

Twelve Years Later

AAPT Biennial Meetings, 2010

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My Teaching Assignments

- Where: Columbia College, Everett Community College, Seattle Pacific University, University of Washington, Seattle University, University of Puget Sound, California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo, Winthrop University
 - o Thus – community colleges, state universities, regional state universities, private colleges;
 - o Thus – students from various geographical regions (PNW, Calif, the South) and social sets
- What
 - o Intro Courses: Applied Ethics, Ethics, Informal Logic, Formal Logic, Introduction to Philosophy, Freshman Humanities
 - o Upper Division: Metaphysics, Epistemology, Philosophy of Religion, Ancient Greek Philosophy, The Art and Thought of Ancient Greece, Existentialism, Kant, Rationalism, Philosophy of Mind, Junior-Level Humanities, Ethics, the Philosophy of Good and Evil, Senior Philosophy Writing and Research Seminar
 - o Graduate Level: Metaphysics, Epistemology

Success and Disappointment

- Getting a job (ha ha)
- Successes
 - o The many instances of individual student satisfaction and realization, especially at the introductory level: this makes the work gratifying.
 - o The realization that it was I who decided what to teach, what to label as “true” or “worthy”: this freed me to realize such potential as a teacher that I have. (Also applies at the professional level.)
 - “What is philosophy?”
 - o Using my own work or thought processes as models in class: this has been a useful device:
 - It provides the students a good model of best practices;
 - It helps me to be clear with the students about what I want from them; it also helps me to be clear with myself about what is best practice, about what I am trying to say or think; self-consciousness is a major factor in both my teaching and scholarship;
 - It enables me to combine class prep with scholarship;
 - It unites the students and me in the on-the-moment excitement of philosophical investigation.
- Disappointments
 - o The many students who choose not to pay greater attention to philosophy;

- The abysmal reading, writing, speech, and thinking skills of my students;
- My frequent failure to manage my time well, so that I am perpetually behind, so that I frequently fail to provide my best teaching;
- On the whole, though, the enjoyment outweighs the dissatisfaction, by far.

Changes in my Thinking about Teaching

- Confidence
- Dis-perfectionism: it doesn't have to be
- Simplifying: less elaborate
- Drawing limits: not to kill myself over every student

Graduate School Preparation

- I would say, yes, as much as is possible.
- Primarily what I took from grad school was the knowledge of my field sufficient to teach at the undergraduate level.
- Beyond this, teaching requires hands-on experience.
- The amount of teaching that I did in grad school was valuable to my being able to teach effectively from the beginning.
- But there is no substitute for experience. It takes 5 years to develop a course.