Advice for New Faculty Members

Nihil Nimus

Robert Boice
Professor Emeritus
State University of New York at Stony Brook

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Let Others Do Some of the Work

Compassion for yourself is more than slowing and calming, nice as those are. It is also more than simplifying your work by way of mindfulness moved outward and into action. The hardest part of practicing self-compassion is letting others do some of your work.

We already know why this "letting go" is difficult, because we struggled with it during earlier exercises as teachers and then as writers. The same rule is no less important in socialization to the professoriate. And it is no less challenging. The usual obstacles apply, including excessive pride, personal reluctance about sharing the credit for work with others, and beliefs that collaborators more often hinder than help. That much you already know; you may suspect the rest.

These inhibitions also owe to customs unique to academe. What better model for working alone and with little direction than the way most of us do our dissertations? What more effective discouragement of sociable sharing than the expectation that dissertations must not be submitted until finished? And what better basis for dread of public scrutiny than the customary uncovering of a shameful ignorance during oral exams?

When I repeatedly queried struggling new faculty about their reluctance to reach out for social support, one explanation emerged most saliently: These novice faculty supposed that *dissertation rules* still applied (e.g., work on your own and share it only when perfect). And they believed that displays of weakness in the presence of more senior faculty could be fatal. But some novice faculty let go of these hardened views when I reminded them of my research findings:

- The sooner new faculty abandoned vicious cycles of isolationism and perfectionism, the more readily they thrived during their probationary periods.

- Struggling new faculty who conserved these unnecessary and counterproductive attitudes more often left campus or stayed on under a cloud.
- These conservatives were less involved in programs for junior faculty, such as the one outlined in this book (however, they did listen, more than other new faculty, to stories about the unfairness of reward systems at their campus).
- They remained unusually private as teachers and as writers; that is, they put off appointments with classroom observers and submissions to editors.
- They more often procrastinated writing while waiting for ideal work conditions and for impressively clever ideas; they typically reworked lecture materials beyond the point of diminishing returns.
- They unintentionally seemed aloof and distant to colleagues, and they themselves saw colleagues in much the same way.
- Conservatives made no sustained attempts to find mentors; moreover, they resisted approaches by prospective mentors (especially when women were offered direction/support by successful men).

Those reluctances remind me of the questions that puzzled me most when I began my programs for new faculty: What makes struggling new faculty so resistant to accepting help from colleagues? Why do individuals who need help most seem least willing to accept it? I didn't quite figure an answer until I repeatedly saw struggling newcomers reject the advances of experienced colleagues who could offer substantial help. I was at last reminded of an insight from Samuel Johnson in his own attempts to assist the needy. They, he noticed, were most skeptical and suspicious, most determined to display their cunning by working alone. Why? Because they, already on the defensive, found it hardest to trust others and to admit even obvious failings. Worse yet, he noted, they were caught up in a pride that made them regard offers of help as little more than condescension.

No wonder, then, that many new faculty need to understand why a sound mentoring relationship is worth letting go of excessive pride and suspiciousness. That understanding, you may have noticed, is the point of this chapter. Toward that end, I will ask you to scan traditional notions of mentoring, to reflect on a pioneering study of mentoring, and to extend the kind of collaboration/trust learned in mentoring to acts such as cooperative learning and classroom research.

As usual, I'll mention proven correctives for poor starts among new faculty: Exemplar-based ways of working and socializing. And I'll try to be compassionately brief in setting a context about where we are and where we are going. A key to getting underway here with ease lies in the clear seeing of what compassion means—as in this simple definition:

[compaſſion, French from *con* and *patior*, Lat.] Pity; commiseration; sorrow for the suffering of others; painful sympathy.

Ye had compassion for me in my bonds. (Heb. 10:34)—JOHNSON'S DICTIONARY

What Helps New Faculty Find Self-Compassion through Socialization?

Compassion, excluding Dr. Johnson's definition of pity, comes most reliably and directly from the kinds of mindfulness we practiced explicitly in Section II of this book. When we live and work largely in the moment, we more clearly see how we usually bring ourselves to misery (e.g., trying to do two things at once). And as we give up neurotic conflicts of approach/avoidance, we not only simplify our own experience but we also more readily admit to our own inefficiencies and needs for expert coaching. In my programs, at least, that inner awareness is most readily moved outward to accept help when the action is least threatening—as with the inquiries about academic culture modeled in the prior chapter. That first move can prime you for an understanding of how mentoring helps.

What, specifically, happens when you begin to socialize your perceptions of academic work by reading and applying some of the advice of varied experts? (Here I ask you to resume the mindset of Francis Bacon, our official guide in Section III.) Expert advice, assembled and refined in a perspective of public action, provides socially tested knowledge that shortcuts the trial-and-error learning we would otherwise have to undergo. Equally important, that socialized learning allows us to proceed with especial confidence about using our time and energy wisely.

If this Baconian notion seems confusing, reconsider this: Early in this book we learned much the same thing about looking outward for public demonstrations of which strategies work well and which do not. One instance with special promise of savings was about reliably distinctive qualities of new teachers whose classes were uncomplicated and unimpaired by incivilities. And in the preceding chapter, again, we enacted the same pattern of moving outward by accepting social support and direction: First with regular advisors, then with advisory groups, along with broad expertise from writers worth reading because of the seeming social generality of their advice. The next exemplary step is reaching out for information on mentoring, initially by considering potential values of mentoring and the simple actions that ensure them.

