DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 220 429 SP 020 662

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TITLE The Emerging Professoriate. A Study of How New Professors Spend Their Time.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 22p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Teachers; *Career Development; Career Ladders; *College Faculty; Educational Research; *Faculty Workload; Higher Education; Noninstructional Responsibility; *Role Perception; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Educators; Teacher Employment; Teacher Orientation; Time Blocks; *Work Attitudes

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to gain better understanding of the work of new professors. Because time is a common constraint for all, it served as the standard measuring tool for describing their work. Three questions were investigated: (1) How do new professors spend their time with respect to their job-related work? (2) Are there some kinds of work new professors believe they should spend more time doing? and (3) What insights do new professors have about their jobs and themselves in the professoriate? The sample was selected from professors who graduated from 14 high-ranked colleges of education and who were completing their first, second, or third year of teaching. Of the 475 survey forms completed and returned, 206 were from "new professors," but only 191 were under full-time contracts. Findings indicated that new professors devoted a high proportion of their job-related work to teaching, advising, and administrative matters. Given the option, they would not take on many more of these tasks. They also engaged in relatively little personal or professional development. New professors recognized this deficit in their experience, and, neither on a peer nor on a mentor level, did they cite scholarly collegiality. New professors engaged in relatively little research and scholarship, though they were keenly aware that they should be committing more time and energy to this work. Though not a direct finding of this study, a realization emerged that institutions of higher education quickly lost contact with even their most recent doctoral graduates. It was also noted that a large percentage of doctoral graduates in education did not immediately pursue academic careers. (JD)

# THE EMERGING PROFESSORIATE
## A Study of How New Professors Spend Their Time

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## Abstract

The quality of any institution of higher education can be linked to the quality of its professoriate. Continued excellence in the institution is dependent on acquiring high quality faculty and sustaining their work over a number of years. While all schools and colleges within a university seek to do so, for schools and college of education it has become especially difficult.

A survey was conducted to describe the current work experience of recent doctoral graduates who are new professors in institutions of higher education. The sample was selected from graduates of top graduate institutions. The survey instrument gathered information on the hours of work, the major time commitments, the desired time commitments, and a major problem or insight of the respondent as well as some brief demographic information.

Results of the analyses reveal differences between the kinds of things new professors spend most of their time doing and those things they believe they should spend more time doing. Their actual work tasks vary with the amount of time they work each week. Six clusters of work-related activities were empirically derived and profiles of new professors were developed. The implications of this research for graduate programs, for the career paths of new professors, and for institutions of higher education are drawn.

The study of what happens to new professors as they embark on their careers has not very often been undertaken. Knowledge of new professors in a single field, such as education, or the fine arts, or engineering is even more limited. It would seem that the initiating experience, like that in many careers, is forgotten by most; few professors look back on their rookie years for anything more than amusement, or as a yardstick to gauge "how far I've come." And which professor can recall with clarity those words of advice from a senior colleague given at the start of a career? Consider those given to S. Levin:

> . . . Since talking with you I have confidence in your ability to do a good job. As I said, we're looking for people who can hold up their end of it and keep the department running smoothly. This is a fine place to start your college teaching, and if you're our type, it's a good place to stay. We don't pretend we're anything more than a typical American state college. The atmosphere is relaxed. There's no 'publish or perish' hanging over everybody's head. There are no geniuses around to make you uncomfortable. (Malamud, A New Life, 1961, p. 37)

Malamud notwithstanding, entry into the professoriate is largely an unstudied phenomenon.

Some knowledge and a perspective on the experience may be gained, however, from several, more-encompassing studies in which the early years of professorship are included. These general approaches theorize about the nature of college teaching and research, and apply recently mapped configurations of adult development to professorial roles. This range of work gives a factual balance to the fictional topography displayed by Malamud. It affords an intersection at which to begin.

David Riesman (1959) spoke on the topic of the development of scholars in the social sciences at a 1958 symposium on "The College Teacher." After describing what, at that time, seemed to be the patterns of motivation and entry to that field, he named a number of

characteristics of the professorial role.

