

Final Report

By Sid Womack

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Presentation of a Paper at the Southeastern Region of the Association of Teacher Educators' Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas

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B. Re-statement of Problems Researched:

What kinds of practices in higher education result in the most effective use of the higher educator's time? A higher educator with more than 30 years of experience across three universities shares what he has learned.

C. Review of the professional enhancement opportunity , creative work, or research procedure. This presentation was a "spin-off from a larger study on the usage of educators' time in the public schools of Arkansas. This is not the first time I have researched this problem. In 1990, I polled nearly a thousand Arkansas educators, asking them about how many hours per week they worked, what they did while they were working for their school districts, and what kinds of monetary gifts they made to their classrooms. Those findings were reported in several Arkansas newspapers and in the *American School Board Journal*. I even received a personal note by mail from then Governor Bill Clinton, thanking me for the research

I attempted to replicate the study in 2002. Due to low numbers of educators responding, I assumed that the data from the approximately 100 educators may not have adequately described the economic and labor conditions for educators at that time. When I replicated the study in 2011/12, the data obtained then indicated that what had been measured in 2002 were more reasonable than I had given credit for. In 2002, I made only a statewide presentation or two and let the publicity go after that.

This presentation at SRATE was meaningful to me and to a junior faculty member from our institution who attended. However, turnout was light (3) due to a major storm system (hurricane) that threatened the ability of many in attendance to get home if they lived anywhere in the Southeastern part of the United States.

A manuscript of the 2012 study is included at the end of this paper.

D. Summary of findings, outcomes, or experiences had. There are a number of things that a professor can do to use the time effectively and avoid having his priorities sidetracked. The goal is not just to avoid spending time on certain kinds of tasks; the goal is to use the time wisely on teaching, scholarship, and service. The presentation shows a number of practices that can keep classroom discussions on track and focused on the objectives of the course. The chapter of what is soon to become a book through Rowan and Littlefield is included in the appendices of this paper.

E. Conclusions and recommendations. Careful lesson planning can help insure that classroom time is used effectively. Designating certain times in the office that are off-limits to other uses can help insure that scholarship time occurs. Service time has a way of spilling over and consuming everything else if no boundaries are set.

Appendix

Full Text of Presentation

This was summarized by Power Point for the actual presentation instead of in this form which is from our book.

The effective use of the higher educator's time

Dr. Sid T. Womack, Professor of Secondary Education

Admittedly none of the trilogy of these studies sampled higher education. If you are willing to study a sample of $N=1$, my typical work week is 50 hours. When I am doing research it can go from 50 to as much as 70. If we are near the time of an accreditation visit, it can go to 70 and beyond. The 50-hour work week has seemed typical to the education faculty of the three universities at which I have taught.

The Sky King perception of university professors is that of a 22 –hour work week. The usual teaching load is 12 semester hours, and the usual expectation is that of 10 hours per week of office hours. If the 22-hour work week is a reality anywhere, it has not been in a university with which I am familiar. No one I have met can prepare for and teach classes, do a plausible amount of research, engage in the number of committee assignments that a university expects, and advise students on 22 hours per week. The 22-hour week will not fly, except maybe for Sky King.

The 22-hour week may not be a reality, but there are a host of other reasons why professors enjoy their jobs. University faculty jobs consistently rank in the top 10 most ideal occupations, according to the polls. Professorhood allows people to use their minds. Being on the faculty puts one usually into very favorable working conditions. It puts people around mostly conservative colleagues, at least in education. Usually the offices are good working places and within reasonable limits, professors can decorate or arrange their offices to their individual preferences.

The holidays are good for university professors. There are a few days off for Thanksgiving, 3 to 4 weeks off for Christmas, a week of spring break, two to three weeks off in the latter part of May before summer school begins, and 5 to 6 weeks off in the summer during the summer session. Our summer school is two five-week periods, and most faculty teach only one summer session. Salaries are livable,

although as Sergiovanni and Starrat point out, salary is always a dis-satisfier and never a satisfier (2007), meaning that no one ever feels like her or she is paid enough.

In teacher education, we prepare college students to be teachers of children and adolescents. That doesn't mean that the college students are adolescents. They expect to be taught like the young adults that they are. They expect a rigorous, defensible, accredited curriculum, delivered by scholars who not only were once "there," but who through research and continued involvement with the schools remain current. It would be a mistake to teach college students as if they were still in high school.

