Rank and Expertise

Assistant to “Full”: Rank and the Development of Expertise

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For several decades, the norms and variants of faculty careers have intrigued both higher education and disciplinary scholars. Beginning with Wilson’s (1942) community study, the professional life of faculty has been poked at and prodded in almost every conceivable way and through almost every imaginable lens. Not surprisingly, the subject of tenure has captured the interest of scholars for several decades, but the spotlight has largely depended upon the contemporary offensives against the threats to tenure in vogue at the time (Bess, 1998; Morris, 1992). Prior to recent applications of the cultural perspective (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Tierney & Rhoads, 1993), scholarly discussions of tenure have been somewhat limited to either describing policies and procedures, institutional requirements, and aggregate apportionments to both gender and race or arguing the philosophical foundations and *raison d’être* of the system.

Promotion has received little notice as a phenomenon other than being a habitual companion of the process of tenure (Diamond, 1995). Rank, however, as the constituent status of the process of promotion, has been used variously as an independent variable to explore faculty attitudes and behaviors, such as productivity (Tien & Blackburn, 1996), institutional commitment (Fjortoft, 1993) and turnover (Honeyman & Summers, 1994), and as a dependent variable to establish the case for discrimination (Boudreau, 1997). In only one line of inquiry has rank been perceived as a unit of analysis. Baldwin and Blackburn (1981), introducing the concept of life stages to the analysis of academic careers, found that the career preoccupations of faculty differed by the amount of time in the profession. New assistant professors are idealistic, enthusiastic, concerned with success, and receptive to assistance, whereas, professors who are not facing
imminent retirement experience career crises, question the value of their career, and look for opportunities and methods to avoid stagnation.

Advancing this analytical thread and applying it to institutional imperatives, the concept of faculty vitality telescoped the imperative to address the specific needs and productive performance of faculty by life stage (Clark & Lewis, 1985; Baldwin, 1990; Blackburn, 1997; Baldwin, Lunceford & Vanderlinden, 2005) and by institutional type (Fugate & Amey, 2000). Following this line of inquiry, subsequent research unpacked and further delineated the goals and needs of faculty by career stage (Wheeler, 1990; Boice, 1992; Sorcinelli & Austin, 1992; Finkelstein & LaCelle-Peterson, 1993).

As a sociological role, however, rank has been neglected. For a phenomenon that commands a great deal of interest and time in a faculty member’s life, causes a significant amount of emotional concern, and consumes an inordinate amount of time, we know little about the competencies of the faculty who have earned their rank. Rank tends to be tied to competency in teaching and time-in-service at teaching institutions and to productivity and time-in-service at research institutions. From our own personal experience and observation of colleagues, we believe that as faculty progress through the ranks, they mature as professionals, increase their control of their subject area, and develop confidence both in their personal mien as well as professional persona. Yet, with all of the research on faculty and their development and productivity, the presence of a connection between advancing through the ranks to the qualitative progression of professional mastery or expertise has yet to be investigated. This research project begins this exploration through a review of the development of professional expertise among faculty.

*Expertise*
Expertise researchers have concentrated on convergent (Becher, 1989) disciplines and fields in which academics and other professionals consider definitive questions and utilize practiced skills to solve theoretical and applied problems. The cognitive behavioral patterns of expertise of physicists (Chi, Feltovich, & Glaser, 1981; Anzai, 1991), nurses (Benner, 1984), doctors (Patel, Kaufman & Magder, 1996; Ericsson, 2004), and magistrates (Lawrence, 1988) as well as musicians (Sloboda, 1996), chess players (deGroot, 1965; Charness, Krampe, & Mayr, 1996), and athletes (Deakin & Coblentz, 2003; Ward, Hodges, Williams & Starkes, 2004) have all been analyzed.

Expertise researchers have differentiated novice and expert behaviors (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1996), which do not overlap (Richmann, Gobet, Staszewski & Simon, 1996). They have delineated the processes involved in the acquisition of skills (Anderson, 1983; Fitts & Posner, 1967) and “vast amounts of knowledge and [the development of] pattern-based retrieval... in the associated domain” (Ericsson, 1996, p. 15). Generally, cognitive researchers have analyzed experts by examining their processes of working toward solutions of problems and puzzles. These analyses isolate the component parts of making decisions, that is, not merely the end solutions, but also the strategies and decision rules they employ to arrive at solutions.

In the research on convergent fields, “the consistent (and unsurprising) finding of research is that experts can solve problems in their domain that novices cannot solve, or in the case of problems solvable by novices, experts can solve them much more rapidly and accurately” (Richmann et al., 1996, p. 169). Additionally, novices work backward, while experts work forward (Simon & Simon, 1978).

A few researchers have begun to expose the cognitive processes of experts within divergent disciplines and fields, such as the social sciences, humanities, and education, which are
characterized by a lack of epistemological and methodological agreement (Becher, 1989). The research questions in these fields as well as the answers are less defined and often times contentious.

Within the field of education, recent research has explored expertise in teaching and research. Based on current findings, Berliner (2004) argues for additional extensive exploration of the prototypic characteristics of pedagogical expertise among K-12 teachers, which are related to student achievement (Bond, Smith, Baker & Hattie, 2000). And, using data from a larger study of expertise knowledge, Tschannen-Moran and Nestor-Baker (2004) have delineated tacit knowledge categories among prolific education researchers, which include social environmental interactions or communities of practice as well as personal attributes. Explorations into the cognitive processes of historians have demonstrated that expertise enables scholars to utilize their mastered cognitive skills to analyze historical documents outside of their specialized areas. The ability to “work through [preliminary] confusion, resist the urge to simplify, and regain intellectual footing despite major gaps in knowledge” provides insight into the general cognitive processes of expert historians (Wineburg, 1998, p. 336). Regardless of the accumulated knowledge about expertise within convergent and divergent fields, the research is primarily silent on the accretion of expertise among faculty members within the divergent pure disciplines and fields.

Background of the Study

As a result of personal experience and professional observations, our initial interest was to ascertain to what extent expertise is associated with rank. We assumed that assistant professors are by no means novices; rather that they are less expert than professors. We wondered if explicit and differentiated expertise behaviors associated with assistant professors, associate professors, and professors could be identified. In other words, we wondered to what extent the acquisition of
expert skill as a professional academic within their discipline and as a faculty member within an institution is related to the progression through academic rank.

To expand the knowledge base further, we wanted to probe expert behavior in a divergent field. If the epistemology and methodology within divergent fields is as diverse as researchers have noted (Biglan, 1973; Hargens, 1996; Becher, 1989), can expertise behaviors be found that are as regularized as have been found in convergent fields? Is there a difference in the way that junior faculty members in a divergent field relate to the issues and problems of their field versus the way senior faculty conduct their academic explorations?

Second, to what extent does a faculty member’s affective development and the institutional approval implicit in promotion and tenure propel gains in expertise? Informally, we have noticed in ourselves and others a surge in public confidence once tenure and the rank of associate professor were awarded that was not visible while in the lower rank. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) argue that “knowledge is just one more factor to be added in with personality, aptitude, and social factors to account for expertise” (p. 44). To what extent then is the apparent professional confidence gained from the social approbation of promotion and how is this confidence related to expertise?

