

# Dental Health Educators' Newsletter

DH Methods of Education, Inc.

Communicating With Our Colleagues

## How to Get Rid of Good Professors

The following description is a condensation of informal discussions with other professors over the years, and is not in any way a report of the findings of systematic research. Nevertheless, it is a formalized description of a method that some (and likely many) have experienced. It is presented as information that may provide support to those professors who have been attacked by their peers. By understanding both the nature of the methods used by their attackers, and the biological consequences they themselves are experiencing, faculty members, especially new faculty, can make better deci-

sions as to how to respond to such attacks. What follows is a description of the basic method of attack, written from the perspective of the attackers. This manner of presentation is selected because it more effectively serves as an early warning device for those being attacked or who are candidates for such attacks.

### Why do some want to drive away good professors?

It may seem a mistake to target these professors, because they are the ones who are the most effective at producing student learn-



ing. But if the faculty members in a given department are not motivated to teach well, and are not interested in the mastery of academic subject matter, they will find that good professors disrupt the harmony of the faculty by raising performance expectations. Moreover, students will come to expect more of all their teachers. If merit pay is in-

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July 2010

### Inside this issue:

Fall Camp Las Vegas	3
Instrument Sharpening	4
Measure Learning	5
DVD 2nd Edition Premiere	6

involved, they know who should receive it. *Continued on Page 2*

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## New Breakthrough in Instrument Sharpening! An Editorial by Cindy Biron Leiseca

One of the greatest challenges for dental hygiene students is learning to sharpen perio instruments. While some educators believe it is the student's inability to understand the designs and angles of the instruments, other educators feel the students have not yet developed the tactile sensitivity to keep the sharpening stone adapted to the lateral side of the blade, so the stone bumps on and off the instrument creating an irregular cutting edge.

We know students are most often visual learners and they need to see how every technique is done in order to imitate it. So far the best way we know of for students to see the angle of the stone against the lateral side of the blade is to hold the instrument stationary with their non-dominant hand braced on a counter and to look at the angle of the stone as they move it around the curve of the blade with up and down strokes. What we commonly call "Stationary Instrument, Moving Stone". Unfortunately, with this technique, most can't produce a precise cutting edge that is in accordance with the original contours and designs of the instruments. Yet, we think it will eventually get them to produce that perfect edge.

A recent study gives reason for a new technique! *Continued on Page 4*

From:

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To:

Continued from Page 1: **How to Get Rid of Good Professors** by Professor Jerome Popp

There is the old aphorism that when all is said and done, everyone, in schools at every level, knows the names of the good and poor teachers. This social fact is further highlighted when a teacher is given some award or is publicly honored. Some conclude that such institutional facts require that good teachers be removed from the faculty. To accomplish this, it is necessary to form a power group—or to activate it, if one already exists.

**Who are the candidates for membership in the power group?**

1. Some have spent time and money studying to become professors, but when they begin to teach, they find that they do not like teaching. They do, however, like the money and the small amount of time and effort that seems to be required of them. Besides that, there are summer vacations and sabbaticals. Some are intellectually and physically lazy, but they desire a job that gives them social status.
2. Some faculty members actually try to teach well, but discover that the students do not like them, give them poor evaluations, and avoid them as much as possible. Of course, the students' poor attitudes are to blame for these low evaluations. Such faculty members are excellent candidates because they have an intrinsic dislike of the good teachers; moreover, they require the protection of the power group for their own survival.

3. The point of being a professor is to teach well and publish, but some seek other means of holding on to their positions. Look for the professors who have no books in their office. They are not drawn to academic journals and books, because their interests lie elsewhere. In addition, reading takes away from their leisure time, or from their time schmoozing with others as a survival technique.

4. Some people are in teaching positions for which they are poorly prepared. These are excellent candidates. For example, in some schools of education, there are faculty members who had never taught before they began to teach teachers how to teach. Imagine how experienced teachers relate to them in graduate courses.

5. Any teachers who are reluctant to join the power group are told they are uncooperative and not team players; this is to be pointed out as often as possible. When they see that they may be targeted, they will seek protection.

