



LEARNED DURING FIFTY YEARS OF UNIVERSITY TEACHING

By James H. Burton



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Abstract

This article describes some lessons that this business professor has learned during fifty years of business experience, management training, and university teaching. Many of these lessons were challenging and some took a number of years to learn. And to be very clear, he continues to learn lessons. The author has enjoyed writing about these reflections; hopefully, the readers will be reminded of some of their lessons.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to share some of my important learnings during the last fifty years of university teaching. Many college professors attended graduate school, got their doctorate union card, and immediately began teaching. My experience was slightly different: I worked as a business executive first and then became a professor of business. Even with my union card in hand and my business experience, I have learned much from the thousands of students who have participated in my classes. My feelings have ranged from frustration and anger to unconditional love and indescribable joy during my teaching career.

Many of my learnings were taught to me by others, and I heard some of these lessons from older and wiser folks; however, I really got it when the learning resonated and vibrated wildly in my heart and soul. Each learning or lesson is discussed with some example and a notable quotation. Perhaps some new college student and/or professor may glean some insights from this writing. I hope so.

Each thing learned or lesson is discussed with some examples and a notable quotation.

My Bio

A brief history of some significant parts of my life are presented in order to orient the reader about my perspectives and biases. I was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1940. As a child, I remember air raid practices at night during World War II with lights out and sirens screaming. I joined the Marines at 17, married at 23, was an executive at 28, filed bankruptcy and became a professor at 35, began my spiritual path at 35, divorced at 60, remarried at 63, heart bypass surgery at 67, sky diving at 70, healed of leukemia at 74, and continued teaching at 78. I feel genuine gratitude daily.

I attended Georgia Military Academy as a boarding student. This was my first experience in meeting Catholics, Jews, and foreigners (mostly from South America). At Decatur High School, I worked at many part-time jobs during high school; acted in the junior and senior plays; and was very successful in Junior Achievement and the Order of DeMolay. I received a scholarship to take the Dale Carnegie Course in public speaking.

After graduating high school in 1958, I joined the United States Marine Corps Reserves. I reported for active duty at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, SC,

in January 1959. After meeting many Marine recruits that had poor educations, I decided to attend college rather than flight school.

In the fall of 1959, I was accepted as a freshman at Georgia State College (now Georgia State University). I worked during the day and attended night classes during much of my college career. I was active in Sigma Nu Fraternity and became editor of the college newspaper my junior year. Although I began college as a pre-med major, I changed to a real estate major in my sophomore year. I also worked for Atlanta's largest commercial real estate holding company, during my junior and senior years. This was a life-changing opportunity because I learned a lot about commercial real estate and met many of the key commercial real estate executives in Atlanta.

I graduated with a BBA degree in real estate in 1964 and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Army. I was accepted into the MBA program in 1964 and graduated in 1966. I began working as a commercial mortgage loan officer in 1964, originating mortgage loans on commercial real estate developments in the Atlanta area.

This brief description of some of the events in my life may help to explain my significant learnings during fifty years of university teaching. Some students have reported that my teaching style is a combination of Marine Drill Instructor and holy man (southern preacher?).

Business Career

I was offered an executive position as vice president of a major Atlanta real estate company in 1968. This position was an incredible opportunity and I negotiated many large real estate deals. On the weekends, I personally developed a 200-acre second home development in the North Georgia Mountains. This development was successful, and all lots were sold within two years. I also continued graduate study at Georgia State, working toward a doctorate degree.

Several friends and I started a real estate brokerage firm in Atlanta. A large Atlanta bank approached me to market another 2,000-acre second home development in the North Georgia Mountains. The economy was experiencing a recession in 1975 and I did not realize that the bank had financial problems. Hence, I gave the property back to the bank and filed for bankruptcy. This time was a very low point in my life because I had relied on my business success as a major component of my self-worth.

During 1975, I was initiated into the Sufi Order, which promoted personal spiritual guidance and harmony among different races, cultures, and religions. At that time, I was given the spiritual name of "Subhan" from my spiritual guide, who remains my teacher today.

