Twelve Years Later
AAPT Biennial Meetings, 2010
M.G. Oakes, Winthrop University

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.