6. It is probable that the relevant chairperson or dean will not interfere with the activities of the power group. Management researchers report that in many cases managers feel vulnerable and anxious that some initially small event could turn into a disaster that damages or ends their careers. Administrators who see their positions as solely a matter of local politics, as opposed to those who strongly identify with an academic field, will be reluctant to intervene with the activities of the power group.

**What is the best method of driving away good teachers?**

*Step One: Target Selection*

Identify professors who are enthusiastic about teaching, have received teaching awards or other kinds of public recognition, those who publish in major academic journals or present papers at respected academic meetings, are widely recognized as good teachers by other faculty and administrators, or are popular with students. Note that those professors who identify with an academic field are not easily influenced by the power group, because they

judge themselves in comparisons with national and international peers. It is possible to use this identification against them.

*Step Two: The Dirt Alert*

Be warm and accepting toward targeted colleagues. When they seem to be comfortable with the attackers (or better still, trust them), become more invasive. In discussions, press them as to how they feel about anything, but especially matters relating to teaching and school politics. Show up uninvited at their homes or apartments as this will often provide information about them that they would not mention in a university context. Be especially aware of possible boilerplate criticisms--sexism, racism, elitism, and incorrect ideology.

*Step Three: Initiate Whisper Campaign*

Report to other faculty members anything the targeted professor has said about them that can be interpreted as negative or critical. Point out how the target thinks differently about policies than do the other faculty members. The goal is to isolate the target from other faculty by creating feelings of distrust in the target's peers. This prevents the target from correcting the misperceptions that the whisper campaign is creating. Mention how the targeted teachers only care about publishing and not relationships with their colleagues.

*Step Four: Bullying*

In public contexts, directly and vehemently challenge anything the target has said or done. It is important that others see that it is not a good idea to come to the target's defense, as that would serve to make them a target themselves. If everything the target says is challenged, the target will eventually become non-responsive and withdraw from discussions. Especially important is the fact that they do not defend themselves.



**How to Get Rid of Good Professors:**  
*Continued from Page 2*

**Step Five: Blame the Victim**

In occasions when bullying is not possible because there is no one else around, take on an “I’m being helpful” demeanor, and inform the target that it is their fault that the other faculty members are shunning them—even if they are not. The goal is to have the target believe that everything would be going smoothly if they would just not be such a know-it-all, or have such a superior attitude.

**Step Six: Watch for Renegotiation**

When humans and other animals realize they are in danger, they have three options: fight back against their attackers, take flight and escape their attackers, or freeze and endure the attack. For those animals that freeze, nature protects them from pain by putting them into a catatonic state so that in the event that they are seriously injured or killed, they do not feel the pain. This is sometimes referred to as nature’s anesthesia. Because they possess reflective intelligence, humans suffer a different consequence of serious attacks.

The energy required to fight or take flight is generated by the adrenalin produced by the realization of the attack. If the only option is to freeze, the energy generated must be absorbed by the body itself. In place of the catatonic state, humans have panic attacks. The mind is sending a message, to the effect, “wake up and do something — you are in danger!” But, being frozen, there is nothing that can be done beyond endurance.

Some researchers report that people who experience panic attacks feel that their own body “has let them down” at the very time when they need to be strong and stable. This serves to make the targeted teacher feel even less confident. When experiencing severe panic attacks, some may try to fight back in various feeble ways; this can be used to make them seem more uncooperative, and will further isolate them.

Researchers, such as Peter A. Levine, point out that people who are attacked try to renegotiate their relationships with their attackers. Since they believe that either they have been misunderstood, or that it is their fault that they are being attacked, they hope they can take action to improve their relationships with their colleagues. This effort can be used against them, because in this endeavor, they will invariably make themselves vulnerable by admitting that they regret something, or have done something or the other wrong. These feelings and admissions can be exploited

in future attacks, thereby increasing their anxiety to the point that they will resign.