There can be a tendency for professors who are not university-level administrators to feel menial about our jobs. We don't handle any money—we don't directly spend any money—usually we don't have a budget or budgets for anything—so it can be tempting to feel like we are mostly menial workers, or as one put it, "pretty good mules."

Thinking of ourselves as "pretty good mules" overlooks a monetary aspect of higher education that is far greater than what the business office handles. To illustrate, currently tuition at Arkansas Tech is \$164 per semester hour. This represents about one-half of the actual cost of providing higher education. The other half is paid for by the state, making the per-semester hour cost \$328. In a typical class of 30 students, the cost of the semester-long experience for 3 semester hours would be \$29, 520. The typical faculty load is 12 semester hours, so an average faculty member will be deciding the fate of \$118, 080 in one semester. Classes larger than 30 students occur regularly—one of my senior classes that was just completed during the first three weeks of the semester had 58 in it. Doing the math on that course, with 58 students in that particular course from 9 to noon each morning, in the space of any particular morning, I spent \$1180 per clock hour and \$3542 of the students' and state's money—*before lunch*. I spent it like other professors do--by deciding the learning activities of the classroom. I have had graduate classes with nearly 60 in them. On a typical Monday during the first three weeks of a

semester (8 hours in the classroom), as a consequence of my choices of activities in the classroom, I have directed the expenditure of \$9500. That's just on a Monday. There are any number of mid- and upper level managers in the world of business that don't direct \$3500 per morning or \$9500 in a day. How much more empowered do I need to feel?

The happy-go-lucky college student perspective changes when it begins to dawn on them how much their higher education is costing them. Even at Arkansas rates, the \$1180-per hour illustration becomes a double-sided one when we look at the faculty responsibility that goes along with it. Any employer would expect someone managing \$1180 per hour to know what he or she was doing, and not to waste time.

Education, including higher education, has been described with several metaphors. One is the textbook metaphor. In public school teaching, teachers try to *teach* what is in the textbook. In undergraduate school, professors use textbooks but are expected to *go beyond* the textbook to make the subject more rich for the students. In graduate school, the goal is not to teach the textbook—graduate faculty, after all, are the ones who write the textbooks—but rather, the goal in graduate school is to *teach students how to think about the subject*.

Another metaphor has to do with the role of the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in the successive education of the individual. On the bachelor's degree, students learn the essentials of the academic discipline, *sitting at the feet* of the acknowledged scholars. At the master's level they critically examine the central teachings of the academic discipline, *standing by the side* of the more experienced scholars who guide them. At the doctoral level, students discover new knowledge to add to the discipline, with the accomplished scholars *standing behind them*.

These descriptions are not being told here as folklore or for entertainment while in the context of making the best use of classroom time. It is a wanton waste of a professor's time for students to

invite or compel him to move backward in either of the above sequences. Students may wish that their professors spent more time reading the textbook to them or explaining what it means, but a wise prof will leave them wishing. That's not what we hire pay university profs to do. It's not what they spent years preparing for, either. At this level, for the professor, it's not gratifying to spend time telling students information that they could or should have gotten out of the textbook.

Is it permissible to accommodate college students in some ways? Yes, but not to the point of lowering standards or failing to reach the stated behavioral objectives of the course. Perhaps secretly, college students want to reach the objectives of the course. They want a good education. Say what you like about America's public schools, the world comes to the U. S.'s door for a higher education. That high prestige about a diploma from a U. S. university comes from the kind of philosophical statements that are being made here.

The university classroom should be an enriched, fast-paced learning environment. There should never be anything resembling a study hall in any kind of a college class. In over thirty years of university teaching, I never gave a study hall. Study halls are for high school, if in fact they even belong there. Upholding academic standards and preserving the dignity of the classroom as a learning place does not cost the faculty member in terms of popularity—it pays him or her.

One Month Before the Semester. This is a busy time especially if the course will be a new one. Before this time, the textbook should have already been carefully chosen. In the scenario of a course that is new or will be new to the faculty member, it is time or past the ideal time to write the working syllabus for the course. In the syllabus, the professor sets the dates for when daily assignments will be due, when term papers or major projects will be due, when major tests will be given, and when student reports will be done. The working syllabus becomes the master plan for both the professor and the students. This is not just a philosophical utterance about the syllabus, but also a legal one. In the

courts, it has been held that once the class has met for the first time, the syllabus becomes a legal contract between the faculty member (as an officer of the institution) and the student. After the first day of class, it will be too late to “up” the number of points for an assignment or reduce the number of points for a test. For that reason, the syllabus should be prepared carefully and deliberately before it is handed out to the students. In the fall or spring term, both the prof and the students are going to have to live with the syllabus through four months, for better or for worse.