Mentoring

In preliminary studies where I observed but did not intervene, I could see that mentoring proved a powerful predictor of "good starts" (as I've defined them throughout this book) for new faculty. Yet, like many other exemplary factors, effective mentoring was generally neglected amongst new faculty left to their own wiles.

Most newly arrived faculty told me they probably would not want or need a mentor. These were their most common reservations (condensed here for the sake of clarity):

- I'm too busy.
- Mentoring is remedial help.
- Dissertation directors are ostensibly mentors but mine was of little help.
- I'm tired of other people telling me what to do; I'm overdue to work on my own.
- I'll ask for advice if I need it; I don't want to be pinned down with regular meetings or annoyed by constant criticisms.
- Mentoring is a fad. It is almost always superficial and done for appearances.
- A mentor would pressure me to be like him or her, maybe even to be a lackey in his or her work.
- I'm not sure what a mentor does.
- Someone who would want to mentor me would probably expect a sexual relationship.

Where might these newcomers to professorial careers have acquired that sort of pessimism? Probably in realities like these: Previous experiences with advisors who were too negative or uninvolved to help; supervisors who allowed too little freedom of expression; and superiors who pressured for inappropriate favors (e.g., collaborations where the novice did most of the work but got second authorship). Add to those experiences customary assumptions that the best work in academe is done alone, and you may feel compassion for such skepticism and reticence. If that compassion needs to be directed to yourself, resume practice of something you know from exercises at teaching and writing: Letting go of excessive attachments, especially to bad experiences. Start by joking about this defensive stance:

A pessimist is one who feels bad when he feels good for fear he'll feel worse when he feels better.—GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

An optimist sees an opportunity in every calamity; a pessimist sees a calamity in every opportunity.—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

But how do you actually get past the nagging realization that pessimists are right? Thriving new faculty generally say they do so by way of mindfulness like this: They see that all these bad things can happen to people who dare venture outward with work done more socially. They remind themselves why that risk is worthwhile (e.g., "Life is a risk, anything worth doing entails some risk"). And they notice that pessimistic new faculty demonstrate the penalties of conservatism: Because they do not learn how to avoid or manage embarrassments and injustices, they risk feelings of helplessness/hopelessness and their likely sequelae of poor self-esteem and low self-efficacy. Moreover, pessimists isolate themselves from too many of academic life's best experiences.

An especially effective way of moderating pessimism, according to my studies, is entering a compassionate mentoring relationship. To illustrate this, I ask you to abide yet another account of my field researches, this time about the surprising ease and effectiveness of mentoring done in exemplary fashion. Therein lie some insights about what makes mentoring useful.

A Systematic Study of Mentoring among New Faculty

I developed an interest in mentoring much as I did for other experiences of new faculty emphasized in this book: Its presence or absence seemed to matter in my day-to-day observations of newcomers. Here, too (as in my examinations of, say, binge writing), there were fewer useful precedents than I hoped for.

A Brief Look at the Literature

Mentions of mentoring can be found in very early writings; it is as old as its kin, including apprenticeship, coaching, and teaching (maybe even parenting). Except for ways in which some apprentices were coached in crafts, such as gunsmithing, we know little about the particulars. I, for one, still associate apprenticeships with the oppression of Oliver Twist, sleeping on a shelf amid the coffins he helped build—but I suspect we can learn more from other cases.

The clearest descriptions of mentoring nowadays come from the corporate world where ensuring good starts is obviously economical. While some business writers extol mentoring for its nurturing properties, almost all their evidence is conjectural or anecdotal. Its critics dismiss any value of mentoring in business because it forces participation and conformity, more so because mentoring done well presumably requires more time than can be managed in the real world. Not surprisingly, pessimists who could be mentors or mentees in academe recite the same objection, one that comes down to busyness.

Even so, recent publications about mentoring in professorial careers merit our attention (e.g., Bova, 1995; Gaff & Simpson, 1994; Johnsrud & Atwater, 1993): Intense mentoring relationships generally predict political saavy, more advanced professional skills, higher levels of research productivity, and greater career advancement. The problem amid these optimistic findings is one we've seen earlier in this book, notably in the attitude romantics bring to scholarly writing: Most campus leaders in a position to help new faculty believe that the best mentoring occurs spontaneously, without unnatural arrangements. Said one dean to me with great certainty: "That only works as a hands-off proposition. Mentors have to do the picking, and they have to do it their own way, without outside interference."

That last assumption—about spontaneity being preferable to informed interventions—was the focus of my earliest studies about mentoring. I began, with my partner Jimmie L. Turner, by observing how often and to whom mentoring occurred "naturally," and how effective it proved to be.

Pilot Study: Does Naturally Occurring Mentoring Suffice for Diverse New Faculty?