Starting a Teaching Career

Having a wife and three children which included a new baby in 1975, I applied for many real estate executive jobs but was rejected typically because I was "over

qualified". Some of the real estate professors at GSU suggested that I apply for teaching jobs at universities. Paradoxically, many universities were searching for real estate professors, despite a severe economic recession existing in the real world. I was offered many professorships across the United States because of my executive experience and having completed my course work and field exams for my Ph.D. degree, only lacking the completion of my doctoral dissertation. I accepted the position at the University of Southern Mississippi because they offered the highest salary, an endowed chair, and the academic rank of Associate Professor. My plan was to teach for one year, and then return to the real estate business in Atlanta or New York.

However, while teaching at USM, I discovered that I loved teaching and genuinely cared about the students. The students seemed to enjoy my teaching style balanced with academic rigor and street real estate experience. My doctoral dissertation of 650 pages was completed and I received my Ph.D. degree in 1978. While at the University of Southern Mississippi, I was selected to participate in a training-the-trainers program; over several years, this program trained us to lead workshops in many areas: personality styles, direct communication, listening skills, leadership, constructive confrontation, feedback, team building, working with small groups, and dealing with crazy participants. This training program received a national award for teaching innovation.

I taught at USM for seven years, then moved to Philadelphia, PA, in 1982 to start an electronic security business for multi-story office buildings with several partners. When we returned to Atlanta in 1986, most of the office buildings in Philadelphia had installed our security system.

I got a job in Atlanta as a commercial real estate appraiser and began teaching real estate as an adjunct professor in the graduate business program at Atlanta University, now called Clark Atlanta University, at which predominantly black students attended. In 1990, I was offered a full-time teaching position as Professor at the University of West Georgia. We started a major program in real estate at UWG that continues to this day. I also continued real estate appraising and consulting in Atlanta, serving mostly as an expert witness in condemnation cases.

Thirteen Things Learned or Lessons

Some of the lessons learned by me during my fifty years of teaching are listed below:

1. Caring for students
2. Sharing with students
3. Leadership by example
4. Cultivating honesty
5. Having fun
6. Dealing with political correctness
7. Attitude matters
8. Developing a personal mission

9. Living in financial balance
10. Choosing not to be a victim
11. The value of internships
12. Changing culture in higher education institution
13. The need for holistic education

I will elaborate each of them in the following sections.

Caring for Students

Students can feel when a professor genuinely cares about them, and they can also feel when a teacher is primarily just doing a teaching job. Real caring about students is demonstrated when the professor exhibits some personal sacrifice and/or self-denial for the student. Meeting with students after office hours, being willing to deal with students who are upset and/or angry, visiting students who are in jail, and being willing to give or loan money to students are a few examples of sacrifice by the professor. I remember that a senior student came to me before their last semester and asked if he could borrow enough money to register for his last semester. He promised to pay the loan promptly after beginning his first job after graduation. I loaned him the registration money and he graduated. I never heard from that student, and he did not pay back his loan; and that is the way it is.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” (Bible). – Jesus

Sharing with Students

I have learned that sharing my personal stories about my failures and successes model appropriate self-disclosure. Trust and self-confidence are increased with suitable self-disclosure. When a professor self-discloses, it demonstrates the he/she is a human being and makes mistakes like everyone; as a result, students are willing to share more and to disclose more of their real selves in class. During the first class meeting of each semester, I typically share some things that I have done that I regret and some accomplishments about which I felt very happy. Then, I ask the students to form pairs and to interview each other about a few of their regrets and accomplishments. The students then voluntarily come to the front of the class and introduce their partner by sharing some of their partner's regrets and accomplishments. This type of self-disclosure and sharing opens the class space for more trust, self-confidence, and introspection.

“I wish I could show you...the astonishing light of your own being.” (Hafiz). - Hafiz

Leadership by Example

A college professor, by job description, must be a leader to his/her students. As with most folks, students do not follow leaders because of their words but because of their works, that is, by their living examples. Marine Platoon Leaders do not send their

troops charging alone up the hill, they are out front, leading them up the hill. We do many activities in my classes that require courage and willingness to risk; I will usually demonstrate my willingness before asking the students to do the activity. For example, sometimes we break 1-inch boards with our hands as a voluntary self-confidence activity.