Rather than comparisons of productivity, the results of which obviously change with institutional requirements and national productivity norms, our purpose has been to examine how faculty go about their work and to determine if differences exist that appear to be concomitant with the stage of their career. The research on expertise considers and analyzes the work methods of specialists, those who have attained the highest levels of performance, whether it is in the playing of chess, mountain climbing, or medical diagnostics. In addition to these analyses, experts have been contrasted with novices, revealing a vast chasm. Recognizing this gap,
however, does not explain how a novice becomes an expert. Richmann et al. (1996) indicate that although mastery requires great patience and persistence, research in this area “is largely silent” (p.175).

Methodology

Absent an applicable analytical model, we explored the issue of expert behaviors in a divergent discipline by devising a non-directive interview outline that allowed us to probe faculty about the ways by which they think and execute their work, both in research and teaching. We first asked faculty to discuss what it is that they do as disciplinary professionals and faculty, why they do it, and how that has changed over time. That is, we wanted to explore how they developed as professionals. We asked them to discuss the professional work with which they were most pleased and probed them for detailed explanations of their strategies for executing the project as well as the career time-frame in which the work occurred. By using the content of their career publications, we prompted them to discuss not only the current state of their research expertise, but also the sequential development since beginning their professorial career (see Blau, 1995 for an autobiographical example of this type of professional progression).

The second area that we wanted to examine was the influence of professional recognition from university, institutional and external colleagues, and students on the development of expertise. We asked faculty to discuss the development of their confidence and conviction in research, publications, professional activities, and teaching. We probed their responses to extract early career reactions to criticism and approbation in addition to current responses. Throughout the interviews, we asked faculty to place their responses in the context of the rank in which the activity occurred.

Of the possible divergent fields, we chose to study the discipline of history because, unlike the other potential fields supported at our two research sites, the history departments are relatively
comparable. The departments are medium-sized with 20 or more faculty. Both departments offer baccalaureate through doctoral degree programs within research universities with high research productivity (Carnegie Classification 2000 category – RU/H). Further, university administrations at both institutions have, within the past 15 years, begun to impose more rigorous and equivalent requirements for promotion and tenure, including external peer reviews. In our analysis, we compiled all the faculty members who were interviewed to provide us with one group of historians rather than segregating the faculty by institution.

We randomly selected—literally by placing the names in rank- and time-in-rank-segregated hats—faculty to interview from each of the three ranks (assistant professor, associate professor, and professor), choosing faculty who were new to their rank as well as close to promotion. We did not seek gender representation, nor was ethnic representation possible. In choosing this method, we could explore the development of expertise over time as well as by rank. In all, 13 faculty members, four women and nine men, agreed to participate. They included five professors (three long-term and two new), four associate professors (all long-term, two presumably permanent), and four assistant professors (one “rising” associate in the process of tenure, two with several years experience, and one brand new).

All of the faculty members earned their PhDs at research universities. Two received their degrees at prestigious European universities. The rest achieved their degrees in the United States. The group ranged in age from early 30s to early 60s.

The Analytical Framework

Our analysis first entailed searching interviews for several types of patterns. In our first round of analysis, we isolated the cognitive, affective, and process details from the faculty responses since these are the primary areas of focus in the expertise research. Once sorted into
these three large data bins, we further refined the data sort by knowledge acquisition, organization, use, and processing in research and teaching activities and general work habits (e.g., collaboration, mentoring, and professional leadership); expressed emotions concerning their work and career; and organizing strategies that faculty used in developing their research and teaching content. We then disaggregated these patterns for comparison and contrast by rank and by time-in-service. Through this disaggregation, we began to see normative, differentiated, and progressive patterns of knowledge discovery (Olson & Biolsi, 1991).

As these distinct patterns began to emerge, we returned to the expertise literature to assist our analysis. According to Bereiter and Scadamalia (1993), cognitive science has agreed on the existence of two types of expert knowledge: declarative and procedural. “Declarative knowledge manifests itself in explanations, lectures, and justifications. Procedural knowledge manifests itself in performance” (Bereiter & Scardamalia 1993, p. 46). We are not concerned with these types of formal expert knowledge. They represent disciplinary content and methodology knowledge and clearly could be measured through achievement testing or through content analysis of lectures and publications or as Wineburg (1998) has accomplished through a think-aloud procedure while reading historical documents.

However, Bereiter and Scardamalia further argue, based on the suggestion by Polanyi (1967) of the existence of “tacit” knowledge, that three additional types of hidden expert knowledge can be identified: informal, impressionistic, and self-regulating. Similar to common sense, informal knowledge is “much more highly developed [in experts] and usually more heavily influenced by formal knowledge” (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993, p. 54). It permits an expert to acknowledge factors and to combine them in ways that others tend not to imagine. Impressionistic knowledge is “the distillation of experience, dominated by a few salient events” (p. 46). Quoting Broudy (1977), they illustrate their point. “What goes by the name of
‘intuition,’ an attribute ascribed to brilliant researchers, designers, and trouble-shooters, usually amounts to a strong impression that something is interesting, promising, or amiss” (p. 56).

Finally, self-regulating knowledge refers to “knowing how to manage oneself” and “regulating anxiety and concentration” (p. 60).

Applying Bereiter and Scadmalia’s typology of informal, impressionistic, and self-regulating expert knowledge to the disaggregated data about the faculty’s academic life, we recognized distinct differences among the faculty according to the length of time that they had spent in the profession. Simon and Chase (1973) determined that ten years of preparation was necessary for chess players to attain a level of skill for international competition. Ericsson (1996) related that subsequent research has generalized the ten-year rule to various other domains (Bloom, 1985; Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Romer, 1993). Preparation is critical and performance gradually escalates “as a function of the number of years of instruction and serious study” (Ericsson, 1996, p. 10). Although the ten-year rule has been deduced from research on skill-oriented professions and convergent disciplines, a similar escalation in expert behaviors appears to occur in history faculty. However, appraising the escalation of the informal expert behaviors required us to refine Bereiter and Scadmalalia’s typology.

Begin by assuming that epistemic, causal reasoning is cognitively represented as narratives, however fragmentary and however inaccurate they may be. Further assume that expertise comes about by: (1) elaboration of and correction of these narratives as a result of training, experience, and deliberate thought; and (2) increased ability to discriminate crucial, often subtle, contextual cues that permit retrieval of appropriate narratives from memory. It follows that a judgment support system must focus upon extending these two aspects of expertise. (Beach, 1992, p. 121)
Beach’s (1992) notion of epistemic narratives provides a frame to experiment with an analysis of the differences in informal, impressionistic, and self-regulating knowledge among the three groups of faculty. Through the analysis of an assembled grand narrative for each of the three groups—in other words, the aggregation of the epistemic narratives of the composites of faculty—a decided progressive elaboration, correction, and discrimination in the compilation of informal, impressionistic, and self-regulating knowledge emerges.

Clearly, all of the faculty members, regardless of seniority, are experts in their field. While not associated precisely with rank, the knowledge patterns, sources of knowledge, and use of knowledge as well as professional activities differed by three stages, junior faculty, mid-level faculty, and senior faculty. These categories are not quite equivalent to rank, but reflect the length of time spent in the profession as well as the professional and institutional success the faculty have achieved in their careers. Thus, the junior faculty includes the assistant professors who are in the first three years of their professional career. The mid-level faculty consists of those who are about to or who have earned tenure and promotion, but who have less than 12 years of experience. The senior faculty includes those faculty members with more than 15 years of service. With promotion being directly related to the “ratcheted” requirements in both institutions, the lack of achievement of the rank of professor does not prevent inclusion in the “senior” category. Veteran associates share similar qualities.