Our year-long field observations showed the following:

- Spontaneous mentoring occurred for only about one-third of the new faculty; nontraditional hires and newcomers who struggled most were even more likely to go unmentored.
- The great majority of those natural pairings died an early, natural death, almost always because mentors and mentees claimed that their own busyness necessitated putting off meetings.
- Because they generally had no clear sense of which actions and interactions would be most helpful, almost all natural mentors tended to disappointingly narrow styles (i.e., meetings only in the mentor's office, usually with the mentor doing most of the talking from behind his or her desk, much of it anecdote telling, bragging, and complaining).
- Most natural mentors were reluctant interventionists and champions for their mentees; they gave some concrete advice but they rarely modeled ways of working (e.g., how to prepare a lecture) or introduced mentees to useful resources and influential colleagues. Instead, they mentored much as they taught, by lecturing to passive listeners.
- Exemplary new faculty, in contrast, took the unnatural initiative of selecting their mentors after careful consideration (e.g., advice from their department chairpeople) and patient early contacts with several possible mentors. All had near-exemplary or exemplary mentors, and most had more than one (usually one primary and the other secondary and more specialized). Exemplary new faculty and their mentors typically met in brief, regular meetings that persisted quietly over several years, and their interactions included direct coaching, even collaboration, in domains of writing, teaching, and socialization.
- Thriving new faculty helped arrange meetings and interactions that took place outside the mentor's office. Curiously, these people were unlikely to publicize their mentoring experiences, apparently because they were more interested in getting work done than in proselytizing about how they did it. They knew that tradition in academe carries a strong prohibition against "outperfomace" (outperforming others) made public (Exline & Lobel, in press).

So the answer to the question I posed at the head of this list—Does naturally occurring mentoring suffice for diverse new faculty?—is no. Natural mentoring is uncommon and usually ineffective. Moreover, exceptional instances of mentoring that works remain generally unknown.

Formal, Funded Mentoring Study

Project Designs (see Boice, 1990; Boyle & Boice, 1998 for additional information).   The first study site was a large comprehensive university. During this two-year formal project, 116 new faculty were hired on the tenure track, 48 of whom were novices in the professoriate. At the second site, a public research university, 95 new faculty were hired, 45 as novices, during the four-year period of study.

Mentees.   Pilot research (above) indicated the importance of tracking each mentoring pair on a weekly basis, with attention both to individual pair members and to mentoring duos. We used friendly and individual encounters to recruit a total of 19 new faculty at both campuses who, by their own admission, would otherwise have remained uninvolved. We included no mentees performing at the level of exemplary new faculty.

We selected novice faculty distributed across the sciences, social sciences, and humanities (although at Campus 2, some departments—under the influence of a new provost with an initial prejudice against faculty development programs—permanently prohibited participation by their new faculty). One recruit quit the program after a luncheon with her prospective mentor and she was replaced by a peer with similar demographics; the other 41 mentees at Campuses 1 and 2 persisted in the program for at least an academic year. All participation was voluntary and, so far as possible, confidential.

During the total six years of study, we got the consent of 36 novice faculty who proceeded without apparent mentoring to serve as control subjects who would provide us with occasional data about how well they were faring. An additional 6, none of them exemplary new faculty, found "natural mentors" on their own and agreed to the same ongoing scrutiny as directed at project pairs.

Mentors.   Public appeals on both campuses for mentors brought an oversupply of volunteers. At Campus 1, interest might have been augmented because our federal grant could supply mentors with a summer stipend after completion of a project year; nonetheless, volunteers seemed as plentiful and enthusiastic at Campus 2 without funding. At both campuses we picked mentors largely on the basis of their productivity and optimism as teachers, writers, and socializers; all seemed genuinely interested in learning about mentoring and helping their appointed mentees in substantial ways. At Campus 2, because I was better prepared to find near-exemplars among experienced faculty, I sought only mentors who qualified as successful teachers, writers, and socializers who had already mentored in a demonstrably effective manner.

At Campus 2, I found exemplars and their close kin among the experienced faculty by looking at:

- The records in departmental files about which faculty were consistently published in archival journals and highly rated by students (cf. strict reliance on public teaching awards or on campus reputation as well liked, hard working, and self-promoting)
- Their classroom immediacies and involvement (see Chapter 8), by way of direct observation in classrooms.
- Their patience during individual interviews
- Their recounting of benefits from mentors of their own
- Their description of a recent experience as mentor, confirmed by mentees as beneficial
- How clearly and willingly they could imagine themselves mentoring in active ways such as coaching at writing or co-presenting in classrooms

One thing struck me as surprising about the accomplished group selected as mentors at Campus 2. They were usually not highly prominent or political on campus (cf. members of special advisory groups to the president; vocal leaders of the faculty senate).

Schedules, assessments, and obligations.   While at Campus 1, we knew of no systematic mentoring programs in academe that had succeeded in keeping its pairs assessed and meeting regularly for more than a few months. So we assumed that our usual emphasis on brief, daily sessions (BDSs) for writers might bring more constancy and persistence to mentoring than customary methods (e.g., pairing and inspiring mentors/mentees in a weekend retreat before letting them work on their own). Our pair members promised to meet in brief, weekly sessions of about 10 to 20 minutes each over the whole of the academic year just underway.

Each pair agreed to share experiences and methods with other pairs in monthly group meetings of about an hour each. They also tolerated several kinds of constant scrutiny: (1) our presence during about half of their scheduled mentoring meetings; (2) our weekly phone calls or direct visits to each pair member along with requests for descriptions and ratings; (3) our weekly looks at their updated logs of ongoing experiences in the project; (4) our frequent demands for completion of self-inventories such as personality tests; and (5) our noting of what they did and said in monthly meetings with other mentoring pairs.

I extended the same essential methods to Campus 2. (This period of my career stands out for the exhilaration I felt in cycling from one observation or interview site to another on campus about every 20 minutes for as long as four to six hours a day. Never before had I felt so connected with the new faculty experience.)