I learned to break boards from my nine-year-old son who was taking a beginning karate class. I have led this breaking wood activity with thousands of people from many different countries and cultures. Although no one has been injured, fear and anxiety may be felt by the participants before they break the board; hence, I always demonstrate by first breaking a board myself. As a result, we consistently get 100% voluntary participation in this activity. I remember a good friend asked me to donate a large amount of money to a noteworthy project that he wanted to complete before his death. I resisted until he committed to donate an even larger sum; following his commitment, I agreed to make the donation.

“A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.”
(Maxwell). - John C. Maxwell

Cultivating Honesty

We did a self-descriptive survey of more than 500 college students several years ago; as I recall, 86% of the students admitted cheating in some form during their college careers. Professors must demonstrate honesty and integrity, not merely to talk about good character values. Here are several ways that professors may model honesty and integrity for their students:

- Show up early for class.
- Honor announced class breaks.
- End class on time.
- Make a specific time commitment to grade tests and papers.
- Volunteer to help students according to a specific schedule.
- Use listening checks with students to improve communication.
- Do not miss classes except with a prior discussion with students.
- Constructively confront students on dishonest behaviors.

I ask students to read and sign an agreement about integrity for our sales class during our first meeting. The agreement is specific and in summary states:

- The student chooses to be in this class.
- The student chooses to keep his/her agreements.
- The student is responsible for creating value in this class.
- The student agrees to attend all classes.
- The student agrees to be on time for classes and breaks.
- The student agrees to remain in class except for announced breaks.
- The student agrees to respect the confidential sharing.

- The student agrees to complain only to someone who can fix it.
- The student agrees to complete all assignments on time.
- The student agrees not to cheat or help another cheat in this class.

When students break their agreement, for instance, some are usually late to class for even their second class, they are confronted constructively in public.

However, honesty is a two-way street. One of the best ways to grow and improve is to learn more about how to give and receive feedback; therefore, effective guidelines for giving and receiving feedback are reviewed about halfway through the semester. Most business students will become managers and/or executives in the future and will be required to give performance reviews to subordinates; a performance review is feedback.

To practice giving feedback, the students are organized into small groups of 5-6 students and are asked to generate an anonymous list of ways that I can improve teaching this class. Some of the guidelines for giving feedback are: to be genuinely helpful, deal specific and changeable behaviors, and avoid generalities. I leave the classroom during their discussions and the students seem to really enjoy this activity!

When I return, a leader from each student group is asked to report a summary of that group's list of ways to improve the class (no likes about the class are permitted during this time), and I write each item of feedback on the board to acknowledge the feedback and show the feedback to all students. One of the challenges for me, as the professor, is to not act defensively and to encourage the students to be specific rather than general. Also, I usually feel sad and hurt while receiving changeable behavior feedback from fifty students, and I report my feelings to the students.

After hearing the students' feedback about ways to improve the class, they are asked to list the things that they like about the class. I also leave the room during this discussion. Each group reports their likes as I write them on the board, and I begin to feel much better. Note that the changeable behavior is reported first, the accolades second. This is also a good order for performance reviews.

The world would likely be a better place if honest and anonymous feedback is given periodically to professors, teachers, business managers, elected officials, and others.

Some basic values of right and wrong may have been missed by some of our college students, and I believe that they want to do the right things and have the right behaviors. Some good values that can be clarified are: avoid lying, do not steal, avoid hitting others, do not murder people, avoid cheating, and to learn from our mistakes.

"I remain an optimist because of my unflinching faith that right must prosper in the end." (Gandhi). - Mahatma Gandhi

Having Fun!

As the Buddhist say, life is suffering. College work may be excessive suffering for many students; therefore, I try to create fun experiences in our classes. I usually arrive about fifteen minutes before class and music is played until class begins. I tell jokes at the beginning of class; sometimes the students laugh and sometimes they do not laugh, but I keep telling jokes. I probably would not have been a very successful stand-up comedian. I also give the students permission to have fun in our classes. We also read inspirational stories from good books like *Chicken Soup for the Soul*; (Cranfield). I frequently wear silly hats in class; and at the end of each class, we form a circle, hold hands, and sing together. In the beginning there is resistance from a few students; however, at the end of the semester, many students do not want to stop singing and do not want the class to end. Laughter really is the best medicine and cures many ills!