> What is perhaps most characteristic in the work of the college professor is not his relatively low salary ... nor the fact that he grows older while his charges do not ... but rather that he sets his own goals; the goals are not given by an institution ... it is this freedom, I am sure, that attracts so many to the profession . . . .
>
> But no one should underestimate the miseries of having to set one's own goals. (p. 159-60)

Setting those goals, adhering to a course that will lead to their accomplishment, and identifying an audience that will appreciate the effort are major role tasks. Incorporated in the tasks is the challenge to find true colleagues: a constituent group or groups that will support and stimulate continued growth without becoming idolized disciples or self-aggrandizing contemporaries.

Daniel Levinson (1978) wrote not about professors, but about adult male development. He uses the term "the Dream" to name one of the first major tasks of the early adult:

> In its primordial form, the Dream is a vague sense of self-in-adult-world. It has the quality of a vision, an imagined possibility that generates excitement and vitality. At the start it is poorly articulated and only tenuously connected to reality . . . .
>
> Whatever the nature of his Dream, a young man has the developmental task of giving it greater definition and finding ways to live it out. (p. 91)

The Dream is similar to but not identical with Riesman's professorial task of defining a goal; the latter is less amorphous than the former. By chance, the four case studies in Levinson's Seasons include a university professor, but the early years are not described in detail in "The Life of John Barnes, Biologist." Barnes entered the professoriate after several years of graduate study with a prominent scientist who also acted as his mentor. The goals toward which he strove

became markers in realizing his Dream.

> His career was marked by rapid growth and advancement. At 28, he was a relatively unformed novice, working in his mentor's laboratory. By 30, after a fellowship abroad, he found an exciting problem of his own on the frontier of his field and accepted an assistant professorship . . . .
>
> Two years of painstaking, solitary experimentation led to an important discovery at 32, clearly a high point in his life . . . . (p. 262)

A year later Barnes gained tenure, further forging a reality from his Dream and being graced for his efforts, at least in this formal way, with a colleague constituency.[1]

Another direct application of development theory to the life of a professor was undertaken by Roger Baldwin (1979). He contrasts three theories--Levinson's of adult development, Super's, and Hall and Nougaim's of career development--and applies them to the career of a college professor. Again, in the earliest stage, which Baldwin limits to the first three years of full-time college teaching, the major tasks are the setting of initial goals/establishment of a Dream, and the location of a mentor who will help in the pursuit.[2] Based on this framework, Baldwin conducted a study of liberal arts college professors at different career stages. (It is unclear in the article how extensive the study was or if a procedure other than interviewing was employed.) Though he found commonalities among professors at all stages--career goals such as the intellectual and personal development of students, contribution to knowledge, and teaching in the college environment generally--he also found differences among his subjects related to years of experience. "Teaching and research gradually take smaller portions of time, while department and college affairs, outside service, and professional activities take progressively more" (p. 16).

"Difficult times" occur at different stages of the career, the first few years being cited as one such time. Independence and satisfaction with being a professor also grow with time. It is useful to quote from Baldwin's composite of professors in the first stage (1 to 3 years of experience):

> These individuals are trying to get their careers established . . . in a currently unstable academic employment environment. Thus they experience some pressure and concern about their future. New professors are adjusting to many novel demands, are trying to learn rapidly, and are receptive to help from others with more experience. These educators' careers are oriented primarily to teaching and limited research commitments. They are concerned wtih improving their performance in both areas. Novice academics are fairly enthusiastic about their young careers in higher education. (After all, they did locate teaching positions.) In some respects their career ambitions may be overly idealistic. Also, new professors have much to learn about the informal operations and modes of conduct in the complex organization known as a college or university. (p. 19)

Finally, Baldwin identifies four major types of critical events in the professorial career which follow in sequence: (1) formal study and professional socialization, (2) early professional employment, (3) opportunities for professional growth, and (4) status and role changes. The second set of critical events is particularly relevant here:

> (2) Early professional employment: Many faculty also believed that their initial college teaching position (locating a position, adapting to the demands of academic life) had a significant impact on their subsequent career direction. In other words, the problems and performance of novice faculty members influence their later occupational progress. (p. 17)

Early career development, then, may be crucial in setting a course for a career of scholarship and service. The experiences of the initiate may long afterwards influence the decisions of which paths to take.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the study was to gain better understanding of the work of new professors. Because time is a common constraint for all, that served as the standard measuring tool for describing their work. Specifically, three questions were investigated.

1. How do new professors spend their time with respect to their job-related work?
2. Are there some kinds of work new professors believe they should spend more time doing?
3. What insights do new professors have about their jobs and themselves in the professoriate?[3]

## METHOD

In order to answer the research questions, a study was designed to describe the experiences of recent doctoral graduates employed in higher education institutions.