Participants also knew they would be rated as individuals and as pairs in terms of a Mentoring Index with 10 basic dimensions (e.g., "Pair meets regularly, per-

sistently, in substantial fashion" [i.e., more than small-talk and for more than five minutes]). Each of these items was rated weekly on a 1- to 10-point scale, with 10 = maximum at both campuses. In all measures, I made my own ratings independently of of those of the participants.

Project Results

Involvement.   Of the 25 mentoring pairs at Campus 1, 22 met regularly and persistently over an academic year. That is, they missed no more than three weekly meetings and no more than two group meetings overall. All 16 of the pairs at Campus 2 met this criterion of constant but moderate involvement. Why was participation so high? Pairs eventually explained it in three ways: (1) The worth and pleasure of the meetings, (2) the brevity of meetings that did not interfere with other obligations, and, most important, (3) the awareness that they would be visited at meeting times or else asked soon after to describe the meeting. Even though we were invariably gentle in these reminders to meet regularly, participants told us that when tempted to skip a meeting, they decided it would be less painful to meet their partners on schedule than to explain their "sloth" to us. Over time, mentees reported a related factor behind their constant but moderate involvement: The efficacy and self-esteem that accompanied this version of BDS. (For a similar point about writing in BDS, see Chapter 11.) Mentoring pairs at Campus 2 evidenced even higher levels of involvement but they placed less importance on feeling forced to meet.

Mentoring styles: Campus 1.   These 25 pairs interacted in a wide variety of styles. Six pairs began by focusing on just one activity, usually writing but often teaching or early preparation of materials for reappointment. By the second semesters, though, those 6 pairs had broadened their scope to three or four topics. By the same juncture, the 12 pairs that had begun by discussing just about everything that came to mind had narrowed topics to three or four specifics. The other 7 pairs established patterns we had not anticipated, patterns that proved instructive to us. Of those, 4 were stymied when, after a few weeks, they had run out of small-talk and could see no need to continue. After a bit of coaching from us (i.e., to continue meeting until worthwhile topics emerged; to spend time reflecting on what kinds of needs most new faculty might have), these pairs functioned at levels we rated as moderately effective. That is, these somewhat reticent pairs remained that way, somewhat reticent.

The remaining three pairs were unique as the only duos who had been close friends beforehand. Each of the prefriendly pairs eventually rated as "failed," apparently because once the relationship was formalized, their mentors generally assumed more authoritarian styles and unrealistic expectations/demands than did other mentors. Another explanation may lie in research by social scientists: People who rely most on "weak connections" (i.e., acquaintances but not close friends) fare best in making wide and useful social contacts (Gladwell, 1999).

Mentors were otherwise initially reserved about acting as experts or advisors (e.g., "I don't really feel comfortable calling myself a mentor because I'm not even sure I know what one is"). What helped break this impasse was the ready insistence of all mentees, in monthly group meetings, that they considered their partners as qualified mentors with things worth teaching and taking pride in. Said one to her mentor: "Listen: It not only isn't presumptuous to call yourself my mentor, it also comforts *me*."

Mentoring styles: Campus 2.   I selected only mentors I had designated, beforehand, as exemplary or nearly so. I gave none of these 16 mentors explicit directions for mentoring, except a research-based document about the usual experiences of new faculty on campus (e.g., their surprisingly lonely starts and their disconcertingly busy and uncivil beginnings as writers and teachers). In a group meeting of mentors alone, held before they met their mentees, mentors settled quickly and congenially on a format of what they called *active mentoring*. They would all begin, they decided, with actions to (1) break the initial feelings of isolation among new faculty (e.g., by taking mentees around to meet people who could help and/or be friends; by showing them how to use the campus computer center); (2) observe mentees' classes from the first to check for incivilities (e.g., lecturing at too fast and uninvolving a pace); and (3) involve mentees quickly in regular sessions of scholarly writing. One result was a far higher level of confidence about being able to help as mentors than I had seen at Campus 1.

The mentoring index: Campus 1.   We used pilot research to preset criteria for rating that would result, ideally, with every pair scoring a mean of at least 70 overall; such a score required little more than consistent, balanced, and substantial ways of mentoring. Our mean rating for these 25 pairs was 70.8; only about half of the mentoring pairs met our expectations for moderate involvement and success; fewer pairs met their own. Still, even the most poorly rated pairs in the project scored generally better than the naturally occurring pairs we monitored; the best two pairs outside our program scored at $\bar{x} = 51$ and 57 (and both were prearranged by mentors before mentees got to campus) but the others rated no higher than $\bar{x} = 30$ during the two months or less they persisted. The three failed pairs who began as strong friends scored $\bar{x} = 29$, 56, and 62. One other pair, weakly and cordially connected, self-described as too busy to meet regularly, ended with $\bar{x} = 29$. I speak to the reasons for this generally poor performance as we proceed.

If this small sample is worth sorting for effects of other variables, these suggestions emerge: Mentoring pairs arranged across departments scored higher ($\bar{x} = 73.9$) than did those with both members in the same department ($\bar{x} = 67.8$), a difference that only approached statistical reliability. Pairs with more senior mentors (15+ years) rated only slightly higher than mentors five years or less past tenure.

Four mentors who paired again with new mentees in the second project year dropped in ratings ($\bar{x} = 77.1$ vs. 81.5), apparently for two reasons. They reported burnout in starting with new and demanding mentees so soon, and they felt conflicted about not giving their original program mentees as much time as before. Indeed, the latter reaction seems understandable in considering that all but one mentor rated above $\bar{x} = 70$ continued to meet with their mentees in brief, weekly sessions for at least a year beyond the formal project, usually two years. (Only two of the less successful mentors persisted in similar fashion.) All pairs that continued with regular meetings into a second year judged it as more valued and productive than the first, and the third year best of all.