The syllabus sets the sails for both the professor and the student for the remainder of the semester. Particularly during the first time a course is taught, or the first time a faculty member teaches the course, it is a good idea to have a spare copy of the syllabus as a “mark-up” syllabus. Each time the class meets, the prof should mark that date or week on the schedule to help him remember whether something worked well or not, whether students seemed prepared for a test by the announced time, if the attendance policy worked or not, and any other reflection that may help. With these kinds of “notes to self,” the second time the course is taught is usually vastly better than the quality of the first time.

Write your exams before you need them. Don’t teach the material and then try to come up with an exam that you hope “covers” the material. All of the horrors of mis-written tests and poor assessment techniques await the prof who does not write the tests first and then teach towards the tests. The tests should be written from the objectives, which should be on the syllabus, which should be written to fit the standards of your academic discipline’s accrediting agencies. Curriculum mapping can be tedious and should be done well before the time for the course to begin.

One Week to Two Days Before Classes Begin: Have your syllabi and the handouts that you will need for the first two weeks already made. At least the first two weeks. Go to the copy machine and make all of the copies that you will need for the first two weeks ahead of the day before class begins. Your colleagues, who do not look as far ahead as you do, will try to make their copies the day before or the

day of class opening. There will be a line in front of the copy machine. The copier will break down. Other faculty will go to class appearing to their students to be unprepared, which will be an accurate perception. Make your copies early and you will not be affected by such events. *You and your students will open school smoothly.* Other people will have to make their own choices.

One Day Before Classes Begin. Go to each classroom you will teach in and check the arrangement of the desks or tables and other furniture. Janitors are notorious for moving those to accommodate their need to vacuum or sweep and then not putting them back. If your salary is like ours in Arkansas, your “unloading time” or actual classroom time is worth about \$100 per hour in terms of what you are actually paid. You and your students do not need to begin class tomorrow moving desks. Move them yourself, the day before. It’s part of the job and everybody does some of this kind of work.

Check out the electronic environment. Does the computer work? Is the network drive still mapped to the computer? It is a good idea to copy the directories/folders from the network drive to the desktop of the computer in the classroom so if you lose the network during a class session, you can keep loading. Class doesn’t stop. If there is a Smart Board and you intend to use it, check it also.

Back at the office, fill out your grade book. Electronic grade books are nice, but if you use one, routinely back it up, and make hard copies too. I am reasonably technologically literate, but on the grade book issue, I use a traditional paper grade book. It has its advantages.

The First Minutes of the Semester. Get to the classroom early—as much as a half-hour early, if no one else is using the room. Check the desks in case the janitor messed them up again. Bring your hard copies of the syllabus, rubrics, and other handouts to put on the desk, spread out, left to right in the sequence in which you will need them. If you will be using web pages, Power Points, or other documents on the computer/projector, load those up and have them waiting, shrunk to the bottom of the screen. The image you want to project to your students: This prof is totally prepared to bring them

a learning experience this semester that will be head and shoulders above anything they have ever had before.

Maslow observed that security needs are among mankind's most basic. In the opening moments of the semester, I have found it useful to designate a time-keeper and two door-keepers in each class. The students understand the need for the time-keeper immediately. In a 50-minute class, the time-keeper will get my attention at 5 minutes before the end of class. Like most teachers, I am in love with my subject, and may not notice that the time is almost gone, so this helps keep me honest. It is not fair and is not collegial to make students in my class late to their next class. About the door-keeper issue: Most of my classes meet in a two-door large classroom

on the second floor of a building. Columbine, Jonesboro, and Virginia Tech are familiar names. The victims in all of those places, and their survivors, also said "It can't happen here." In the opening moments of class, I tell the class that as of the past few years, I have necessarily changed from an open-door policy to a closed door one. It's not that anything is a secret. I invite them to record any class sessions in audio or audio-visual form. We start with closed doors so as to have an advantage in a dangerous-stranger invasion. The doors are very solid wood, with narrow vertical windows. Those doors won't be kicked down easily. I teach a lot with Power Point, so there is usually limited lighting in the room. If a disturbance is heard, I will intend to turn over the two heavy metal desks in the front of the classroom, creating a V that may turn bullets if they come our way. I instruct the students in the seats on the front and in the middle to shove their desk-chairs into the V-wedge, then all students will get on the floor in the middle of the classroom and behind the wedge. This will also get them away from observation from the narrow windows in the door.