### Sample

The sample was selected from graduates of 14 high-ranked colleges of education identified by Ladd and Lipset (Fact-File, 1979). The new professors were completing their first, second, or third year when the study began in Spring, 1979.

Names of graduates generally were obtained from commencement programs for the academic years of 1975-1976, 1976-1977, and 1977-1978. For each institution, 150 names were randomly selected from the three-year lists. Two universities had fewer than 150 graduates within those three years; in these instances, all the graduates' names were used. The smallest number of graduates was 85 and the largest was an estimated 635.

Deans of the colleges of education were contacted to explain the study and the need to obtain addresses for a sample of their graduates. All 14 colleges cooperated and addresses for the sampled graduates were obtained. Unfortunately, addresses for all the graduates were not available. The study sample consisted of the graduates whose names were randomly selected and for whom addresses were available; these graduates numbered approximately 1557.

Based on available data, a reasonable estimate of doctoral graduates in education from all institutions in the U.S. over this three-year period is approximately 22,000.[4] Approximately 70% (Grant and Vance, 1979) or 15,400 probably accepted positions in education upon graduation; what percentage of the 15,400 is in higher education institutions could not be determined. In the 14 institutions included in this study, an estimated 4,500 doctorates were granted in education during the three-year period. The sample of 1557 represents over one-third of that population. But of the 1557, it can be presumed that some percentage did not go into the education field, and of those that did, only a percentage went into higher education.

Of the 475 survey forms completed and returned, 206 were from "new professors," but only 191 were under full-time contracts. Two hundred sixty-nine respondents were not employed in higher education. The return rate varied widely by institution.

Instrumentation and Procedures

A six-item questionnaire was constructed to survey new professors' uses of time. They were asked to indicate the amount of time they spent working each week, what tasks consumed their time, and what tasks they believed they should commit more time to. The items were arranged on

one side of a page with the reverse side used for outgoing and return addresses. By December 1979, most of the questionnaires had been returned and data processing began.

Categories of job-related work were not pre-determined. Rather, exact responses on approximately 60 of the returned questionnaires were sorted in a variety of ways, seeking meaningful categories which were yet parsimonious in number. This analysis resulted in identification of 21 distinct categories. Then all the responses were categorized. While the 21 categories are discrete, viewed more broadly, they could be related. In the next step, the 21 categories were collapsed into six clusters. These were defined and used as the basis of subsequent analyses.

## RESULTS

The reports of new professors about the number of hours of work are summarized in Table 1. Some respondents noted that they had particular kinds of assignments such as administration or field work that lengthened their work hours.

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Insert Table 1
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### Actual versus Preferred Work

The percentages of responses in each of the six clusters (Figure 1) of job-related work are reported in Table 2.

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Insert Figure 1
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Table 2 constrasts percentages both for work actually engaged in and for work new professors believe they should do.

Among new professors,

- most of the instances of actual work fall into administrative/service work (Cluster A) and teaching (Cluster F).
- most of the instances of preferred work fall into research (Cluster B) and professional self-development (Cluster C).

Profiles of New Professors

Table 3 presents data for answering the question, "Which new professors, as differentiated by work hours, are doing what kind of work as differentiated by clusters?"

Insert Table 3
about here

Among new professors,

- administrative/service work (Cluster A) is reported most frequently by those who work 50-59 hours per week.
- research and other scholarship (Cluster B) is reported more frequently by those who work 60 or more hours per week than those who work less.
- teaching (Cluster F) declines somewhat as work hours increase.

An examination of relationships between the six clusters and the number of hours worked reveal profiles of characteristic, but not unique, configurations of work clusters by work hours. Figure 2 shows

the relative distribution of tasks among the six work clusters by new professors who work a given number of hours per week. Using that data, the proportionate emphasis of each kind of work creates a somewhat different--different in degree--profile for new professors depending on the number of hours they work each week.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Insert Figure 2
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New professors who work fewer than 40 hours per week (See Profile 1):

- report the most instances of work on teaching activities (cluster F).
- report the fewest instances of work in developing new courses or programs (Cluster E).