The mentoring index: Campus 2.   Compared to those on Campus 1 these mentors took a more definite and active role, and their scores based on the same Mentoring Index produced predictably higher ratings overall, $\bar{x} = 90.5$. No pair at Campus 2 rated lower than 79 (and that score came from a within-department pair who decided to put off sustained attention to teaching until the second or third year of meetings; their department had a clearly stated rule that initially poor teaching ratings would not count in R/P/T decisions).

Pair's self-ratings: Campus 1.   Pair-members made weekly entries in their logs on a variety of dimensions. Just 3 of the 25 pairs at Campus 1 showed consistently high ratings in both directions (mentor-to-mentee and vice versa); retrospectively, mentees in the other pairs blamed themselves for most of the slowness with which trust and rapport had developed.

Figure 20.1 depicts the average pair ratings for the dimension participants valued most after the project at both campuses: Consistency of meeting. (These data, not surprisingly, closely resemble my own counts of actual meetings.) The first four quarters represent the formal year of participation; the fifth quarter depicts the carryover of consistency into the first quarter of the second year. Natural pairs (Campuses 1 and 2) fell off most markedly and reached nader within the first year. Experimental pairs (Campus 1) were highly consistent until the fifth quarter of recordings; there, the divergence between groups with overall above- and below-criterion scores lowered the mean level of consistency. Finally, pairs with near exemplary mentors or better met most consistently.

Those same groups also divided in similar ways along lines of reported congeniality. This suggests that experimental pairs, most of whom could not find compatibility, fared only marginally better than natural twosomes on this crucial dimension. Said another way, our failure to select more exemplary mentors at Campus 1—and, perhaps, to provide them with a clearer sense of what needed doing first—produced pairings less likely to cooperate than at Campus 2.

Pairs ongoing ratings: Campus 2.   Again, pairs with near-exemplary mentors showed the most consistency in meeting (see Figure 20.1). They also reported the most congeniality by far (Figure 20.2). My own observations indicate that exem-
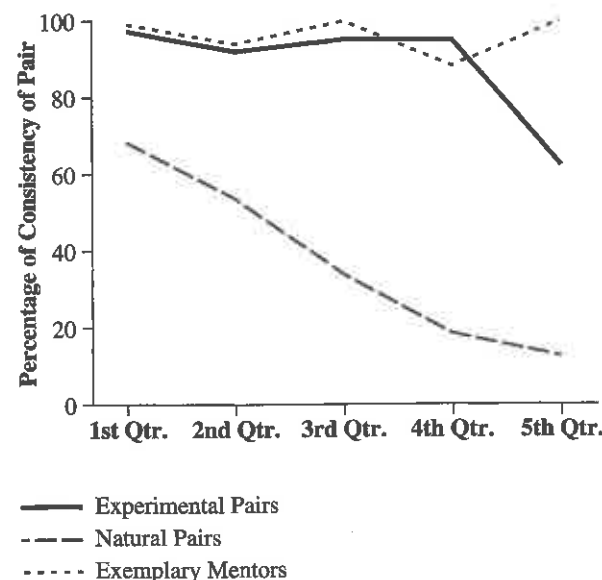
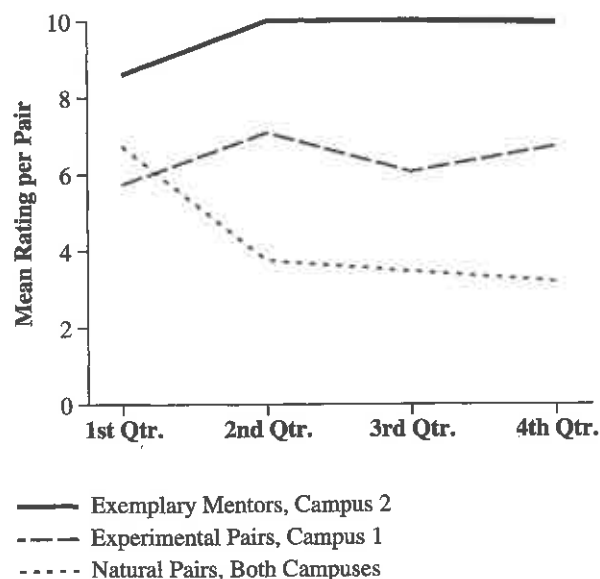**FIGURE 20.1   Consistency of Pair Meetings**

FIGURE 20.2   Pairs Reporting Congeniality

plary mentors came to pairings with more confidence and congeniality at hand; said in terms of this book, they more readily displayed the immediacies and positive motivators we saw for the exemplary teachers of Chapter 8. This, in turn, seemed to enhance the readiness with which mentees could respond to suggestions for on-target actions. That same readiness also seemed to amplify their sense of congeniality. Mentees of exemplary mentors rated their "coaches" with uniformly high scores, at least by the third week of regular meetings. Mentors did so almost immediately.