“Just play. Have fun. Enjoy the game.” (Jordan). - Michael Jordan

Dealing with Political Correctness

My judgement about political correctness is that it stifles open and clear communication. Merriam-Webster defines political correctness as: “conforming to a belief that language and practices which could offend political sensibilities (as in matters of sex or race) should be eliminated.” (Webster). A few people might say that I do not practice political correctness effectively.

Wikipedia described political correctness as: “Political correctness (or PC for short) means using words or behavior which will not offend any group of people. Most people think it is important for everyone to be treated equally, fairly and with dignity. Some words that are unkind to some people have been used for a long time. Some of these words have now been replaced by other words that are not [as] offensive. These new words are described as politically correct. The term is often used in a mocking sense when attempts at avoiding offense are seen to go too far.” (Wikipedia).

Jay Karlson described political correctness with another viewpoint: “None of us expect a life where we will never be offended or sheltered from conflict or hurt feelings. However, many self-appointed saviors are trying to make this a reality, through aggressive speech codes, legal rulings and corporate policies. Political Correctness (PC) originally flowered in academia and spread like a virus through the government and corporate worlds. It has devolved into a tyranny of the most offended person in the room. PC complaints now range from the sublime to the ridiculous, and they are stifling the honest assessment, and debate, of issues in our lives.” (Karlson).

Hannah Fingerhut at Pew Research reported: “At a time when the appropriateness of language has become a political issue, most Americans (59%) say ‘too many people are easily offended these days over the language that others use.’ Fewer (39%) think ‘people need to be more careful about the language they use to avoid offending people with different backgrounds.’” (Fingerhut).

Political correctness implies that the term is motivated by politics and someone else's opinion; however, being offended by speech is a choice made by the offende. I recall my Grandmother saying: "Sticks and stones may break your bones, but words cannot hurt you."

According to Wikipedia, Christians are 74% of the U.S. population, Judaism is 2%, and Islam with less than 1%. (Wikipedia). In Georgia, Christians are 79% of the population. (Wikipedia). Several years ago, apparently to avoid offending anyone, our college changed the name of our annual "Christmas" luncheon to "holiday" lunch. Given our Christian heritage and the joy of celebrating Christmas, changing the name of our Christmas luncheon seems a step too far for me. There are many published examples of abuses of political correctness in speech. (Snyder).

Being raised as an American with freedom of speech as a Constitutional hallmark, I resist being told by others what speech is politically correct. I try to be open and truthful without hurting others, and students are encouraged to speak their truth without intentionally offending each other.

Another example of being offended by speech occurred during my traditional lecture about indirect communication. One of the examples of indirect communication is called "mind raping", which Yahoo defines as: "Mind rape is always done by a second person. It is an extreme violation of your emotional boundaries and intellectual boundaries. It attacks the very essence of who you are." (Yahoo). Mind raping is to tell another what they are thinking and is an unacceptable method of communication. At the end of the lecture, a student said that she was offended by the term "mind raping". My intention was to explain that a poor form of communication was telling others their thoughts without asking for verification. While this lecture has been given dozens of times, this was the only instance that a person shared being offended.

"If freedom of speech is taken away, then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter." (Washington). - George Washington

Attitude Matters

While everyone experiences adversity in life, each person has the power to choose one's own attitude. We may feel powerless to control a situation or event, but we can choose how we respond to the situation. Perhaps describing one of my mistakes may help to illustrate this point. Upon returning a test to students some years ago, one of the students challenged me in an assertive tone to explain why points were deducted from one of his discussion questions. My reaction to this student was loud, aggressive, and defensive. My reaction was the opposite of a positive and caring attitude. Fortunately, a little wisdom kicked in, and I later apologized to him in front of the entire class. That student turned out to be a star student.