*Developing Professional Expert Behaviors among Historians*

Scrutinizing the aggregated epistemic narratives, we identified distinctive patterns of behavior within each of the three groups of faculty. Both teaching and scholarship efforts play essential roles in the development of expert behaviors. Clearly the interactions faculty members have with their graduate and undergraduate students as well as departmental, disciplinary, and extra-disciplinary colleagues enable them to elaborate, correct, and discriminate. Figure 1
presents the patterned professional expert behaviors in terms of informal, impressionistic, and self-regulating knowledge for junior, mid- and senior level historians. The epistemic narratives of the three faculty groups illustrate decided patterns of modification and accretion within these hidden knowledge domains and of alterations in interests and products.

Junior Faculty

*Informal Knowledge.* Once employed, junior faculty begin to fulfill their contract to teach courses and to conduct further research. In addition, they prepare for tenure and promotion. As a result of these activities, junior faculty begin to elaborate their formal disciplinary knowledge, and more specifically to the point of this study, start to develop and correct their informal knowledge.

Due to the heavy specialization of their graduate degree, the formal and informal knowledge with which junior faculty commence their employment tends to be narrow within the discipline and apparently lacks sophistication across other fields. From junior to senior faculty alike, those interviewed found it imperative in their first years as faculty members to elaborate their formal and informal knowledge by reading both broadly in the general field of history as well as in specialized areas in preparation for their teaching assignments. The broad reading is an especially important process for teaching courses for which they did not have intensive graduate preparation. One assistant professor explained:

In some ways the lecture is a better forum because I can tell them something and then get it back from them. ...It pushes me to read more broadly, which is good. You know, here I
am, Mr. --th Century historian and I am the one who teaches them [a different period] history, so I have to read the latest stuff.

The second source of elaborating informal knowledge for junior faculty is the revision of the dissertation for publication. Preparing for tenure and promotion hangs heavy on the junior faculty’s heads from the beginning of their employment. Although other disciplines and fields maintain different productivity models (Wanner, Lewis & Gregorio, 1981; Huettner & Clark, 1997; Rebne & Davidson, 1992), the normative scholarly publication medium for history faculty, at least in the beginning stages of their career, is the book. In both departments, the current requirement for tenure and promotion to the associate rank is a scholarly book published by a university or other reputable press. This requisite publication for all of our interviewees resulted from the revision of the faculty member’s dissertation. All of the junior faculty members know what is required of them. However, most dissertations are end products in themselves, written for a graduate faculty audience and not with a publication audience in mind.

For all but a single rising associate professor, extensive revisions were required. The process of revising their doctoral work into a manuscript of the quality demanded by a university or other reputable press dictates that, according to the faculty’s own description, they think more broadly in order to place the research findings into a larger context. Amplifying the relevance of the work compels the faculty again to read more broadly than they did during their doctoral work. One assistant professor, who resisted specialization at the beginning of his doctorate and wanted “to be a renaissance man, to know something about everything”, turned full circle when he realized the necessity to draw more extensive implications from his study. After receiving critiques on papers produced from preliminary work and teaching humanities courses at the university extension college, a junior faculty member began to see the culmination of his graduate work in a different light.
I came to think of my dissertation, I don’t want to say it was bad, but in some ways it was deficient. There were questions that it didn’t answer. I realized that my conceptualizing, my thinking was naive. I became more skeptical, more empirical and more cautious about intellectual claims. So I spent some time in history and literature and I began thinking about some other problems that my work might address, such as [several sociological concepts].... So I started salvaging the project, reformulating the problem.

Thus, the processes of preparing to teach, of lecturing itself, and of revising the dissertation for publication are all specific activities that induce new faculty to expand their declarative and procedural knowledge and in doing so, further develop their informal knowledge or historical “common sense”. This developing common sense permits faculty to reflect on and when necessary to modify their sustained conceptions and explanations of historical events by applying new, larger, or diverse perspectives.

Impressionistic Knowledge. As Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) argue, for people who do creative work of any kind, artistic, scientific, or practical, an important kind of judgment that must be made continually is judgment of promisingness. “...such knowledge of promisingness is the main thing that distinguishes creative from noncreative expertise” (p.58). What constitutes impressionistic knowledge or the judgment of promisingness at one stage of an historian’s career as opposed to another appears to change. As the junior faculty begin their professorial careers, they bring, emanating from their course work and dissertation, impressionistic knowledge that take at least three forms: intriguing, but often rudimentary research questions; negative and sometimes harsh judgments about existing historical literature in their specialty; and confusion about integrating areas of professional interest. Through the junior years, the acts of teaching and revising the dissertation for publication facilitates the elaboration and correction of the faculty
member’s impressionistic knowledge and impels them to begin to discriminate. Through their early years, juniors appear to begin to clarify the impressionistic knowledge with which they arrive in ways that correspond to disciplinary norms.

The least sophisticated type of impression that ultimately led to a dissertation results from discerning an obvious “hole” in the literature. Other dissertations arise from the impression that a topic can be explored via a new form of methodology. One assistant professor explained that she felt that her topic, on which a plethora of books already existed, might profit from using a fresh approach. She explained:

The work that was most sticking in my head was a book by [well-known author], where she writes about working class women in New York City during the antebellum period and really a very elusive group to get at. ...One of her main sources is trial records, domestic abuse cases, many cases of theft or something like that where people would go in to testify but they would have to describe other things in the process…. And I had found this really fascinating.

The initial impressions that intrigued junior faculty as dissertation students about their topics not surprisingly were based on their current declarative knowledge and personal value set. However, regardless of the primary attraction, the actual research often led to unpredictable findings. Several of the faculty shared that they saw possibilities with their topic, began their archival work with one set of expectations, and realized rapidly that they had to revise their early impressions. One assistant professor explained his interest in his topic as he began his dissertation. “I kind of had this romantic idea about [type of] workers were supposed to think and do.” As he began to focus on specifics, his impressions sharpened and he narrowed his project further.
I’d found some old histories of this [event] and they were just wrong…. And even with
the relatively little primary research I had done at the time on the business part of it, I
knew that there was something really wrong with that story. And so, I felt that I couldn’t
tell the story about the [type of] workers until I told the story about the [Company]. And, it pulled me in that direction.

Similar to this assistant professor, who admitted having been angry at the current portrayal of the topic, most of the faculty in their dissertation and subsequently in their junior years criticized the adequacy of the extant research on their topic. For one, rectifying the “story” was a matter of historical ethics, for others, it was arguing the efficacy of a different approach, whether conceptual or methodological. The process of revising the dissertation in the early years, whether for a monograph or articles, appears to have been a major force in assisting the faculty in characterizing their impressions of the inadequacy of the literature base and in elaborating their own arguments.

A third possible area of impressionistic knowledge may relate possibly only to an individual or may hint at a subtype that is particular to new faculty. One new junior appears to be drawn to new intriguing questions, but ones that are far removed from her specialization and more related to her personal experience in graduate school. At the time of the interview, while drawn to perceiving interesting questions in the new area, sophisticated pathways to discover solutions appeared not to be within her grasp. Her impressions seem to be more related to solving professional albeit personal issues rather than disciplinary concerns and perhaps exhibit personal temporizing rather than bone fide historical scholarly inquiry.