**Russian proverb:**

*The tallest blade is first cut by the scythe.*

**Chinese proverb:**

*The nail that sticks up gets hammered down.*

**American proverb:**

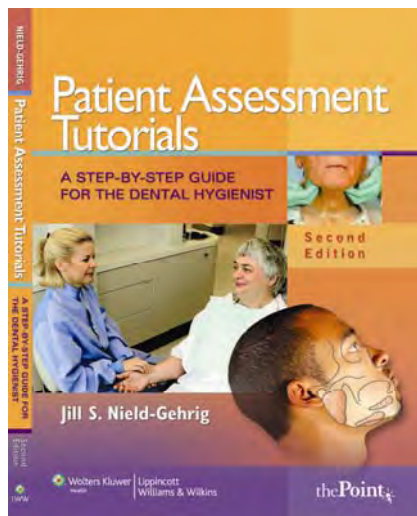
*Good teaching never goes unpunished.*

**Postscript**

Peter A. Levine’s, *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma* (North Atlantic Books, 1997), may be helpful to those who have experienced such attacks.

The concept of academic freedom suggests that professors have the right to freedom of inquiry, which is a negative right in that others have the obligation not to interfere with that right or freedom. For a recent discussion of rights, see John Searle’s, *Making the Social World: The Structure of Human Civilization* (Oxford University Press, 2010). Following Searle’s analysis of social institutions, we have to ask: Who has the obligation to protect this right?

Note that the existence of power groups indicates the presence of ineffective or incompetent academic administration. ♦



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Sharpening ...continued from Page 1

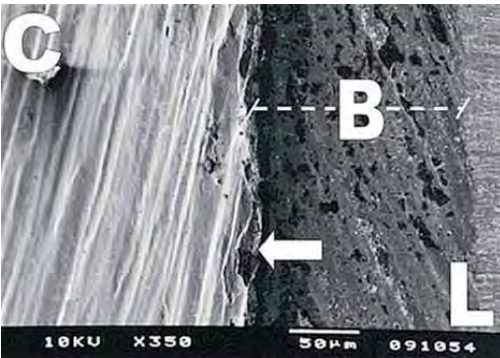
**Drs. Andrade Acevedo RA, Sampaio JEC, Shibli JA.** described the results of many different methods of sharpening. The sharpening of the instruments in this study was done by experienced clinicians. For the complete article refer to:

*J Contemp Dent Pract* 2007

November; (8)7:070-077

**Scanning Electron Microscope Assessment of Several Resharpener Techniques on the Cutting Edges of Gracey Curettes.**

The study included 9 groups, each using different sharpening techniques and the Group whose technique produced the most precise cutting edge without wire edges and irregularities was Group 1 *Stationary Stone, Moving instrument!* **Yes, you read that correctly**—that is **NOT** the technique most commonly taught in dental hygiene schools. The most common technique is *Stationary Instrument, Moving Stone* and that technique was used by Group 3 of the study. Group 3 was not producing the perfect cutting edge, in fact, to quote the authors, “(Group 3) produced a high incidence of undefined cutting angles with the formation of bevels or third surfaces”.



**Group 3 (Stationary Instrument , Moving Stone)**  
**By Permission: Dr. Roberto Andrade Acevedo**

I too, had been using the Group 3 method most of my years as a full-time practicing hygienist in general dentistry and periodontal offices. After beginning a new position as a hygienist in the office of a prominent and highly respected periodontist, I asked where I might find the sharpening stone in the operatory. I was brought to this huge stone that was a 4x5 inch block, sterilized and in an autoclave bag. I told the periodontist I had to have a small stone to sharpen my instruments. He said, “No you do not. Let me show you how to

