

# Teaching Tips/Notes



## Lead with Your History, be Balanced, and Stamp out Ignorance

Over the course of numerous years, I have shared my thoughts on a variety of academic (teaching/learning/advising/career) issues. My thoughts on the squeeze for funding at all levels [1,2,7], use of computers/cell phones in class [3], journal impact factors and citation analysis [4,5,6], optimizing work environments [8,13], job placement and alumni relations [9,14,15], advising graduate students [10,11], and measuring academic success [12] all (basically) relate to obtaining/keeping academic balance over the course of one's career [16,17,18,19]. However, when getting closer to retirement, one's goals and efforts [20] change. It has come to that point for me. I recently submitted my letter of retirement [effective in early 2016]. So, what kind of clever things might I say/share about that?

Never being one to "look back," it seems difficult to do so now. Greater than 30 years ago, students seemed more eager to be in class than they do today. Moreover, way back when—they seemed to be more apt to come and discuss issues with instructors (face-to-face) in their office.... rather than solicit items (faceless) via electronic means. It used to be that one could write a challenging exam and a student's grade would stand, instead of being challenged to department and upper administration. Also, administrators used to stand-up for faculty, who were in the teaching trenches, in all matters. However, it seems that today-students are more entitled, vocal, less disciplined and more likely to disrupt classrooms than to learn within one. Even with the change in students, administrators and easing university policies— I have loved my time as a teacher, guidance counselor, mentor, coordinator, advisor, and (in some ways) role model.

All of this will be gone, when I retire. Or....will it? I will have had some impact on a goodly number of students/alumni, who [some already have] will become producers, administrators, teachers, medical professionals and (yes) politicians [to name a few]. Can I live with that? Can I live without the day-to-day grind of driving for 45 minutes each way-sometimes in terrible weather? Can I live without the after hour phone calls; hundreds of emails per day; or hours of grading, writing, discussing and thinking about work? Yes— I can. It will be easy, as I can (instead) remember the great number of positives obtained from academic work of all kinds [21-26]. Others may now take over, do a better job, and make their mark. My advice to them would be as it always has been: "Lead with your history, be balanced [27] and stamp out ignorance." This has worked well for me for over 30 years. Perhaps, it could work for others for the next 30 years.

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