New professors who work 40-49 hours per week (See Profile 2):

- report most of their work is administrative in nature (Cluster A).
- report teaching activities constitute the second largest portion of their work (Cluster F).
- report the smallest proportion of their activities on their own professional development (Cluster C).

New professors who work 50-59 hours per week (See Profile 3):

- report most of their work is administrative in nature (Cluster A).
- report teaching activities almost as frequently as administrative tasks (Cluster F).
- report the fewest instances of work on developing new courses or programs (Cluster E).

New professors who work 60-69 hours per week (See Profile 4):

- report the most instances of work on teaching activities

(Cluster F).

- report the fewest instances of work on their own professional development (Cluster C) and developing new courses or programs (Cluster E).

New professors who work 70 or more hours per week (See Profile 5):

- report most of their work is administrative in nature (Cluster A)
- report the fewest instances of work in developing new courses or programs (Cluster E).

The Typical Experience of New Professors

Another way of interpreting the data in Table 3 and Figure 2 is to examine them relative to the number of people in each category of work hours (See Table 1). The largest group of new professors, 36 percent, spend 50-59 hours per week in job-related work. The greatest amount of their work, 81 percent, is administrative work (Cluster A), teaching (Cluster F), and student advisement (Cluster D). The second largest group of new professors, 26.3 percent, work 60-69 hours per week and do the same kinds of work but with different relative emphases. Teaching, administrative work and student advisement occupy 73 percent of their time. These two groups are 62 percent of all the new professors in the sample, and it is clear that the majority of the work of teaching, administration, and student advisement is being done by these people. That is, the "typical new professor" works between 50-69 hours each week and 73-81 percent of his or her work is spent teaching, doing administrative tasks and advising students. Because the numbers of new professors in the other work hour groups are fewer (Table 1), their contribution to the work of higher education is "less."

None of the new professors is doing a great deal of research or

scholarship (Cluster B). Even fewer engage in professional self-development (Cluster C). Course and program devel pment (Cluster E), too, seem not to be the work of new professors.

The only "clear trends" in these data are for research (Cluster B) and teaching (Cluster F). Engagement in research seems to increase with an increase in the amount of time spent working. New professors who commit more time to their work seem to commit it to the work of research and scholarship. By contrast, the proportion of teaching activities decreases as the number of work hours increases.

## DISCUSSION

The data display just completed could give rise to extensive discussion of the implications for graduate education. The following observations are offered as particularly worthy of attention.

A. Not a direct finding of this study, but a realization that emerged from its undertaking is the fact that by and large these institutions, as institutions, have lost contact with even their most recent doctoral graduates. Many addresses were unavailable; the accuracy of many addresses obtained was doubtful. What implications this severing of ties has for the graduates' sense of being set adrift, or not, is unclear. Of course, more important tethering may be maintained at the cohort or advisor levels. That too is unclear. As institutions, however, these schools and colleges have lost contact rather quickly with their doctoral graduates.

B. Statistics on post-doctoral employment of graduates of education indicate that about 70% enter educational institutions. If the response rates of this study reflect accurately the larger population, it would seem that even smaller percentages enter institutions

of higher education. This reduced rate may reflect the limits of a tight job-market, or simply the attractiveness of opportunities outside of colleges and universities. In any case, it is worthwhile to note that large percentages of doctoral graduates in education do not immediately pursue academic careers.

C. New professors devote a high proportion of their job-related work to teaching, advising, and administrative matters. This is true for all work-hour groups, for women and men, for new graduates and those with a little experience. Given the option, they would not take on many more of these tasks. Presumably, they already allocate them enough time.

D. New professors engage in relatively little personal professional development. This kind of activity, which includes interaction with colleagues and participation in professional organizations is seemingly overwhelmed by other demands on their time. Interestingly, though there has recently been some endorsement of the idea of fostering mentor relationships as a means of nurturing new faculty, less than a handful of the respondents referred to such an arrangement in commenting on their colleagues. Neither on a peer nor on a mentor level do most new professors cite scholarly collegiality. The development and stimulation that conceivably occurred in the course of graduate study apparently must sustain them until such a time as the activities of personal professional development can resume. New professors recognize this deficit in their experience. In the words of one, " . . . The need for stimulating colleagues, especially those who are comfortable with theory and ideas!! (I seem to need such people locally and also [have] the need to feel

in touch with colleagues elsewhere.) The importance of not being isolated" (1-10-026).