This plan, if it ever had to be used, (1) lessens the likelihood of a shooter to detect that students are in the room (2) lowers the likelihood of a shooter to enter the room since such terrorists usually seek

to harm as many “faceless” people as possible in the shortest amount of time, and (3) lowers the likelihood of students being hit by rounds fired through the walls if someone stood in the hall and began shooting. Unless or until someone comes up with a better plan, this is what we are doing. In five years of announcing this to students, no one has suggested a better plan, or for that matter, even another plan. The two door-keepers will open and close (automatically locking) the doors for students who arrive late.

How does the security plan save time? Likely it will never be needed, or at least we hope so. But relieving the tension about security frees young minds to concentrate on the content of the course. In 31 years of student evaluations, I have never had one say that there wasn’t enough content in the course. They’ve commented about other things, but never that there wasn’t enough in the course to learn.

Harry K. Wong is absolutely correct—spending the first minutes or hours of a semester doesn’t cost time—it pays it (Wong and Wong, 1998, 141-193). Frankly, on the first day of classes, I would prefer to get right into the content of exceptional children or educational research methods. I find that content far more interesting than the administrivia about class attendance, due dates for assignments, and the particulars about field assignments. But having reviewed the research on classroom management and applying it to higher education, instead I take my students through the syllabus, then through the rubrics of the major paper or papers that they are going to write in the class. It is much better to take an hour and a half early in the semester to get students established on procedures (as Wong and Wong call them) than to have to stop the content multiple times during the semester to give instructions or answer questions about procedures. Wong and Wong’s 1998 book on *The First Days of School* is a best seller among teachers and teacher preparation universities. Therefore the students appearing in university classrooms these days will likely have been around such opening day activities. If

their professors do not do these things, the students are likely to develop a concept of their teachers as subject matter specialists but not effective teachers. They might be right.

Go over the syllabus in enough detail that you have mentioned all of the assignments and when they are due. Go over the grading scheme so that the students have both seen and heard what is needed to make an A, B, C, D, or F in the course. Go over the attendance policy. Talk about plagiarism and its consequences. Going over those things during the first minutes will save hours of confusion later. Have a schedule with dates on it about when students should read chapters, when assignments will be due, when tests are likely, and when a term paper will be due. Effective syllabi are written in such a way that after the first day, everyone in the class should know what is supposed to happen and approximately when it will take place—within a class meeting or two. There is a sample of such a syllabus in Appendix D. Be aware—a course syllabus has all of the characteristics of a legal contract. To wit—

- *Quid quo pro*, or “If you do this, I’ll do that.” The courts have held that if students do what is listed in the syllabus, they have to be awarded the grade that was promised for doing the work. Meeting of the minds.
- An offer. Offer of a grade if certain conditions are met.
- Consideration. Consideration in this situation is the work that students turn in and the tests that they take, plus their class attendance and participation.
- Acceptance. Acceptance takes the form of the students’ continuation in the class past the withdrawal or drop date.
- Authenticity. Contracts are enforceable only if they do not violate other already-existing or superceding laws. The lack of conflict with other laws makes a syllabus a contract.

I have asked seven lawyers on seven different occasions about what makes a contract. Not only did they answer the same things (above), they all gave them in the same order, as if they had studied them out of the same textbook. The contractual feature of a syllabus means that we as higher education faculty should ask for enough from students that both we and they feel that real learning has taken place well before the end of the course.

Class periods. Starting class right on time is not just a sweet-'n-sticky good idea. It sets the tone for the self-discipline that must exist for both the professor and the students if learning is going to take place. Few things destroy students' respect for a teacher, and low their estimation of the course, than chronically coming to class late. Being unprepared for class is also a major enthusiasm-killer.