Self-regulating Knowledge. Self-regulating knowledge refers to individuals’ knowledge of what is required of them to operate at an expert level. It is not self-regulating behavior itself.
Having the knowledge, or knowing what is necessary, and acting on that knowledge are very different things. For junior faculty, self-regulating knowledge takes several forms. Not surprisingly, knowing how to manage stress and to juggle multiple demands seems to head the list as it does for most every new employee. Self-regulating knowledge also includes learning about and how to improve one’s work and research style and pace; recognizing the need to separate oneself from a graduate advisor and his/her style and methods; perceiving how to develop legitimacy in the profession, including visibility; and learning the value of criticism as well as the process of self-critiquing.

Obviously managing the day-to-day stresses associated with navigating a new institution takes a toll on the beginner. New colleagues with professorial styles and personalities abound. Many of the new faculty began to learn to teach while in graduate school, but few absorbed the role requirements of being a faculty member. A junior explained: “Being in this position (a tenure-track faculty member), I realize the value of time and set my priorities. When you have all the time in the world (in graduate school), you can agonize. I am stretched now, in life and in teaching. I have to set priorities and do what really counts.”

Relatively quickly, junior faculty are faced with having to decide who they are as professionals. One senior faculty member evoked the time when he had just arrived at his present institution: “I had three years of experience, but I was still very much of a beginner. I know that I felt as though I was doing an apprenticeship. Now, [former department chair] was across the hall from me and I really learned how to be a college professor from watching [first name]. I could see right into his office.” When asked what kinds of things he learned, he added: “How to deal with students. Restraint. And how to be an advocate for the students, go that extra mile…. A certain degree of grace under pressure, I don’t know if I actually learned that, but I learned it was a good thing, let’s put it that way.”
In addition to controlling attitudes and behaviors toward students and other demands, junior faculty must begin to resolve their professional values. Another senior faculty member spoke of his first years teaching in a major research university during which he began to develop his own professional orientation:

When I taught I played devil’s advocate to the students, but I had no idea what I felt myself. I used to push it, trying to get them to articulate a position. One topic was [controversial behavior] and the question of who did it first. I pushed them to look at morality from a cultural perspective. To think about what it is like to be the underdog.

Juggling the multiple institutional demands associated with teaching and advising takes energy, patience, and time. Preparing and delivering lectures for multiple courses, devising evaluation techniques for each class, advising both undergraduate and graduate students, directing honors theses, and participating in doctoral committees are some of the activities that new faculty must learn to do and squeeze into their harried schedules. On top of all of this, of course, the clock is ticking away the probation period at the end of which a completed book, either published or under contract, must be in hand. But, managing several projects and teaching is not easy (see Matveev, 2007 for an in-depth discussion of self-regulating behaviors among junior faculty). A young assistant professor, who by his own admission, has yet to determine how to self-regulate, explained:

I haven’t had much time to think about the (first, dissertation-based) book, I have been doing other papers, an article is just coming out. I have started to think about a second book. I am working on another article this summer and I am editing an anthology on the [major historical event], a reader with major articles.
Another element of junior self-regulating knowledge can be characterized as legitimacy issues. One subset of legitimacy is recognizing the need to disengage from one’s dissertation advisor and the process seems to be a very individual endeavor. The nature of the separation largely depends upon the character of the relationship itself. For most, the relationship was supportive and instructive albeit demanding. In these cases, advisors neither hold their advisees hostage or in debt, nor do the faculty maintain a dependent tether. A senior reminisced:

I was his only student. Again, I did not know this at the time because I was brand new there and he had only been there a brief while, but he had a forbidding reputation. Totally undeserved; a wonderful man. But he was a nationally prominent historian and I think that frightened off some of the graduate students. But, I was his only student for most of my time there and he was able to devote an enormous amount of attention to me. And that was very important; I rode his coattails, literally into my first job.

His advisor assisted him in establishing independence by suggesting that he submit part of his dissertation to a prominent journal. From that endeavor, the young faculty member began to establish his own contacts and gather additional assistance.

At one extreme though, an assistant professor, whose advisor is a renowned and successful historian, recognized his need to generate his own persona:

My advisor… is flashy and popular. It’s not me. I have come to realize that it is not my taste. I have found my voice by thinking about what he does and trying it a little. But compared to him, my other advisors were less concerned with the flowery and more with the argument. [When I found my voice] it was a wonderful liberation. I don’t agonize over it now. I am less tortured. So, it is not the writing, not the turn of the phrase, but the argument that counts.
At the other extreme, a new junior, who feels that she received very little advice while in graduate school, is struggling with the process of actualizing the required tenure monograph and is forced to seek guidance from professionals in her specialty on her own. “Getting the right advice and getting the mentoring, which, when I went to [country] on that research trip, I was just shocked to see how much, how helpful people’s advisors were, and I've been kind of this orphan and I'd done it. I'd managed to get there on my own. ...I have to fight against feeling bitter at times because of that.”

A second legitimacy issue is gaining recognition as an individual apart from the mentor and as a bone fide scholar. For one junior faculty member, the route has been through publishing and communicating with others on the Internet. For another, it was finally securing a tenure-track slot after two years in a visiting position. “It gives me the freedom to do what I want. That in a way, I don’t really care if somebody at the [archive] thinks I am doing an impossible project at this point. Because I can do what I like now. And I don’t have to, sort of say, ‘I’m a legitimate historian.’”

Finally, the last area of self-regulating knowledge is learning the value and methods of criticism both from others and from oneself. Within the dissertation process, the advisor and the committee provide criticism as well as a safety net to some degree. The individual is rarely in full control of the document. Advice and criticism from an advisor and from committee members may be understood and acceptable to a candidate or may represent intrusive constraints that leave a candidate with no choice but to adopt in order to have the dissertation be accepted. A necessary part of knowing how to regulate oneself appears to be learning how to control one’s own research and writing projects. And, a major aspect of this self-regulating knowledge of control is learning how to seek and accept criticism from others as well as learning the discipline of self-critique.
The heightened knowledge of other- and self-critique accrues from interactions with three sources: students, departmental colleagues, and external colleagues, including editors.

Several junior faculty have found students, both graduate and undergraduate, to be good sounding boards against which they can practice their scholarly arguments, either in class or on paper. “I could do these lectures and students would hear every word and would throw back any contradictions, any problems, any questions that they had, in your face. And that was so great. I mean it just so exciting that they were awake and alert and I could really test my ideas.” This assistant professor cited two freshmen who assisted him in rethinking parts of his scholarship. One, challenging an assumption the assistant professor made in class, wrote a national undergraduate prize-winning paper. The student’s argument convinced the faculty member to rethink a certain event and change a section in his book. Due to an odd number of students in the course, the other was paired up with the faculty member for a class exercise on critiquing. The student isolated an implicit argument which the assistant professor had not made explicit in a paper he shared for the exercise.

The act of critiquing and evaluating student papers produces a heightened awareness of the mechanics of a good argument also.

I am able to look at the material now more objectively. It has been some time since finishing the dissertation and that has allowed me to think about what I am saying. I can advise myself. Because I read student papers, I am able to criticize myself more. I am able to do exactly what I ask my students to do. I think I am able to have a certain amount of distance from the work and have a critical or dispassionate attitude toward it. When I read drafts, I ask about the relevance to the questions being asked in the field. I am much less concerned about the quality of the writing, of how I construct the sentence. I know
from experience that the real issue is the argument, relevance, and the importance of the research.