E. New professors engage in relatively little research and scholarship. Though they are keenly aware that they should be committing more energy and time to this work, they simply don't. By contrast with the career of John Barnes, a biologist, these professors of education will not quickly contribute important new findings to their fields of knowledge, and will not likely rise through the professorial ranks with as much ease. If Baldwin's results can be used to predict their career paths, then what little research is now undertaken will further diminish with time and experience. The major research and scholarship of many of these academicians may already be behind them.

Considering the topography of experiences of a new professor as mapped by these data, one might wonder how well their graduate preparation equipped them. Had they, in their most realistic imaginings, seen these paths they would eventually take? Do these paths lead toward or away from their Dreams? And, perhaps as importantly, to what future do these directions point for the institutions of which they are now a part?

## NOTES

1. The relationship between productivity of professors and their prior experiences in graduate study is the subject of a Phi Delta Kappa monograph by Worthen and Roaden (1975). Interestingly, it might have predicted Barnes' productivity, based on his early involvement in research. It would not have attempted to comment on important personal events which occurred for this new professor, and which presumably are an integral part of the experiences of many women and men.

2. Baldwin's second stage is also at assistant professor rank. It combines Levinson's Age Thirty Transition and Settling Down periods. The tasks of this stage are reexamining initial commitments and values, making adjustments in them, and moving to a more stable personal life and a place of importance in the work setting.

3. Responses to this question are not reported in this paper because they are, by nature, lengthier and require extended treatment on their own.

4. The "Fact-File" (Chronicle of Higher Education, 1980) cites 7370 Ph.D.'s in education granted in 1978-79. This was used as an annual estimate and multiplied by 3 to obtain 22,000.

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Table 1. - Hours per Week Spent Doing Job-Related Work

| Work Hours | Percent |
|---|---|
| fewer than 40 | 8.6 |
| 40-49 | 17.7 |
| 50-59 | 36.0 |
| 60-69 | 26.3 |
| 70 or more | 11.3 |

Table 2. - Clusters of Job-Related Work of New Professors

| Clusters of Job-Related Work[a] | Percent of Instances--Actually Engaged | Percent of Instances--Should Do More |
|---|---|---|
| Cluster A | 31.7 | 11.0 |
| Cluster B | 11.7 | 38.1 |
| Cluster C | 6.0 | 29.8 |
| Cluster D | 15.9 | 7.5 |
| Cluster E | 4.7 | 5.4 |
| Cluster F | 30.2 | 7.6 |

[a]See Figure 1 for descriptions of the six clusters.

Table 3. - Percentages of Job-Related Work Clusters (Actually Engaged) by Work Hours per Week

| | Job-Related Work Clusters[a] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Work Hours | A | B | C | D | E | F |
| fewer than 40 | 23.5 | 7.8 | 7.8 | 15.7 | 2.0 | 43.1 |
| 40-49 | 33.0 | 9.2 | 3.7 | 14.7 | 9.2 | 30.3 |
| 50-59 | 36.0 | 10.7 | 6.1 | 14.6 | 2.3 | 30.3 |
| 60-69 | 26.4 | 15.2 | 5.6 | 16.9 | 6.2 | 29.8 |
| 70 or more | 30.1 | 13.7 | 8.2 | 20.6 | 5.5 | 21.9 |

[a]See Figure 1 for descriptions of the six clusters.

Cluster A. Includes work on (1) administrative tasks which are part of the job of, for example, a program director; (2) obtaining grants and carrying out funded projects; (3) activities of service to both the community and the profession locally; (4) assignments of service to the department or the larger institution; (5) individual tasks of completing forms, reports, correspondence and regular travel related to work; (6) the service activities which define this role in the institution.

Cluster B. Includes work on all phases and aspects of research and scholarly production.

Cluster C. Includes work (1) with colleagues to grow as a scholar and (2) personal professional development of knowledge and skills through study or practice.

Cluster D. Includes (1) supervision of the individual work of graduate and/or undergraduate students; (2) informal contact with students and student organizations and (3) advising and counseling students.

Cluster E. Includes work to conceptualize, develop, implement, or evaluate new curricula and programs and to plan new courses or revise old ones.

Cluster F. Includes work related to preparing for teaching, teaching in class, and evaluating students.

Figure 1.-Clusters of Work Categories.