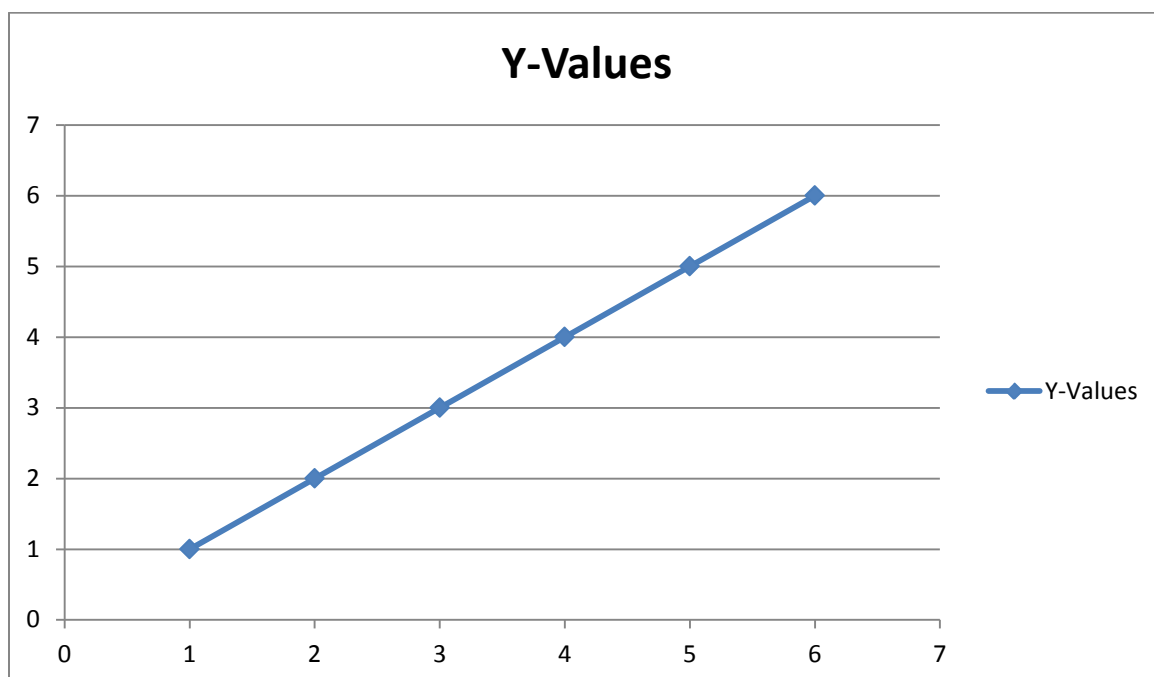
Dignity of the Classroom. The classroom, whether a kindergarten one or a graduate one, must have a level of dignity to it if it is going to be effective. There is such a thing as "classroom English." Responses from students will be more dignified and respectful if the professor himself has spoken in dignified ways. Leave the slang for the deer woods or the back porch. There are few, if any, situations where profanity is permissible in the classroom. The young prof who opens the semester with risqué jokes and profane speech is digging a hole for himself fast—one that he may not be able to get out of when it comes time for the students to evaluate him. They are not likely to forget that they paid a lot of money for the course or that they expected to get a lot out of it. Using a lot of swearwords does not convince students that the prof knows his stuff. Getting an even, steady supply of his subject matter will. It is suggested that faculty dress up a little bit—maybe not a suit every day, but nice slacks, shirt, and a tie on most days. The way faculty dress adds or subtracts from the dignity that classrooms must necessarily have.

Extrinsic Motivation. The work of Bateman and Crant (apparently 2001) is useful in explaining intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and we will use it to illustrate an optimal number of assessments for a college course. Their statistical analysis is more involved than what will be described here, and some

simplification will be offered. The intent of the next two figures is to contrast two theoretical views of motivation as they are applied to the motivation of university students to learn. Figure ___ illustrates a linear model—that is, that as the stress that imposed by the number and nature of classroom assignments and tests increases, that learning increases.