Having a positive and happy attitude makes all the difference! Smiling is a treasure.

"It is our attitude at the beginning of a difficult task which, more than anything else, will affect its successful outcome." (James). -William James

Developing a Personal Mission

I had no clear idea of my life's mission until I was 35 years old, and perhaps the initial glimpse was an accident (or it could have been divine intervention). After my personal financial collapse in 1975, I began teaching full time at the University of Southern Mississippi and received flashes of insight that my real passion was teaching, regardless of earning only about 10% of my former income. In the training-for-trainers' program at USM, Drs. Hyler Bracey, Aubrey Sanford, and Roy Trueblood asked me to write my life's mission statement and my Mission Statement has changed very little during the past forty years:

To love everyone;
 To serve everyone;
 To keep my word and my agreements;
 To live in financial balance;
 To walk a peaceful path;
 To respect all natural laws;
 To forgive and forget the dead past;
 To fear not the future;
 To laugh, sing, and dance each day;
 To enjoy each moment fully;
 To treat my body as the Divine temple;
 To give thanks daily for my blessings;
 And to surrender to God.

I work on doing some activities each day towards completing my mission. And I fall short of my missions on some days. One of the activities that I ask my students to complete each semester is to write their own mission statements. Everyone should be encouraged to write their mission statement and do their best to put their mission into action.

"The only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it." (Jobs). - Steve Jobs

Living in Financial Balance

Many years after my bankruptcy, I realized some of the reasons for my

financial failure; they were: high financial leverage, spent more than my income, did not give to God or charity, did not save and invest, and I made big changes in one year (new home and new business).

Credit cards and large student debt are also prescriptions for financial disaster. “According to Make Lemonade, there are more than 44 million borrowers who collectively owe \$1.5 trillion in student loan debt in the U.S. alone. The average student in the Class of 2016 has \$37,172 in student loan debt.” (Friedman). I encourage students to minimize their student loans and to maximize their income and savings to pay college expenses. If a student is ready to graduate, and has large student debt, I recommend their using Dave Ramsey’s “debt snowball” technique for paying off the debt. (Ramsey).

“If you create incredible value and information for others that can change their lives - and you always stay focused on that service - the financial success will follow.” (Burchard). - Brendon Burchard

Choosing Not to Be a Victim

We all tend to play the victim card from time to time, sometimes in very small ways and sometimes in gigantic ways. In some sense, playing the victim is deception.

Merriam-Webster defines victim as: “One that is acted on and usually adversely affected by a force or agent; the schools are victims of the social system; such as (1) one that is injured, destroyed, or sacrificed under any of various conditions, a victim of cancer, a victim of the auto crash, a murder victim; (2) one that is subjected to oppression, hardship, or mistreatment, a frequent victim of political attacks.” (Webster).

Wikipedia describes victim playing as “Victim playing (also known as playing the victim, victim card or self-victimization) is the fabrication of victimhood for a variety of reasons such as to justify abuse of others, to manipulate others, a coping strategy or attention seeking.” (Wikipedia).

Christian Maciel suggests fourteen signs that someone is playing the victim card: (Maciel).

1. They don't take responsibility
2. They are frozen in their life
3. They hold onto grudges
4. They have trouble being assertive
5. They feel powerless
6. They don't trust others
7. They don't know when to say enough is enough

8. They get into arguments easily
9. They feel sorry for themselves
10. They constantly compare themselves to others
11. They see life as always lacking
12. They are a critic
13. They think they are perfect
14. They cut people out of their life

While there are likely justified victims, many who play the victim act are not taking responsibility for their own choices and behaviors; typically, they blame others for their actions. Here are few examples of students who are pretending to be the victim. A student will claim that they did poorly on a quiz because they did not have the money to purchase the textbook (I am a victim of poverty); yet, she is wearing \$150 shoes and designer jeans and could have easily borrowed a book from another student or the library to study for the quiz. A student claimed to be late for class because his alarm clock failed to alarm (I am a victim of the faulty clock); yet, he also fails to return from the class break on time.