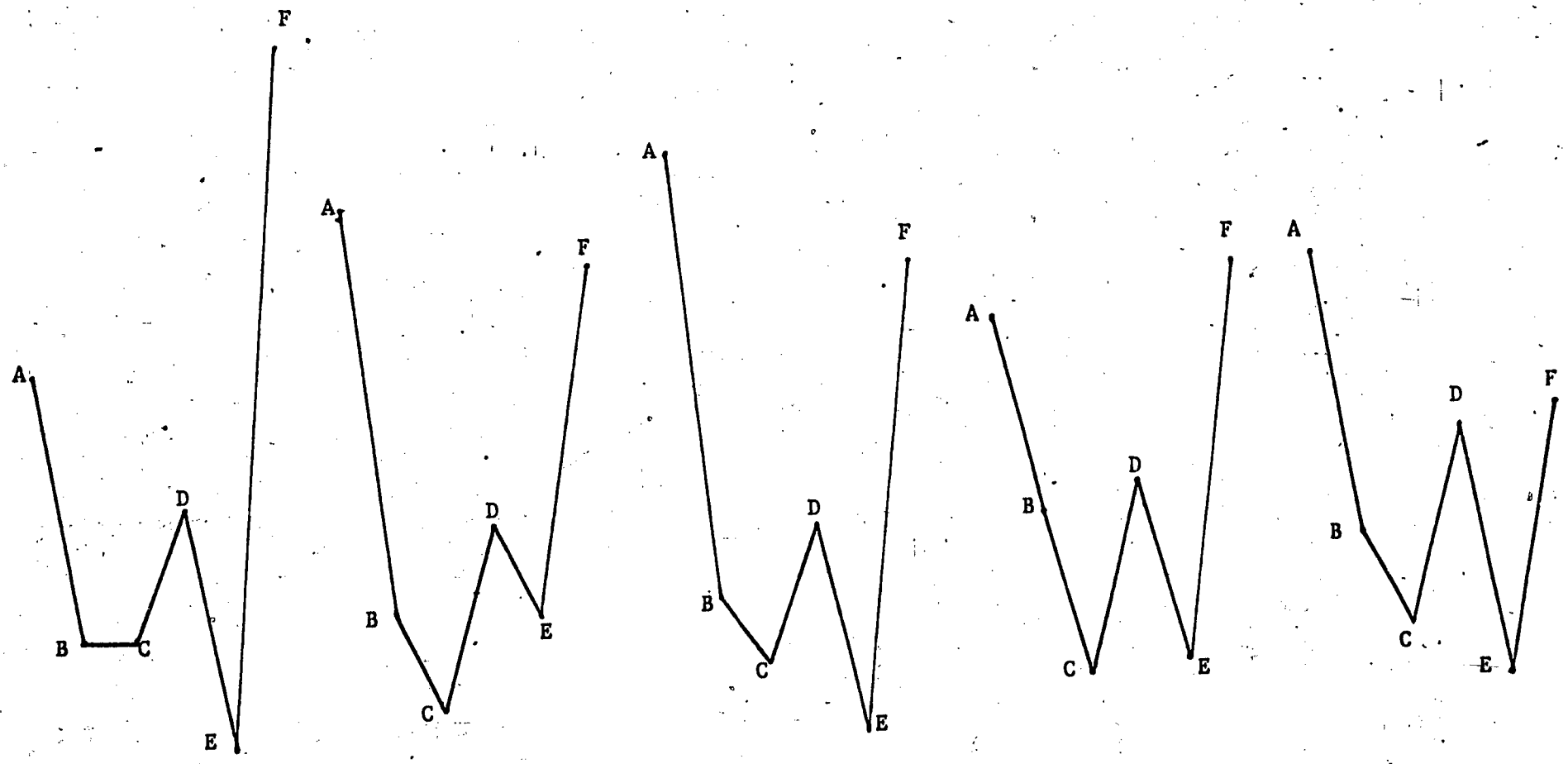


Figure 2.-Profile Showing Relative Proportions of Time New Professors Spend on Job-Related Work Clusters by Work Hours.

See Figure 1 for descriptions of the six clusters.
Profile 1 describes professors who work fewer than 40 hours per week.
Profile 2 describes professors who work 40-49 hours per week.
Profile 3 describes professors who work 50-59 hours per week.
Profile 4 describes professors who work 60-69 hours per week.
Profile 5 describes professors who work 70 or more hours per week.