Figure ___

Representation of a linear theory of extrinsic motivation

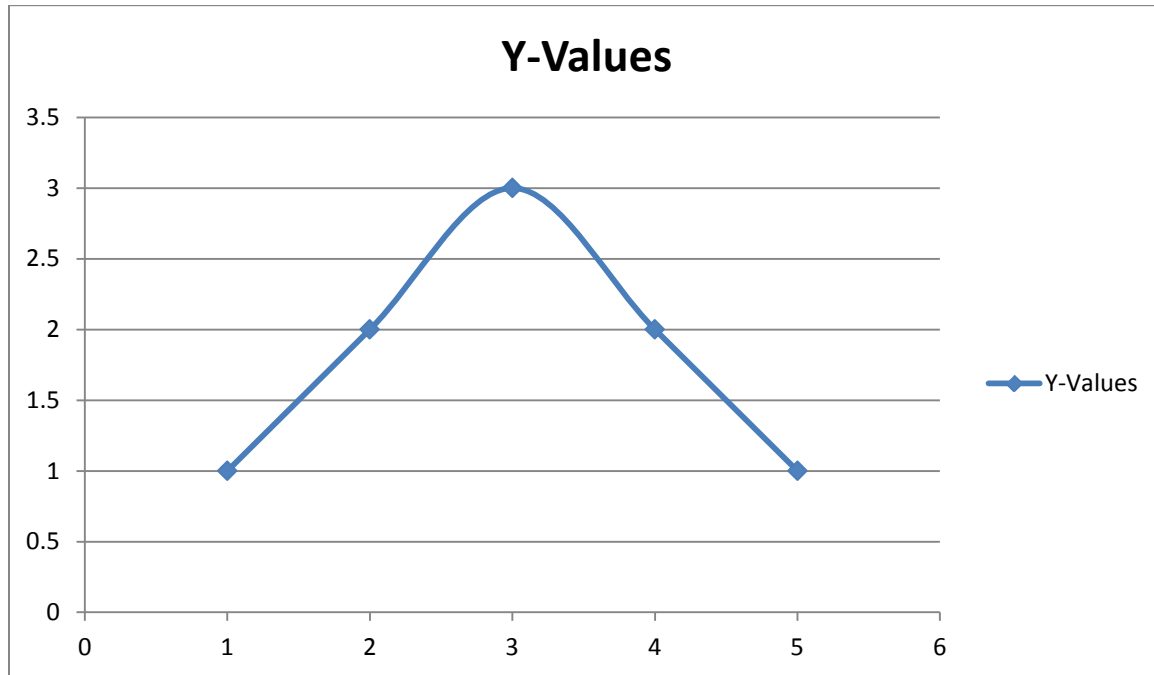


Adherents to this motivational theory would add stress in the form of pop quizzes, frequent major tests, homework assignments, in-class presentations, and term papers to obtain the maximum amount of learning from students. Data from 833 respondents in the business world would agree with the linear theory so far as *intrinsic* motivation is concerned.

For intrinsic motivation, the straight-line relationship between stress and achievement may be mostly accurate. The curvilinear theory of *extrinsic* motivation, as confirmed by Bateman and Crant,

shows that *extrinsic* motivation has a curvilinear rather than a linear relationship with such stresses (Figure __).

Figure ____



Bateman and Crant's findings are very parsimonious with my teaching experiences at almost all grade levels, in a variety of sizes and types of schools at multiple locations in the South, and in a number of different academic subjects. At the undergraduate level, the number of assessments that seem to elicit the optimum amount of extrinsic motivation approximates the following:

- Four to eight short assignments
- Three to five major tests, including a cumulative final
- One to two major student in-class presentations, usually with Power Point
- A field experience, verified by a public school teacher
- A major paper

- Attendance and participation at all or almost all class sessions

When the number and nature of assignments and assessments has gone very much beyond the above, the negative comments made by students on course evaluations about “busy work” and “professor thinks his course is the only one I am taking” rose sharply, while the data gained from all of those assessments failed to indicate that students were learning significantly more. Years ago in public school teaching, I had it explained to me by students and parents very quickly that band was not the only subject my students were taking, and that there was a “sweet spot” of the number of after-school rehearsals that could be required before complaints increased and student musical performance actually decreased. The same kind of thing occurred as a fourth grade teacher with regard to homework. Students and parents expect some homework, but not on every single night. Our task as teachers is to find that motivation middle ground within any given group of students and stay within it. Too little assignment-induced stress and students do not learn optimally. Too much, and the resultant anxiety over performance gets in the way of learning. Indicators of too much stress for optimal learning can include

- Students in class come back again and again with requests for clarification about assignments, especially with reference to the grades they will make.
- Numerous documented instances of cheating on tests
- Numerous, not occasional, instances of plagiarism on major papers
- Obvious physical and emotional signs of stress as students attempt presentations
- Visits of students to the department head or dean about the prof’s grading system
- Grade appeals, not just once in awhile, but every semester
- For elective courses, low enrollment

- For required courses where another prof teaches a section of the same course, large disparities in the numbers of students enrolling in one section versus the other prof's section
- Withdrawal/dropout rates approaching 50%

All of the above indicate that students are spending much more time on protecting their grades than on meaningfully interacting with the content. In terms of the curvilinear graph above, the teacher is too far to the right of center when very many of the above symptoms appear and persist. *Grading-protecting time is mostly wasted time.* It's not about the quality learning time that we as educators want our students to have.