“I am not a product of my circumstances. I am a product of my decisions.”
(Covey). - Stephen Covey

The Value of Internships

Internships for students who are attending college provide additional opportunities for students to gain some more practical business skills. Employers want to hire college graduates with some business experience. Some colleges offer academic credit for internships, and some employers will pay wages to interns. Internships are win-win for the student and the employer.

Daniel Bortz suggested five big benefits of doing an internship: (Bortz).

1. Beef up your resume
2. Figure out what you want to do, and what you don't want to do
3. Learn by observation
4. Get professional feedback
5. Make valuable connections

Although I have never hired an employee based primarily on their resume, these suggestions are real benefits of doing an internship.

Internships make a difference to employers, according to a Harris Interactive

survey of more than 2,000 college students and 1,000 hiring managers. More than 80% of employers want new graduates to have completed a formal internship, but only 8% of students interned in a field related to their major. (White).

Some guidelines from Dr. Hyler Bracey, a former CEO, management professor, and author, about being an exceptional employee, which also apply to being a good intern, are: (Bracey).

- Show up for work on time, or early.
- Do something that gets actual results (avoid busy work).
- When you finish a job, ask your boss "what else can I do?"
- Ask for real feedback from your boss, two things I can improve and two things that you like.
- Make and keep specific agreements.
- Be the first to volunteer to work overtime when asked (after the first time, you can negotiate overtime); demonstrate your sincere willingness.

Having served as president and CEO of several different companies, I can confirm that an intern or employee who practices these six simple guidelines will be a star employee and may be promoted to the boss.

"The ideal intern is committed, creative, organized, ambitious, independent, and able to crack a smile, whether meeting a celebrity or folding socks." (Weiss). - Emily Weiss

The Changing Culture in Higher Education Institutions

Growing up in Decatur, Georgia, my public elementary and high schools were racially segregated; all students were white. When I attended Georgia State College from 1959 through 1964, the college was also racially segregated and most of the business major students were male; frankly, I do not remember any females attending the upper division business classes. And my girlfriend was denied admission to Georgia State College because of low high school grades and/or low admission test scores. (The name of Georgia State College was changed to Georgia State University in 1969. (Wikipedia).)

The nonwhite population has doubled, and segregation has decreased at Georgia State University by more than 300% during the last 45 years, according to research by the Center for State and Local Finance at GSU. (Woodson). In 1970 whites were 78% of the student population at GSU; in 2015 whites had dropped to 56%. In 1970 African Americans were 22% of the student population at GSU; in 2015 African Americans had increased to 33%. Hispanics increased from 1% to 11%

during the same period; and Asians increased from 0% to 5%. (Center for State and Local Finance).