Clearly, faculty learn to be more self-evaluative from peer reviews also. Some have benefited from colleagues in their departments, both by asking for reactions on specific work and by participating in informal conversations. Conversations with colleagues at meetings become invaluable resources for several of the junior faculty. One explained that “from doing conference papers, I have gotten a sense of my strengths and weaknesses. I have gotten some good comments from people in the audience and sometimes the commentators. But I also meet people who are interested in my work and want to know more. They sometimes offer to read my work.”

An assistant professor, however, knows what type of criticism he needs but feels that he is not getting it from formal external sources:

I gave a paper as a job talk a couple of years ago and got lots of good criticism. And that the thing I think that I need is, at this point, not help but somebody to say, “I don’t buy it or, prove it.” But for some reason, the historical associations don’t do that. I don’t know why. In my experience, I mean, I’m not sure... Maybe it’s because the people who read the things, read them on the plane and you know their comments are right off [the top of their heads].

One of the seniors who believed that we would find no differences, bragged that the juniors in his department were top-notch scholars who all were graduated from excellent doctoral programs. Indeed, the juniors are all experts on their topics with deep formal knowledge. However, being a faculty member entails more than being an authority in one narrow area of research. As the probation period unfolds, junior faculty elaborate their formal knowledge, historical content and methods. As they teach and write, they read broadly expanding their
knowledge, especially in areas that required less specialization during their course work and dissertation. As they teach and write, they correct and modify the ways they interpret history. The elaboration and correction of their epistemic narratives allow them to discriminate more and more in their specialty, devising new ways to see, to interpret, to analyze, and to evaluate.

The process is not an easy one though. For junior faculty members, the number of issues with which they are coping and trying to control is legion. The publication of their first book and earning tenure, however, provides not only the experiences necessary to move ahead, but also professional approval. This approbation conveys to them that they are headed in the appropriate direction.

*Mid-Level Faculty*

If mid-level faculty can be characterized at all succinctly, their manifest qualities consist of perceiving new vistas, seeking and acquiring new areas of knowledge unrelated to those assigned by the department, and learning how to calculate and take risks. Across the three types of knowledge used here to interpret the narratives of the faculty, these three qualities are readily apparent and ubiquitous. The basis for the marked change is a modicum of professional self-assurance that was not found to be conventional among junior faculty. Self-confidence without doubt is derived from a two-step process: the publication of their first book (or less common, first articles) and the conferral of tenure and promotion.

Full membership in this second stage of professorial life apparently frees faculty to pursue new avenues in their research and teaching. The book publication is clearly the first step in moving into this second level in the professorial role and in elaborating expertise. “I think probably the biggest moment of change was when my book came out actually. I mean literally the scholarship, I think I felt then I sort of entered the profession in a real way,” explained the
rising associate. Once notified of the contract, faculty begin to acquire the formerly elusive composure.

Without the contract or publication, tenure is impossible. With the contract or publication, tenure is possible but not guaranteed. The evaluation for tenure consists of more than merely the presence of one product. However, the publication of the book often conveys essential external approbation, which augments the candidate’s legitimacy and appeal. Good reviews of the book provide not only external validation of the promise and potential for future performance to the institution, but apprise the faculty member of his or her credibility and professional acceptance at an especially important career event. The one “rising associate” in our set has not received the official conferral and she explained:

In terms of tenure, I’ve tried to adopt the philosophy of one of my colleagues who went up last year, which was, she’s done what she can do and that there’s no point of getting overly stressed about it now, ‘cause there’s nothing that can be changed at this point. So I am worried about the outside letters. Fortunately, a fair number of them had already provided advanced blurbs for my book, but the larger part of the process is virtually out of my control.

Thus, the mid-level position is gained through surmounting both major hurdles, a monograph publication and tenure. With the latter of course, generally comes promotion to the associate rank. The increase in rank appears to be the least important milestone for the individual faculty member and is merely a consequence of their accomplishment. The rank of associate professor may well be more a symbolic indication for those professionals external to the individual that the two hurdles were achieved.
Informal Knowledge. Informal knowledge among the mid-level faculty seems to result from a search, whether explicit or not, for new challenges. Mid-level faculty generally have finished publishing out of their dissertation. Some, although not all, abandon their topic, but not necessarily their specialty. Mid-level faculty also have prepared and taught a group of courses for numerous years, and through their probation years have explored various analytic and methodological schools of thought and implications concerning the historical content of those courses. For every member of our set, a new project emerged. Mid-level faculty members deliberately pursue a wholly new research topic derived from personal interest, stumble onto a new way of looking at their specialty, or explore a new area using a pet conceptual framework.

The new explorations arise from personal interests, course preparations, or a combination of the two. The new projects also tend to be interdisciplinary in nature. That mid-level faculty should begin to ask questions by using concepts and subjects from other fields should not be a surprise. They began to broaden their formal knowledge and thus commenced to extend their informal knowledge during their junior years. Connections between non-historical disciplinary theories and concepts and their formal history content knowledge produce new informal knowledge or common-sense understandings. Quite often, the connections result directly from combining early interests with explorations that result from teaching assignment.

A senior scoffed at first when one of his doctoral students in the late 1970s suggested that he explore history through a related discipline, which meant using different sources of data. “When I came here I had total disrespect for it, you know they used to call it [jocular name] history when I was coming along. I had no knowledge of it and didn’t think it was important.” Taking a risk, he submitted a paper for a meeting of the other discipline and found an exciting new set of colleagues with whom he maintains contact. For many in the study, an advanced level of informal knowledge commenced through the adoption of a new model for looking at historical
questions and the advanced level of expert behavior emerged as a direct result of their ventures. Books and articles testing and demonstrating the models resulted in each case.

Another senior, rather than directly bridging into a new area of research decided to explore instructional matters. “My book got accepted with [university] Press and I was pretty well assured survival. And so then I started taking a look at teaching.” For the next decade, his experimentation has focused on generating a better approach to his classes. Yet, as a result of pursuing new knowledge for his courses, he perceived a new line of research out of his original dissertation and first book topic.

In my particular case, it came entirely unexpected. One part of this was [a social scientific] explanation for this [phenomenon] and that got me into [a group] who were unbelievably interesting. I’d been doing a lot of other things, learning quantitative methods and statistical analysis and that sort of thing, adding this and adding that. So, I kept on researching [type] history and a part of that started developing into [social science concept] and how it came about and that produced [my second book].

These faculty members have followed the mid-level pattern of pursuing a second project with a new perspective. One shifted her research to a different time period and historical phenomenon, but wishes to further develop the conceptual framework she explored in the first book. “I think what’s more of a contribution of my book is the way that it brings different things together than it’s saying anything on its own terms that’s particularly new.” Another remains interested in a certain class of people, but pursues their story in a very different time, place, and circumstance. And this time, he exclaims,

You know, in a way, I’m kind of glad that that project’s over and the other project that I want to do now is more, is about [type of place], War [place]. [Type of people] in groups,
sort of. It’s a pretty drastic change, shift in period of time. But yeah, I know, it’s true, it was a kind of anger that pushed me through the finishing of the [dissertation and book]. I’m excited about, I’m more kind of, I love this project!