Put simply, the pairings at Campus 2 (all formed between strangers—as strong weak connections—and half across departments) worked surprisingly well for both mentors and mentees, many of whom had initially described the other as disappointingly different with regard to personality, appearance, or apparent interests. Mentors said that these pairings had gone far better than their own, earlier, natural mentoring experiences, probably because they now had so clear a sense of what new faculty experienced and needed in general. As a result, mentors reported, they could move quickly to specifics and early actions for mentees. One mentor put it this way: "It was as though I could read his mind." And they put high value on the confidence they felt in so helpful a path with their mentees (e.g., "I was at ease, immediately"). I anticipated the final explanation of why their pairings worked from what mentors had said, retrospectively, at Campus 1: The more they got into coaching, the more they benefitted in seeing their directives put into action by mentees (sometimes in other mentors' mentees, in monthly group meetings). This meant that mentors clarified their advice about, say, teaching by way of pointing out classroom immediacies. But that pleasant experience was only the half of it. One exemplary mentor's explanation seems so memorable that I present it with emphasis:

> *Let's see, maybe it will make sense this way: At first I had to admit that I had never been totally clear about what I did as a teacher until I tried to put it [advice for teaching] into discreet assignments or whatever. That took some thinking and some observation to see how she [my mentee] did it to our mutual satisfaction. Then, of course, I put those somewhat clearer techniques to work in my own teaching. Now that was an unexpected benefit of mentoring. I may be getting more out of this than she is.*

Francis Bacon would have, I believe, beamed at this outcome. I surely did.

Conclusions about the Mentoring Study.   Overall, my 6½-year inquiry about mentoring for new faculty took me a long way beyond my anticipations. (I could have used a mentor, an expert about mentoring.) At the outset, I had no good understanding of how rich and rewarding mentoring relationships in academe can be. And I had begun without imagining what deprivation new faculty suffer without effective mentors. At the two study campuses I've just depicted, and at several

others I have monitored, truly effective mentoring occurs for far fewer newcomers than Jim Turner and I had originally estimated in our pilot studies. The irony is that effective mentoring is neither too difficult nor too time consuming to effect in useful fashion. In my observations, effective mentoring took no more than one hour per week, on average, for mentors (including time spent in meetings, in preparing for meetings, and in related contacts with faculty/administrators who could help their mentees). When mentees found a secondary mentor (40 percent of mentees in pairs rated highly did so; none in poorly rated pairs), time expenditures for primary mentors decreased somewhat. For mentees of exemplary mentors, time reported spent on meetings and exercises averaged 2.5 hours per week. Mentees at Campus 1, in the better half of mentoring pair ratings overall, reported $\bar{x} = 1.8$ hours per week; those in the lower half reported $\bar{x} = 0.7$ hours per week.

At the beginning of my mentoring studies, I would not have guessed that my own mentoring/coaching of mentors would become a prime stimulus for completing this book of advice. In practice, *Advice for New Faculty Members: Nihil Nimus* seems as useful for mentors as for mentees.

I'll end my overview of the mentoring studies with some data that may have mattered most in terms of survival. Mentees from highly rated pairings at Campus 1 and from all pairings at Campus 2 evidenced greater long-term benefits than did poorly mentored or nonmentored new faculty. These are representative specifics for new faculty with effective mentoring:

- Always came close to departmental expectations for scholarly productivity (mode = three or four manuscripts accepted in refereed outlets before formal tenure consideration)
- Always exceeded departmental expectations for adequate teaching by year 2 on campus (criterion = teaching ratings in the top half for the department)
- Always were rated, beforehand, by reappointment committees as adequately collegial and cooperative

Amongst new faculty *not* exposed to excellent mentoring, one-third were on track in regard to these criteria early—within the first two years—and one-half within the first three years. Most new faculty who were just below par at reappointment but who showed promise and congeniality were reappointed for a second three or four years and with painful feedback. Roughly 15 percent of new faculty without excellent mentoring left campus early or were terminated while probationary; *none* with effective mentoring did or were. Of course, mentors with success had help from their partners. Mentees in excellent pairings were also distinctive in supporting mentors, even in asking for specific help they wanted.

What might you do to be as proactive? How can you be informed enough to select a mentor likely to help you in substantial ways?

Rule 3: Let Another Person Do Some of Your Work, as a Mentor.

Exercise for Rule 3

Exercise 1. Consider Optimal Ways of Arranging Mentoring.

1. Know enough about mentoring to appreciate how useful, essential, and fun it can be. In particular, appreciate that joy and comfort are nearly universal for mentees in mentoring relationships carried out with constancy, moderation, directedness, meaningful assessments, and compassion. Also, anticipate that you can also derive other benefits, such as good beginnings and easy passage through R/P/T rituals.

2. Understand why most natural mentoring isn't more common and useful. The usual process is no more effective than waiting at home for new romantic prospects to show up. You must be proactive in finding a qualified partner; you might even have to cultivate your mentor as much as he or she educates you.

3. Appreciate one good reason for carrying out this difficult assignment of letting others do some of your work: Most campuses set expectations higher than can be attained without it.

4. Understand that exemplary mentors and their close kin may not be the most luminous and obvious faculty on campus. They are usually not so competitive and busy as politicians.

5. Be patient and mindful in selecting/accepting a mentor; wait while you sample the advice and modeling styles of prospects before coestablishing a formal relationship. Try to arrange at least one mentor from a department other than your own in order to ensure that some of your foibles are observed by a colleague not on your R/P/T committee.

6. Remind yourself of the actions of excellent *mentors* (e.g., willingness to mentor in active ways, including coteaching) and, just as thoroughly, of the exemplary qualities of *mentees* (e.g., ready trust, openness, and involvement—once confidentiality is assured)

7. Let go of perfectionism if necessary; you'll do better to find a young partner than no mentor or an uninvolved senior mentor. Settle, if necessary, for two or three mentors (not more; be moderate), each with different kinds of expertise. If your campus has no mentoring program, prepare yourself and your mentor with a guidebook such as this. And agitate for a mentoring program on campus.