Classroom presentations. The arguments and studies about lecture versus discussion, lecture and discovery, lecture and various electronic media have continued and will continue. Despite what the studies on acquisition and retention say, at the university level, some degree of lecture is expected from students. If they do not get it, it will show up on the faculty evaluation forms. At our university, student evaluations are given serious consideration by administrators. And well they should. The competition with other universities for students is real. A college education is a huge monetary investment. Some cooperative-group activities are appropriate, but too much of it can lead students to say "I am paying all kinds of money for professors to teach me, and all they do is put me in groups and expect me and my classmates to learn from each other's ignorance!"

Classroom presentations should be well thought out, related to the objectives of the course, and effectively presented. There should never be long periods of time in class where the professor is trying to remember what he was supposed to say. Power Point and Smart Board are two contemporary technologies that can help faculty write down the main points of what they need to say. Those vehicles are also convenient repositories of special photographs, videos, or audio recordings that may be needed

again and again in successive semesters. Build a strong collection of those for each course, then work at keeping the collection current. In the long run, this will save vast amounts of time.

Within the first two or three years as a new professor, it is likely that a lot of time will be needed to build the handouts, Power Points, web sites, tests, and other materials needed for the successful teaching of courses. By the end of the third year, big hunks of the work week should have been freed so that now the professor can pay more attention to scholarship and service. These along with teaching make the customary three emphases of college faculty. It is in those areas that faculty are most heavily evaluated. In all but the largest of universities, the faculty member who does not do well at teaching will have difficulty surviving the probationary period of typically five to seven years. This is as it should be: Universities originated and should continue to mainly exist to teach students, not just to do research. The ideal faculty member is one who is settled well enough into his teaching that he can do that, and do it well, while carrying out a research agenda with about 20 to 30 percent of his time and service about 10 to 20 percent of the time.

Assessing Student Learning. Doing your own reliability studies and doing an item analysis after every test will save classroom time. If you do happen to give a test that won't score consistently, having done the Kuder-Richardson 21 or Pearson correlation will give you an objective means of recognizing it. This will save your students the time, and you the embarrassment, of them having to point it out to you in class. Doing an item analysis gives a quantitative, objective way to determine which items did not work well, saving you and your students "haggling time" in class. Coming to class with the statistics and the list of "return items" saves time and shows students that you are being careful with their grades. It also heads off arguments about students' grades. Those not only take time, they are counter-productive in reaching the objectives of the course.

Ending the course. The usual proclivity of other college faculty will be to wait until the last minute for term papers to become due. Likely *all* of the students are facing nearly identical due dates from all of their professors. Would you like to see your students' best efforts on the papers they turn in to you? Simple. Make them due in week 13 or 14 of the semester instead of waiting for week 15, just before final exams. Actually you will be doing the students a favor in time management as well. This helps them spread out the time for papers coming due.

When the papers come in, starting grading right away. This avoids long hours of grading, some of it very late at night, and while very tired. No one makes his best decisions when really tired. Asking for the papers a week or two early and grading them early makes final exam week an easy one instead of a *tour de force* one.

Appendix B

Acceptance from the Southeastern Association of Teacher Educators for the Presentation

Date: Mon, 08 Oct 2012 10:02:01 -0500
From: SRATE 2012 <srate2012@uca.edu>
Subject: Womack, Sid SRATE 2012 receipt
To: swomack@atu.edu
Cc: SRATE 2012 <srate2012@uca.edu>
X-Mailer: Novell GroupWise Internet Agent 8.0.2
X-RemoteIP: 161.31.24.47
X-Group: ACCEPTLIST
X-Policy: \$ACCEPTED
Original-recipient: rfc822;swomack@atu.edu

Hello Sid Womack,

Attached is your receipt for your SRATE 2012 conference registration. Please contact us as srate2012@uca.edu if the receipt is incorrect or is not attached.

We look forward to seeing you at SRATE 2012!

Mary Ellen Oslick, SRATE 2012 Registration Chair
Jamie Alea, SRATE 2012 Registration Co-Chair

Nancy
SRATE 2012 Conference Chair

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