Getting your faculty career off to a good start

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How long to reach full productivity in research & effectiveness in teaching?*

~95%: 4-5 years

Quick starters (~5%): 1-2 years

*Based on Robert Boice, The New Faculty Member
What’s the difference between the 95% and the quick starters?

Make 4 common mistakes

Avoid those mistakes
Activity

1. Form groups of ~3, introduce yourselves.
2. List mistakes new faculty members commonly make that limit their productivity and effectiveness?
Success Strategies

- Planning your work life
- Preparing for class
- Developing a mentor network
- Developing a writing routine
Mistake #1: Work without clear goals and plans

• Accept unproductive commitments
• Fail to take steps that will help

Consequences
• Become spread too thin
• Fail to meet expectations
• Anxiety, depression
How different our lives are when we really know what is deeply important to us, and keeping that picture in mind, we manage ourselves each day to be and to do what really matters most.

Stephen Covey
Success Strategy #1

Develop clear goals & a detailed plan to reach them. (more on next slide)

Results

– Make commitments wisely
– Maximize chances of reaching goals
Plan for coming year

- What are my major areas of responsibility?
- What are my specific actions for each area in the coming year?
- Get feedback from dept. head and mentor.
- Check your progress regularly.
- Keep a running list of all commitments.
- Memorize & use the most important word in the language.
Mistake #2: Work non-stop & alone
Wait for colleagues to offer help

Consequences

- Don’t get available support
- Don’t learn local culture
- Isolation, depression
Success Strategy #2

Network at least 2 hrs/week to develop a group of mentors.

Results

• Quickly get help, learn culture
• Discover campus resources
• Cultivate allies and advocates
Mistake #3

- Spend little time on scholarly writing
- Put out fires, wait for “blocks of time”

Consequences

- Lack of productivity $\rightarrow$ anxiety
List several strategies for writing that you have found helpful.
Success Strategy #3a

Schedule regular time for writing projects → 30-45 minutes daily or 2-3 longer blocks weekly.

Results
- Minimize “warm-up” time
- Steady progress → less anxiety
Effects of Brief Daily Writing Sessions*

*Figure adapted from *Advice for New Faculty Members*, Robert Boice (2000)
Success Strategy #3b

Hold yourself accountable for writing regularly.

Pomodoro technique

Writing partner

Writing group
Success Strategy #3c

Separate creating and critiquing*

* See “How to write anything” in handout
Mistake #4
Overprepare for classes
• 9+ prep hrs per lecture hour
• Good teaching = complete content, ready for any question

Consequences
– Rush to cover material, poor evaluations
– Little time for anything else (research, life)
Is course material

(a) addressed in your learning objectives?
(b) assumed known by instructors of courses for which your course is a prerequisite?
(c) something you would ever put on a test or major assignment?

Yes to any = *need-to-know*  
No to all = *nice-to-know*
Success Strategy #4

• Limit prep time for class (Target: 2 hr prep/hr class)
• Cover need-to-know material, minimize nice-to-know

• Results:
  – More questions & activities
  – Time for other responsibilities
Tips on teaching a class for the first time*

Don’t reinvent the wheel!
- Ask for course materials from previous teacher
- Search materials online

*See “How to prepare new courses while keeping your sanity” in handout.
Final activity

• Write down your main takeaway messages from this session.