8. Enquire about outstanding mentors of new faculty. Put your departmental chairperson in a separate and limited category, as someone you should regularly ask for advice but who shouldn't know all your shortcomings.

9. Expect that mentoring experiences, if done well, will persist, with constancy and moderation, at least three years. Expect, too, that mentoring, if done amid

overattachment, will lead to occasional strife, including a difficult period of "leaving" your mentor.

10. At the least, coach yourself mindfully in proven ways of overcoming the usual early fault lines described in this book.

You might even want to consider two related things that can help strengthen your willingness to share work with others—involvement in cooperative learning and classroom teaching. Here, the mentoring amounts to letting nationally organized groups of experienced teachers help direct you to work on your own and with others on campus.

Other Kinds of Socialized Work

We already know some of what happens with socialized work, such as joining a mentoring relationship. Two more possibilities you may not yet know are cooperative learning and classroom research.

Cooperative Teaching/Learning

Few strategies for teaching improvement have amassed so strong a set of affirmations as this one (Smith & Walker, 1997). And, arguably, few have made so strong a contribution to teaching improvement at the college level. Formally, the movement for cooperative learning is a response to calls from researchers and national commissions to more actively involve students in the learning process (Cuseo, 1996). Traditional lecture methods, in contrast, carry the assumption that students learn best by simply listening to knowledgeable people talk about their knowledge (Chickering, 1974).

While the push for active and cooperative learning is as aged as attempts to coach teachers, the movement for cooperative teaching/learning has become widely popular only in the past decade (e.g., Gaff, 1994; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991). The leader of this surge is Jim Cooper, editor of the *Cooperative Learning and College Teaching Newsletter* (New Forums Press, Stillwater, OK) and author, with team members, of a book with the same essential name (1990). Cooper and colleagues have studied the effects of cooperative learning in thousands of college students.

What makes this approach "cooperative" is its focus on learner-centered teaching. In practice, it begins with letting go of strict reliance on the lecture method in favor of having students do some of the work in classrooms. And, far more radical, it means involving all students as active learners, not just the usual minority of dominant class members. It has students teach other students (what we might term letting others do some of the work) and its related specifics are these:

- Teachers place students in teams and assign clear roles to individuals (e.g., team captain, recorder, spokesperson), assignments (e.g., a different subsection of learning projects), and rewards (points for meeting individual and team goals).
- Teachers use peer group influence to enhance performance and learning. Peers may be better than teachers at explaining concepts at a level more congenial to students. And peer teachers, much like the mentors depicted earlier in this chapter, learn more than do recipients because they must clarify what they teach and observe how it gets put into practice by a student or mentee.
- Cooperative learning may be best arranged in small groups where students not only teach each other but also work for collective grades. Telling measures of learning come from student reports about the processes of team practice and from dialogues about their own performance. Students prefer group efforts where their individual efforts are reflected in their course grades. In the end, though, they may value the social bonding of team learning as much or more than the grade.
- Done optimally, cooperative learning balances group problem-solving sessions in teams with activities for the whole class, including some lecturing and discussion. Even within teamwork formats, emphases include constant attention to learning goals, reasonable levels of student involvement, and the teacher's feedback. Cooperative learning does not mean lessened responsibility or work for teachers.

Here is an opportunity for the instructor to assume the role of coach. As teams progress through their assigned activities, the teacher can observe, encourage, and intervene to provide requested clarification, offer encouragement, ask questions to stimulate deeper thought, or redirect efforts as needed. In most cooperative learning activities, students must perceive their peers as the major resource, and the instructor must avoid the temptation to provide immediate answers.—JIM COOPER

One thing might still puzzle you: How do teachers facilitate cooperation within student teams? Some team-building activities are as simple as modeling small-talk and self-disclosure to students as they get to know each other (e.g., having team members interview each other and summarize the information to the team). Other kinds of bonding come by way of immersion teams in tasks as easy as making sense of what the teacher has just said in his or her brief lecture.

Measurable results for students learning in teams are consistently superior to those in traditionally individualistic and competitive formats. One key to this outcome apparently lies in students' access to diverse teachers—and not just the professor. So here, too, as in the *nihil nimus* approach, there is balance between group and independent learning. A second key is freedom from sole reliance on lectures and readings for learning. That shift alone seems to help students develop more

autonomy, self-expression, and sociability with peers and teachers. Third, cooperative learning may foster more critical thinking in students and teachers (e.g., Kurfiss, 1988). When students are allowed to be less dependent on and attached to professors, their independence fosters a "standing back" from what is being done and said in order to reflect, mindfully and metacognitively, on alternative processes and economies of solving problems. We saw a related approach in Section II, of teaching ourselves less dependence on traditional methods of writing in mindless/passive ways and more on recursions between broad images and clarification into linear writing—so that the whole process of writing or learning is made simpler but broader-minded.

Indeed, cooperative learning does facilitate writing by encouraging its sociable practice in small groups. Writing, as we have seen, is initially eased and clarified by talking it aloud; social conversation about what students plan and write helps break narrow conceptions and self-conscious blocks. In a cooperative learning approach, even the shyest and least self-confident students can be coaxed into active and effective participation.

