

**Summary Comments about “Quick Starters” (Boice 1991)  
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After studying faculty for several years, Boice (1991) (at SUNY-Stony Brook) observed many characteristics of teachers that he defined as “quick starters” (i.e., only between 5-9% of new faculty). These individuals were typically very successful and made consistent progress. We think understanding the characteristics of “quick starters” may be useful in mentoring graduate students or faculty who are starting their professional careers.

Some of the characteristics of “typical” new faculty members were:

- Spent too little time on scholarly writing.
- Went to class overprepared (i.e., had too much material, rushed to finish everything at the expense of active student learning activities, and spent >30 hours/week on class preparation).
- Taught defensively.
- Received student evaluations below expected levels and blamed results on factors such as survey instrument, poor students, and class size.

Some of the characteristics of “quick starters” were:

- Showed concern about students’ active involvement in learning and taught at a pace that allowed active learning. These individuals were willing to improve their teaching.
- Avoided isolation by developing social and professional networks.
- Sought advice from senior colleagues (i.e., mentoring)—spent about 4 hours per week on discussions of research, teaching, etc (not gossip, but valuable and important information regarding career development).
- Avoided being critical and negative about undergraduates (i.e., or other employees).
- Learned to balance all job responsibilities—e.g., teaching, research, outreach, and service and integrated research with teaching/outreach.
- Made a quick transition to moderate levels for class preparation.
- Spent >3 hours per week on scholarly writing.
- Were highly energetic, curious, and humorous

Boice felt that the two primary differences between these two groups were that “quick starters” learned to balance their time demands and quickly established productive networks with colleagues. To help balance time, individuals may want to keep a record of how time is spent. In summary, quick starters were resilient, insightful, and positively identified with their campus community.

What lessons can we learn about “quick starters” for mentoring graduate students and new faculty members?

Boice, R. (1991). Quick starters: New faculty who succeed. In M. Theall & J. Franklin (Eds.), *Effective practices for improving teaching* (p.111-121), *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, no. 48. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.