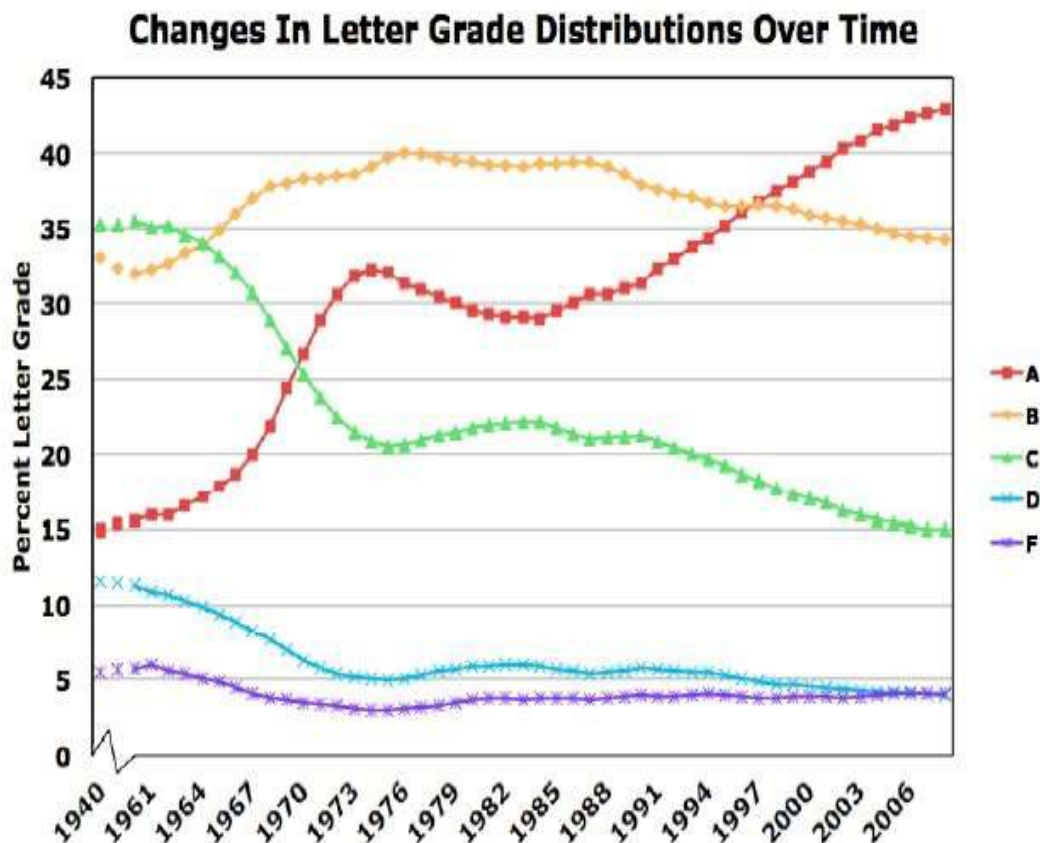
My first semester as a professor at the West Georgia College was in the spring of 1990. In the fall of 1990, the racial mix at West Georgia College was 84% white and 14% black. The name of West Georgia College was changed to the University of West Georgia in 2005. In the fall of 2017, the racial mix at the University of West Georgia was 51% white, 36% black/African American, 6% Hispanic, and 1% Asian. (UWG).

One of the significant cultural changes in education during my career is grade inflation. Grade inflation may be defined as: “the awarding of higher grades than students deserve, either to maintain a school's academic reputation or because of diminished teacher expectations.” Grade inflation has seemed to increase dramatically in high schools during the last two decades. “In 1998, 39% of high schoolers had an “A” average. By 2016, the rate had increased to 47%. Meanwhile, the average SAT score fell from 1026 to 1002 on the 1600-point scale. Private schools, in fact, had cases of grade inflation at three times the rate of public schools.”

A recent study by Grade Inflation.com showed that college grades continue to increase and that the most common grade is “A”. Scott Jaschik summarized some key findings of the study: (Jaschik).

- Grade point averages at four-year colleges are rising at the rate of 0.1 points per decade and have been doing so for 30 years.
- A is by far the most common grade on both four-year and two-year college campuses (more than 42 percent of grades). At four-year schools, awarding of A's has been going up five to six percentage points per decade and A's are now three times more common than they were in 1960.
- In recent years, the percentage of D and F grades at four-year colleges has been stable, and the increase in the percentage of A grades is associated with fewer B and C grades.
- Community college grades appear to have peaked.
- At community colleges, recent years have seen slight increases in the percentages of D and F grades awarded. While A is still the top grade (more than 36 percent), its share has gone down slightly in recent years.

The following chart illustrates these grade changes in average grades from 1940 to 2012: (Jaschik).



This chart reflects the latest college average grades data of 42% - A, 34% - B, 15% - C, and D's and F's hovering around 5%, indicating an average GPA of greater than 3.0. I reviewed the grades in six of my classes during the past two years to compare my grades with the national data; 11% - A, 38% - B, 36% - C, 11% - D, and 5% - F, indicating an average GPA of 2.4. The percentage of A's in my classes is significantly less than the national average, 11% to 42%; the percentage of B's in my classes are similar to the national data, 34% to 38%; the percentage of C's in my classes are above the national data, 36% to 15%; the percentage of D's in my classes are above the national data, 11% to 5%; and the percentage of F's in my classes are similar to the national data, 5% to 5%. The average GPA in my classes of 2.4 was noticeably less than the national average of 3.0.