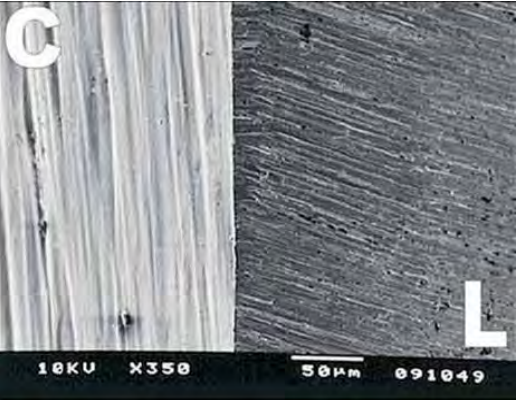
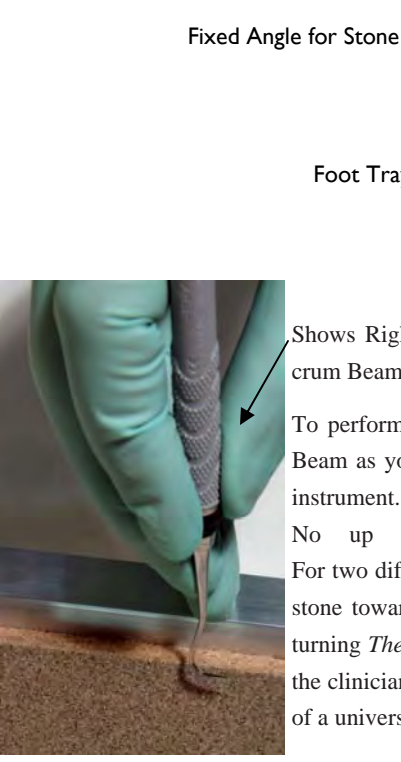
sharpen your instruments using a technique that will produce a perfect cutting edge.”

It was then and there that I learned “Stationary Stone, Moving Instrument”. I actually found it easier to do, but I had already been practicing for 5 years and had great tactile sensitivity and understanding of the contours of the curet blades, so surely I knew it wouldn’t have been something I could have mastered as a student.

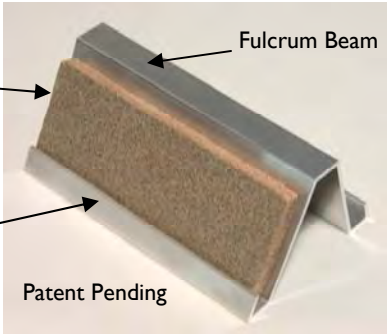
The following year I started teaching part-time in the clinic at a dental hygiene school. I wanted to be calibrated with the other instructors so I left the “Stationary Stone, Moving Instrument” technique at the office. Besides, I knew it would be rather difficult to teach to students.

Now, some twenty-five years later, having read the study and struggling to get students proficient with a technique that may not eventually produce the most perfect cutting edge, it was time for some critical thinking and problem solving to be employed by this educator.

I started thinking about how we could get the students to control the instrument against the stone and have the correct instrument blade to stone angle. So if controlling the instrument requires a fulcrum, they need to fulcrum when they sharpen their instruments. They need a “Fulcrum Controlled Sharpening Technique”. And they need a fixture to hold the stone at the correct angle. Eureka! The idea of *The Sharpening Horse* was born. I described what I needed to my husband, Ron, (an engineer) and he drew the specs and got the prototype and patent pending.



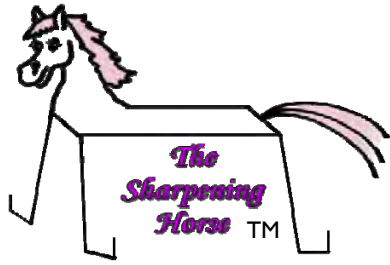
**Group 1 (Stationary Stone, Moving Instrument )**  
**By Permission: Dr. Roberto Andrade Acevedo**



Shows Right handed clinician with fulcrum finger on the Fulcrum Beam and lining up instrument face parallel to the floor.

To perform the technique, glide fulcrum finger along Fulcrum Beam as you move from heel to tip/toe along the length of the instrument. So easy to see the adaptation of blade to the stone. No up and down strokes and **No Wire Edges!** For two different cutting edges—one edge is sharpened with the stone toward the clinician, and the other edge is sharpened by turning *The Sharpening Horse* around so the stone is away from the clinician (as shown here). Equally easy to sharpen both sides of a universal curet or paired ends of area specific curets. —>





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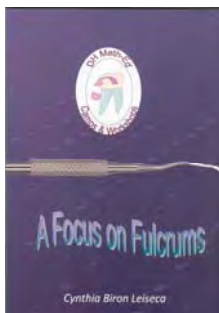
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## Measure Learning Rather than Satisfaction in Higher Education

By Ronald E. Flinn and D. Larry Crumbley

The Teaching, Learning & Curriculum Section of the American Accounting Association has recently published a scholarly monograph with thirteen articles that attack the widespread misuse of student evaluation of teachers (SETs) by administrators. SETs are those anonymous accounting control questionnaires that professors have to hand out to their students each semester. Professors today are hired, fired, rewarded, promoted, tenured, punished, and fired largely based on student satisfaction opinions at the end of each semester about their professor's teaching.

