples, 84% of the new faculty identified specific writing projects they expected to complete during the summer; only 19% actually did so. The plans of the new faculty now being studied may well meet the same fate.

As a group, the new faculty in the present study revealed little knowledge about what writing habits were the most productive: one person proudly stated that once he got started writing, he would write all night; another apologetically admitted that she only wrote forty minutes three days a week and that if she couldn't think of something to say, she would just put anything down on the paper. This ignorance about productive writing habits was nowhere more obvious than when the inexperienced new faculty discussed what they considered to be their best writing strategies. They recommended with equal frequency and enthusiasm scheduling time to write, thoroughly planning their papers before starting to write, and being deadline-driven. Research on scholarly writing (Boice, 1990) indicates that some of these strategies are effective, some notably counter-productive.

New faculty are usually unclear about how much publication is expected of them and how Departmental Personnel Committees will evaluate and weigh teaching activities and scholarly work (Boice, 1991a; Fink, 1984; Sorcinelli, 1989). In response, they tend to become anxious about their levels of scholarly productivity and to conclude that they must be prolific publishers (Boice, 1991a). Like their peers on other campuses, the new faculty in this study were unsure of what to expect from their DPCs. Unlike their peers, however, they seemed to feel little anxiety about this uncertainty. As previously noted, all were still optimistic about getting something published in the near future; all felt that they were at least, if not more, interested in publishing than their senior colleagues; and, despite their concerns about what would be involved, all were confident they would be tenured. As one faculty member reported, "My chair said not to worry."

Summary

This paper reports the preliminary results of a longitudinal study of new faculty at a comprehensive, residential, coeducational state university noted for its teaching orientation and compares this data with that gathered on other campuses in previous studies of new faculty. The first semester interviews indicate that the new faculty at this university resemble their peers at other institutions in a number of ways, most notably in that their work is dominated by class preparation, their levels of scholarly activity are far below what they
had initially expected, and their knowledge of effective teaching styles and productive writing habits is inadequate to meet their needs. The new faculty appear to differ from other new faculty in that they have found relatively high levels of collegial support on their campus, informal and teaching-related interactions between junior and senior faculty being common.

References