**Impressionistic Knowledge.** Given the explorations that mid-level faculty engage in, the characteristics of their impressionistic knowledge should not be surprising. Their forays into new areas appear to enlarge the scope of their questions and applications. Mid-levelers detect fresh and innovative opportunities for scholarship within new areas of research. In many cases, these innovations inspire changes in the faculty’s teaching and open new avenues of scholarly publications. When a senior began employing a new medium for classes as a mid-level professor, he sensed application beyond the classroom and into his research. “But something occurred to me, I thought, well why, why couldn’t an historian in addition to using, systematically using illustrative material in courses, [examples], let’s say, why not use [it] for evidence of the reconstruction of attitudes and assumptions, modes of perceptions, historical mentalities?” Through experiments with his new methodological application, he not only published articles, but developed an instructional tool, first for his own course and then eventually for a wider consumption. It is “distributed it to all of the institutions that adopted [a publisher’s] textbook. It’s not sold commercially though it has an ISBN number. I’m told it’s being used in 400 American colleges and universities.”

Indeed, the impressionistic knowledge of a mid-level faculty member builds on the original formal and informal knowledge, but expands as years of reading, teaching, and writing accumulate. In the narratives of the faculty, whether currently in the mid-level or reminiscing from the senior vantage point, each of the faculty seemed to have distinct and salient events that brought them to this distillation of experiences (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993) that comprise their
impressionistic knowledge. The memory of that realization or recognition of the new method, perspective, event, group, or phenomenon is as fresh as the day it occurred.

**Self-Regulating Knowledge.** Achieving control over their career activities, including their research agenda, teaching style and content, and professional participation, is a primary activity of the mid-levelers. Within these activities are hints of self-regulating knowledge. Knowing how to achieve this mid-level degree of control means distinguishing ways to manage the new projects, and acknowledging and testing the new areas of interest. Since the projects arise from choices resulting from personal interests, their exploration tends to be stimulating and less daunting. As their impressionistic knowledge develops, allowing them to perceive innovative and fresh approaches, questions, or applications, they are willing to entertain the professional risk that attends engaging in a new line of inquiry. And since the personal interests appear to build upon the accumulating informal and impressionistic knowledges, the faculty voluntarily shoulder additional preparations needed to fulfill the new project. Further, anxiety from producing scholarship according to an imposed external deadline lessens once the tenure and promotion hurdle has been cleared. Indeed, the element of choice is characteristic of the mid-level faculty activities.

For a rising associate, increased knowledge of self-regulation results from analyzing historical methods in order to teach students the “proper way” to go about research. She is less anxious about focusing and controlling her scholarship as a result of teaching methods courses.

I think just having to try to explain what we do as historians, I mean, I find this conversation actually helpful. You know, because you gotta stop and think about constantly what you do…. I didn’t always do my own projects in the same way but I had
to really stop and think, if you were doing a research project, what would be the logical various steps that you would go through? And no one ever did that with me.

As a result of expanding her network of colleagues, she has also discovered that her methods are not as atypical as she once thought. “I felt it was this deep dark secret that I really didn’t read this stuff, but then when I talked to another colleague, he said, “I almost never read what other historians write.’ And I remember this was this really freeing moment.”

Concentration and focus seem to increase. The one associate professor who is relatively close to her final promotion explained her immediate plans, which require retooling to be prepared.

Write a third book. Well, to me, it's been most intense intellectual activity. I am trying at this point to branch out into different fields. I'm working on my [foreign language] so that I look into different sources. The world has gotten tired of [another foreign language] because [country]'s position in the world has altered considerably even in the 25 years since I started studying about [its] history…. I would like to shift fields…. I want to switch into a more recent area, so I can link up more directly with [related social] issues and with current problems in [two related fields] as opposed to staying in the more distant historical arena. The connections are there but historians have difficulty seeing them. I could work in --th Century on [technical application] or something like that.

With professional contacts and networks being cultivated and scholarly products accepted, the need for external approbation lessens. During his mid-level years, one of the seniors wrote an article focusing on members of a dominant group who adopted the culture of the subordinate group. Not only was this piece his first in a prestigious history journal, but also was the issue’s lead article and has been “reprinted dozens of times.” This article led to an invitation by the journal to do a major review of the state-of-the-art for his sub-field a short time later. This piece
helped to build his reputation “which was totally undeserved. But I must have been doing something right.”

Rather than being a daunting prospect, switching into or exploring new areas is enervating for mid-level faculty. They build on previously acquired knowledge and experience, but take chances with new, yet more controlled projects. The result is more confidence coping with the requirements of the position. For the mid-level faculty, this period and the processes attending it is exciting. Gaining control over their teaching and over their scholarship as well as exploring the areas they find of interest takes time, but rather than having a dissertation committee or a promotion and tenure committee demarcating their actions, they are freer to venture into new areas than possibly ever before.

**Senior Faculty**

Synthetic, authoritative, calibrated, and guiding are the four descriptors that appear to characterize the senior faculty in general. Whether talking about their research or their teaching, the words and images they use about their activities exhibit these four dispositions. By synthetic, we mean that they tend to write scholarship and to teach classes that bring areas of their expertise together. Authoritative refers to the voice and stance that they assume and the authority extended to them within their departments and fields as a result of a career life of recognized scholarship. By calibrated, we find the senior faculty in the enviable position of being able to pick and choose what they wish to do. And finally, by guiding, they reveal through their work with students and other professionals that they share their expertise through good counsel, inclusion, and concern for the welfare, scholastic and otherwise, of others.

*Informal Knowledge.* The informal knowledge of the senior faculty spans not only a wealth of formal knowledge within their primary specialty, but includes formal knowledge from
other areas of history and other disciplines, following decades of broad reading. Each of the faculty has written extensively and has taught a variety of courses. Their informal knowledge represents not only the “common sense” of their specialization, but takes into account information and strategies from other areas. As experts they see relationships that are not obvious to others. In one senior’s words:

The reason you find questions is because you get involved in information. Well, first off it is the resources you’re looking at. ...At the moment I am working on an article in which I am pulling in political, economic and social theory to examine; this is the crux of the whole thing, trying to explain. It is an interaction, it is a constant interaction. You are constantly trying to create things. It’s not an inspirational effort.

Overwhelmingly, they tend to produce scholarship and instruction that pull from this vast storage of knowledge. Another senior, the author of several volumes of essays on his primary specialty, is once again pursuing a secondary interest that he has carried throughout most of his career. Collecting material at this point, he returns to satisfying a boyhood interest, by researching the life of an influential architect of social policy.

A celebrated master teacher, a third senior demonstrated this synthetic nature while discussing his general approach to his classes. He used an example of employing a musical film in one undergraduate class:

You realize that my teaching style can best be described as “seat of the pants,” you know, whatever works. This is awfully hard to articulate because it’s more instinct than it’s thought out. But by using something that is certainly funny and obviously never happened, it gets them away from the notion that past politics is present history and present politics is future history. I get them away from that. I get them away from the time-line…. Let’s think about this from an entirely new perspective.
Whereas junior faculty appear to be concerned with presenting the theories of others as well as testing their own discrete theories, whether to a professional audience or to students, the seniors seem to synthesize, to apply broader strokes, and to meld ideas from a rich array of knowledge.

*Impressionistic Knowledge.* The compelling activity that dominates the lives of the seniors is providing connections (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993). Each one in turn while discussing their current professional lives, whether in the classroom or at the desk, consistently revealed their felt need to draw insights from their experiences in their discipline and to create synthetic products.