While various college professors claim that some of their graduates lack writing skills and math skills, a recent survey reported that 60% of employers said that applicants lacked communication and interpersonal skills, such as motivation, appearance, punctuality, and flexibility. Technical and computer skills were less important lacks.

My view is that college is not for everyone. Many students that struggle in college and accumulate debt may be wiser to choose a trade that pays well and does not require a costly college education.

In summary, the college culture continues to change. Racial diversity is increasing; grade inflation has increased in high schools; grade inflation has increased in colleges and universities; however, the grades in my classes do not conform consistently to the national data.

Some reports suggest that many of our college graduates have difficulty writing correctly and doing college level math.

“It is a thousand times better to have common sense without education than to have education without common sense.” (Ingersoll). - Robert G. Ingersoll

The Need for Holistic Education

I have continued to ask myself, how can I best serve the students in learning to have a happier life? Holistic education seems to acknowledge the whole person. According to Wikipedia, “Holistic education aims at helping students be the most that they can be.

“Abraham Maslow referred to this as ‘self-actualization’. Education with a holistic perspective is concerned with the development of every person's intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative and spiritual potentials. It seeks to engage students in the teaching/learning process and encourages personal and collective responsibility.” (Wikipedia)

One of the purposes of holistic education is to prepare students for the struggles of real life. According to Holistic Education, “Holistic education believes it is important for young people to learn:

- About themselves.
- About healthy relationships and pro-social behavior.
- Social development.
- Emotional development.
- Resilience.
- To see beauty, have awe, experience transcendence, and appreciate some sense of ‘truths.’ (Holistic)

Hence, to be a more effective teacher, I should focus on the whole student: intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative, and spiritual aspects. Much of college training concentrates on the intellectual or left brain of the student. Athletic and physical education foster physical training. Some psychology classes, especially in our humanistic psychology program at UWG, and the counseling center may help students grow emotionally. Music, art, and theater classes and performances improve the artistic- creative or right brain side of students. However, spiritual growth and

training may be minimal in colleges and universities, except in religious student organizations.

Holistic education can be transformative and change students' lives. Political correctness demands that religious terminology and religious symbols should be avoided in the classroom unless the class is a specific religious studies class. For me as a business professor, just to realize that we all, including our students, are spiritual beings may be enough. Seeing that lightning rod of awareness in a student's eyes and illuminated face is joyous. It may be more about a deep feeling than a cognitive realization.

"The highest function of education is to bring about an integrated individual who is capable of dealing with life as a whole." (Krishnamurti). - Krishnamurti

Conclusions

I have learned many valuable lessons from college students during the past fifty years, and I plan to continue learning. Some key learnings for me are to genuinely care about the students as individual human beings, to lead by my personal examples, to practice consistent honesty, and to share my real self of mistakes and successes. In addition, I need to continue to adapt to our changing university culture. Even though I resist political correctness, I can practice being more sensitive to the feelings of others. If some of my students discover their passion in life, I feel very happy as a teacher. It is also OK to have fun in class and share a positive attitude. Singing is inspiring for the soul. Smiles and laughter are good habits!

"Your purpose in life is to find your purpose and give your whole heart and soul to it." (Buddha).

- Lord Buddha

Epilogue

If the reader is genuinely interested in becoming a more courageous teacher and is willing to go out on a limb to find the fruit, there are some positive steps that you can choose. Some of my leaps into the unknown have included participating in dozens of native American sweat lodges, leading youth service projects in scary foreign lands, sky diving, hang gliding at Lookout Mountain, completing the fire walk workshop, finishing a number of individually guided spiritual retreats (40-day retreat in 2014), periodic fasting, and many personal growth workshops/seminars. One of my most significant choices was to select a real spiritual guide and teacher, who has now been my Friend for 43 years.

The growth choices are virtually unlimited, and there is one helpful rule: if you are frightened, do it! Some other ways to grow are to visit a psychological therapist to release your childhood conditioning and to become more vulnerable, take a yoga class, practice Tai Chi, learn to meditate, take an art and/or music class, genuinely forgive those who have hurt you, and complete a personal growth workshop annually.

May all Beings be happy; peace, peace, peace.

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