Worth doing? Yes! As easily done as it first appears? No. Few, very few, *new* faculty in my studies fared best in a full shift from lecturing to cooperative learning during their first two years of teaching practice. They did better to wait and move into cooperative learning formats slowly but surely. Even exemplary novice teachers (and those who modeled after them with success) focused on first things first; they began with attention to classroom incivilities and classroom comfort. So, for example, they mostly lectured but they took pains to slow the pace, make fewer main points, and encourage questions, even discussions. They often primed chosen students before class to ask certain questions to help make discussions more predictable at first. Did their cautious approach work? Theirs were classes where student involvement and comprehension were as high as in any teaching format I've assessed. Later, usually by the third year of teaching, these new faculty felt confident enough about gaining student cooperation (especially in large introductory classes) to do what Jim Cooper and his team would call cooperative (or Cooper-ative) teaching/learning, during about half of total class time.

But when new faculty tried to move abruptly to general reliance on discussions and small groups, the results were usually anarchy and embarrassment. Students didn't really know what to do, largely because of their own unfamiliarity with cooperative learning, and they complained loudly about being taken away from the familiarity of lecturing and listening. New teachers panicked when groups floundered, particularly when some students resisted involvement. Student comprehension after such class meetings was dismal and teacher satisfaction was no better. Were there exceptions to this pattern? Yes, but they were exceptional.

So a larger question looms: Why, in my own studies, if exemplars and their mentees were succeeding as teachers who lectured, did many of them move to a

cooperative learning mode? These were active lecturers who commanded high levels of student involvement and learning; the gradual and democratic involvement of their students as active participants led to cooperative learning almost spontaneously. The optimal pattern amongst new teachers I studied had students doing the following:

1. Individually writing abstracts outside class about readings, for circulation among peers
2. Writing abstracts for brief discussion in class, with the authors fielding questions from the class
3. Writing abstracts outside class and in small groups who then presented/defended them, collectively in class (or, as part of large introductory classes—in lab or discussion groups headed by teaching assistants)
4. Working in small groups in class, still with mentoring from the professor, each preparing parts of classroom instruction and then presenting them with economy to the class
5. Having small groups conduct early, informal evaluations of what the class valued and learned in lectures and in teamwork
6. Doing more and more things prescribed by leaders in the cooperative learning movement

The fifth of those cooperative tasks consists of course evaluations/analyses carried out by students (one we saw much earlier in Section I), and it sets the stage for considering a similarly shared action of teachers and students.

Classroom Research

This popular approach to teaching improvement is also cooperative and sociable. But classroom researchers do more of what their group label suggests: research. The literature of the classroom research movement encourages (1) mastery of the literature on teaching improvement as a meaningful form of scholarship in an academic career; (2) extension of that scholarship to empirical research in classrooms; (3) results that can be written up for an audience of other teachers (sometimes even students); and (4) involvement of students as fellow data collectors and analyzers of class experiences. All this can turn out to be little more difficult than managing cooperative learning. Classroom research can also be a legitimate source of scholarship and publication for new faculty, especially at campuses whose R/P/T guidelines credit nonrefereed manuscripts.

Classroom researchers began to bond together for support and ideas in the 1980s, largely under the leadership of Thomas Angelo (e.g., 1990). The movement continues to grow in size and importance; whole sessions at national conferences are devoted to cooperative sharing of what members have learned in

classroom research at various campuses. If you'd like to socialize your work at teaching and produce worthwhile manuscripts, you probably won't do better than this.

Even if you don't intend to join this crusade, I encourage you to know something about its advice for collecting data about how (and how well) your students learn. To give you a sense of what classroom teachers teach (and learn), I mention a reading here that I abstract in the Appendix at the end of this book:

> #7. Angelo, T. (Ed.). (1998). *Classroom assessment and research: An update on uses, approaches, and research findings.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

The book is edited by Tom Angelo and it includes chapters by many of the leading research-practitioners in this sociable approach to improving teaching.

I could go on with similarly socialized ways of letting others do some of the work but instead I'll begin to stop by reminding you where we've just been and where we will go next. In our journey through Chapter 20, we've looked mostly at ways of bringing more social support and socialized knowledge to new faculty experience. We prepared for this move in the previous chapter, with simple and painless ways of learning about the culture being joined—by way of reading and sifting expert advice, by interviewing saintly colleagues about proprieties and efficiencies for novitiates. We even, in that first chapter of this section on socializing with compassion, looked at beneficial ways of finding an especially useful. advisor and, better yet, candid advisory groups. In this chapter, we moved outward a bold step further, to finding and optimizing mentoring. Here, we saw evidence of the worth of mentoring for new faculty and about what effective mentors do that helps ensure easy beginnings and timely tenurings. Most important, I used the research on mentoring to advise you about ways of arranging effective mentoring for yourself. A key point was this: Mentors, like other teachers, need educating by mentees.

That same point extends to cooperative and researched ways of learning how to teach. When we make students collaborators (or when we act as active learners with our mentors), we see beyond our own needs to the needs of our students. And, as per Francis Bacon's notions, this move informs us about how others learn what we teach in ways that make us better learners, too.

One more step remains in this progression outward to more sociable beginnings for new faculty (always balanced with time and energy for thinking and working alone): Exemplary new faculty usually take the compassion they've learned as mentees and teachers to yet another level. I advise you to perform that same service as part of making your own career and that of others easier and more rewarding. In the next and final chapter of this book, I show how service, defined here as an extension of help for yourself to other new faculty, can reward and educate more than serving time on committees.