Considering his prolific writing career, one senior explained that he now is driven to write about as many of his ideas as he can before retiring. He described his strategy for the past decades:

> All of the books I write, with the exception of the first two, have been written to fill a need of courses. I write them and go into the classroom, invite the students to criticize, then I deliver a paper, and then write it up. The courses expand my ideas. My goal is to write everything there is on my topic. Ten or 11 years ago, it was to finish two books.

This senior has produced at least seven volumes of essays and lectures that he has written and presented within the recent decade. Most have focused on his specialty, but he has scrutinized a secondary issue as well.

Another senior, demonstrated that he perceived a need to connect history with a relatively new conceptualization from another social science, thereby conveying a new approach to the analysis of his time period. In doing so, he revealed another medium through which senior scholars bring to bear their need to synthesize.
Other kinds of works that senior historians would do, conceiving of a collection of original papers; I organized about a dozen of my colleagues in [two other countries] and this country and asked them to produce 8,000 word papers, original research, that is, archivally-based on topics that fit the theme of [time period and school of thought]. And so, I conceived the book and gave shape to it and contributed my own original paper.

When asked the source of the conception of this edited volume, he stated, “It grows out of research, in other words, the way research is moving in one field.” With a great smile, he continued,

So, to understand the way the [institution] really worked in the --th Century, we need to know something about the unseen, the values, the assumptions, the modes of perception, or what I call the rules of the game. I, in fact, define [delimiting concept of the book]; somewhat to my delight and surprise, I find that I am being quoted. The one sentence in the book that’s being quoted is the first one or the first two sentences because I offer a definition for specialists in non-jargon language of what [delimiting concept] is.

Another example of connective thinking within impressionistic knowledge is evidenced by a senior faculty member who was asked to write a retrospective essay. He admitted that at first he did not think that he was the person to write the essay. Others in the department, he believed, were more connected to the topic. But,

I got the invitation to do it. And I sort of set back and thought about all of my experiences here [place], which is like Mecca to [period historians] anyway. And what is it that I have seen happen over the last 20 years? It turns out that I was probably a very good choice for this because I had no axes to grind; it was not my particular interest…. I found that it was not an onerous task. And it was very satisfying to figure out what I thought were the main
themes of history as applied to [state and region]. And there probably would not have been a lot of people that would have brought all that stuff into it.

*Self-regulating Knowledge.* Having reached the pinnacle of the professorate, control and confidence are the two primary characteristics of the seniors within this category. They know primarily how to control their professional lives and know that they possess attributes that are accepted and esteemed. As a result, they know when and why they should accept or reject new projects or assignments offered by others. They also want to share their accumulated expertise, whether with students, their professional colleagues, or the public. So, mentoring and professional leadership, whether in the form of disciplinary governance or conceptual modeling, become regulating behaviors during the senior years.

Most of the seniors possess these qualities. Seniors control their professional lives by knowing when to accept or reject the various offers they receive. Saying yes or no does not constitute the only knowledge required though. Knowing how to regulate work habits in order to fulfill the affirmative answers is the complementary piece. One senior related, “In general, I have resisted other invitations. I have too many of my own things to write about.” He did, however, accept an invitation from a major university press several years ago to write a piece timed to appear on the occasion of a major, but controversial, cultural milestone. Given the latitude to write from whatever perspective he wanted, he accepted the challenge. Given, however, a short lead, “there was no time to waste.” Using two fellowships and a sabbatical, he managed to take two semesters off from teaching, thereby creating a leave that constituted more than a full calendar year. To gain the background he wanted, he took a graduate seminar and to push himself to begin researching and writing, he proposed a paper on the subject for a
conference. Thus, the self-regulating knowledge here was identifying the best way to manage the project.

In a similar vein, having gained legitimacy through their scholarly efforts, the seniors understand the real purpose in reading papers at conventions and find little function in participating for the sake of being seen. Another senior explained:

I think producing papers for conferences or grant proposals, they’re preliminary to or they’re part of the writing of an article or chapter in a book. I think that giving a paper at a conference is anti-climatic spiritually, it doesn’t do a damn thing for me. But, it’s the preparation for it that is, I think, probably important because you have a deadline and you have to produce a twelve-page paper, you’ve got to fax it to your commentator, and push, push, push. But the giving of the paper, no. It’s, you know, you might as well circulate it among friends and have them read it and send you critical comments, might even be better, but you have to take the next step, you have to develop that paper and keep it going and get something published. Just giving your conference paper for the sake of going to conferences, that’s a waste of time. Ah, it’s there, yes, but to what purpose?

A second part of controlling one’s professional life is to ascertain tributary professional opportunities when invited to participate. Two seniors have within the decade been asked by their institutions to organize substantial conferences in situ. One senior explained that the president of the university asked him to organize an international conference to “mark the anniversary of the accession of [two dignitaries].” It was the kick-off actually of the [university’s founding]. Out of it eventually came a book of readings that he edited.

Finally, saying “no” has a purpose also. The long-term associate professor, approaching “seniorhood”, is learning to regulate her professional life by not participating in everything that comes her way. When asked how she can refuse invitations, she explained:
I do it all the time. I'm still not as good at it as I want to be. But, I'll tell you one trick, once you’ve done it, it gets easier. It does. ‘Cause you don't feel like you've got the right to say no. Once you've said it, you realize that life goes on. They've found someone else to do it, this vital task. It didn't go undone. Then you realize that you can do it. I used to be like that. Even to things I should not have done, I was really not qualified to do. And I shouldn’t have been doing. And, again, it's partly this job. If I am going to survive in this and still get on my research I had to put a stop to some of these ancillary things.

The self-regulating knowledge of seniors also includes mentoring and professional leadership. This knowledge is manifested in several forms and forums. Senior faculty members share their beliefs and values with others and give counsel to and model apposite professional behavior for undergraduate and graduate students. Often, senior faculty members are honored by their institutions for their contributions. Some find this an opportunity to mentor. Having been named to one of a number of newly-endowed chairs at the university several years ago, one professor disclosed that “there were six people and we all gave inaugural addresses, which is a nice custom, but has fallen into abeyance. Actually, that was one of the most pleasurable things I ever did. I gave a talk called, ‘History as Imagination,’ which was really my philosophy of history and of education at that point. It was really fun to put together, very personal.”

Most of the senior faculty discussed at length their unconditional desire to encourage students, both undergraduate and graduate, to pursue learning, teaching, and scholarship with the same passion and standards they practice. With graduate students, the faculty are concerned that they learn to conduct research and to teach properly and that they succeed professionally.
As the head of the graduate program in her department, the long-term associate voiced her objectives in rehearsing graduate students for their professional lives. She intuitively focuses not only on the declarative and procedural, but suggests teaching self-regulating knowledge.

Partly what you're trying to do is to form in people an attitude toward teaching that is what you took from your teachers and that is the way that traditionally first year professors and college teachers have been trained. And for all the flaws, I think it's a good system. That is one of the things that you are trying to teach. How do you feel about things, what are the dominant debates? How do you establish what your values are in teaching? Such as clarity of presentation, excitement of material, encouraging self-motivation, oral presentation, writing...establishing your values. And then once you have a sense of those values, how do get there?

For their undergraduate students, they are equally passionate. One professor delineated his instructional goals, which focus on the students’ acquisition of declarative and procedural knowledge:

As far as I’m concerned, for the undergraduates, the juniors and seniors, I want them to understand the idea of process of human experience over time, to extract some meaning of the role of time in human life. Secondly to enlighten their writing skills, that’s why there’s all the writing. The third is to sharpen critical...the ability to criticize something both in terms of strengths and weaknesses. That’s why that critique paper is in the syllabus. Those are my major goals. I think there’s a fourth one lurking in there some place but it is basically the skills of organization, interpretation, reasoning, and develop a critiquing attitude and then just to have, for a foundation, the bulk data.

Transitions
Although moving from one rank to another is a clean and discrete act or event, moving from one level of expertise to the next is not. Earning a higher rank obviously does not guarantee that all of the requisite knowledge associated with the characteristics prevalent in that rank have been acquired. Nor does the awarding of rank automatically propel a faculty member into a new level of understanding. Much like rites of passage in pre-literate tribes however, achieving a new rank apparently does signify new associated sociological roles and psychological patterns of thinking. Much like the initiatives who endure the rites and enter a new stage in life, achieving a new rank means that social interactions change, new responsibilities are ascribed, and a modified concept of self emerges (see van Gennep, 1960).

The transition from one stage of expertise to another for the history faculty we studied is a process by which an individual grows by adopting the characteristic forms of knowledge that seem to be normative for each level. Certain activities and milestone events appear to pull the individual toward this adoption. Clearly, the act of reading, of gaining more formal knowledge, is requisite to generating new informal knowledge. And broadening one’s control of the literature of the field as well as delving into other fields is dependent upon the individual’s desire to explore and to learn. It is self-initiated.

The many forms of social approbation, however, are fundamental components in the process of transition. Without the acceptance gained from colleagues, students, and the institutional markers of tenure and promotion, faculty would be hard put to develop confidence in their work. Without acceptance at the junior level, the faculty member would not receive tenure and at least in that environment, what confidence might exist would be hard to retain. The presence of approbation appears to ease and perhaps even propel faculty toward the next level, raising a whole new set of challenges. The one rising associate summed up her feelings as she
waits for her tenure decision at the university and demonstrates that she is progressing through the transition into the mid-level.

I don’t know if I feel different in terms of my place in the profession. I feel, having had a book out and reviewed, so that, when I went to a conference in April, people I never met could say, “Oh, I’ve read your book.” You know, that made me feel like I had sort of come of age to a certain extent. But I am very quickly feeling a pretty serious pressure, which is probably self-imposed, but might be somewhat external to have another book and to not be a one-book wonder, to not be someone who takes 20 years to come out with another book.

According to our analysis, her present task would appear to be increasing her self-regulating knowledge. She discussed at length her concern about her second research project. “I am very, very nervous. I’m not sure I can do it again. I don’t know when I am going to find the time to do it. I mean it’s harried, this graduate school scene, in retrospect it seems pretty leisurely and with this teaching load, I just don’t see really being able to do it.” Yet, she spent this past summer in the archives in a continuing attempt to flesh out her new project.

Moving from the mid-level to the senior level requires a different set of challenges. As faculty gain more control and confidence in their work, they look for new opportunities and appear to develop new ways of sharing their expertise. The long-term associate professor who is progressing toward promotion forecasted her long-term objectives. Indeed, they are aligned with the characteristics found among the senior faculty.

I’d like to find a way to position myself to speak to a larger audience than the narrow perception of a group of historians, which is something that I think as you get older you want to try to set the public value of what you do. You want them to know the pure joy of research, compiling historical knowledge. Then I think the desire is there to connect with
publics and politics or something like that. That is something I'm trying to do. But, you know, it's pretty academic still. I think it's something people often want to do. They have learned how to be an historian and they've made their contribution to straight line academic history. And, they want to try to find out how they can be more approachable to a general audience…. There's a historical background to everything that happens, you know.

Conclusions

Informally, we have noticed in ourselves and others a surge in public confidence once tenure and the rank of associate professor were awarded that was not visible while in the lower rank. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) argue that “knowledge is just one more factor to be added in with personality, aptitude, and social factors to account for expertise” (p. 44). To what extent then is the apparent professional confidence gained from the social approbation of promotion and how is this confidence related to expertise?

We believe that patterns can be discerned about the development of expertise in faculty as they progress through the ranks. Although the interviews suggest that patterns exist by rank, we do not believe that rank is the sole or dominant force in this growth. Rather, as one might suspect, a combination of factors exist that propel and guide faculty toward control and confidence in their expertise. We still hold though that rank is a more important social role than the research would have us believe. Although it may be symbolic in nature, it is a signifier to professional colleagues, to students, to the public, and to the individual who has earned it that this person has achieved a certain level of expertise in their field.

We suggest further research be conducted on the topic of expertise and faculty. The strand of work that Baldwin and Blackburn (1981) began in the early 1980s has led many
researchers to look at the emotional development, needs, and satisfaction of faculty. From this chain of research, many faculty development programs were initiated. However, junior faculty appear to receive the bulk of the assistance. We believe our findings indicate the need for additional considerations for faculty as they progress through the ranks though. The development of their disciplinary expertise must not be taken for granted and indeed, could be advanced and expedited with more deliberate mentoring.

If the characteristics we have found are any indication of progressive scholarly maturation, faculty members require differential consideration and assistance as they progress through the ranks. The continual ratcheting up of the productivity culture that has been developing through the last two decades promotes a stressful environment, one that may not stimulate scholarly development or the development of expertise. Junior faculty require senior faculty colleagues, both “at home” and in the profession, with whom to discuss and dissect their ideas and to learn discrimination and self-pacing. Mid-level faculty need encouragement, time, and resources to explore new areas of application. Senior faculty require fora in which they are stimulated to share their accumulated expertise.
Table 1. Matrix of Historians’ Developing Professional Expert Behaviors

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Informal</th>
<th>Impressionistic</th>
<th>Self-regulating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Junior</strong></td>
<td>gains knowledge from reading across specialty areas &amp; draws from doctoral courses and then teaching; research is influenced by informal knowledge not available to authors of current literature</td>
<td>due to heavy dose of formal knowledge acquired in dissertation, sees intriguing questions to ask about dissertation topic; often sees literature as bad or inadequate for explaining new approach; cannot always fit new ideas or areas together</td>
<td>attempts to manage stress, juggles multiple demands; begins learning patterns of own work and research style/pace; creates from original data; deals with legitimacy issues: separation from mentor and professional visibility; begins learning self-critique through peer reviews and student reactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mid-level</strong></td>
<td>looks for or stumbles onto new way of looking or exploring original ideas (often 2nd book), opening new vistas; need to increase knowledge but combined with existing informal; begins new level of informal knowledge; new qualitative models emerge</td>
<td>senses opportunity within new areas; perceives broader questions or applications</td>
<td>manages acquisition of new formal knowledge by choice; is stimulated by exploration; less legitimacy anxiety; formal concentration/ focus increases; controls new projects; takes chances; develops more deliberate professional networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senior</strong></td>
<td>broadens interests due to informal knowledge cutting across specialty; employs synthetic informal knowledge and tends toward the applied</td>
<td>sees need to draw insights together; synthesizes; create new courses based on interests</td>
<td>controls professional life, can accept or refuse new projects or assignments; can take on leadership or mentoring with confidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resources


http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classifications/


Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.


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2 For the analysis, the relevant parts of the senior faculty members’ narratives of their early and mid-years of their careers and the early years of the mid-level faculty members’ careers were included in the two lower categories to enhance the data sets.