In the Preface co-editor Ronald Flinn and Larry Crumbley say that professors are no longer in the learning/teaching business, but rather are in the satisfaction business. In an interview, Dr. Crumbley at Louisiana State University says the dysfunctional education system based upon the misguided concept that students are customers has allowed "the inmates to be in charge of the prison." Students are inventory, not customer. You would not allow the cars at the end of a General Motors assembly line to fire a worker. You would have someone check the automobiles to see if the worker is performing his or her task effectively. We need to determine if students are learning, not whether they are satisfied with their grades. This destruction of higher education is caused by legislators for public universities and Boards of Trustees in private universities telling administrators to evaluate the teaching effectiveness of university professors, and they in turn hire the inventory (students) to evaluate (e.g., audit) the professors. While using students in this manner may be an inexpensive and quick way to evaluate professors, this method does not measure learning. In fact, this system has reduced respect for professors and the higher education process.

Administrators prefer higher SETs scores, which lead to higher grades, higher student retention rates, and more tuition and tax revenues and bigger salaries for administrators. Likewise, even though administrators have sprouted like rabbits and their salaries have skyrocketed, they refuse to do their administrative duty and observe their faculty in the classroom. Instead, they will spend 15 minutes once a year reviewing the ranking of the professors by the student satisfaction evaluations, and then they are off to the golf course or tennis court.

Professors, of course, face the classic prisoners' dilemma each semester. Be tough, grade hard, and you get bad evaluations. If all professors inflate their grades and deflate their coursework, each professor gets slightly higher evaluations. As a result, there is severe grade inflation throughout the U.S. A's are now common as dirt. In the words of Charles Murray, "dumbed down courses, flaky majors and grade inflation have conspired to make the letters B.A. close to meaningless. The light workload alone can make college today a joke." He believes the "demanding professor is close to extinct." A Duke University English professor Cathy Davidson, a former administrator, now allows the students to determine their own grade.

As Robert Haskell says in his article in the monograph, we have had enough research on SETs, because we will never reach a scientific level of certitude. "If the control mechanism is not constrained, this dysfunctional system will continue to endanger the integrity of tenure, promotion, and academic freedom." It is up to administrators to prove this control device is valid, not professors. And they can not show this proof.

Professor Flinn and Crumbley encourages governors and others concerned with the

*Continued on Page 6*

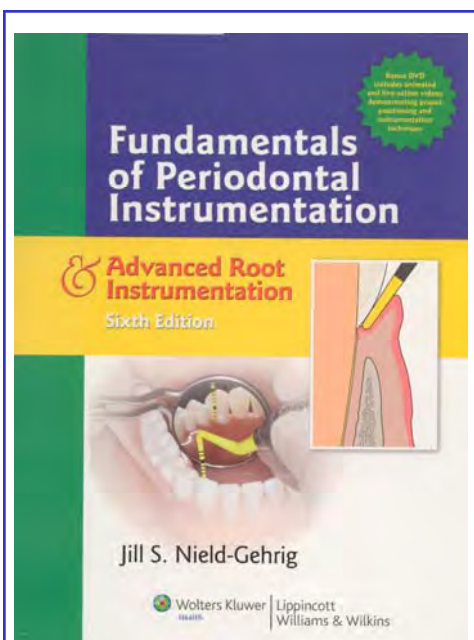
integrity of higher education and student learning to scrutinize the current internal control mechanism that allows administrators to increase retention rates at the expense of learning.

As administrators multiply, their salaries skyrocket, tenure-track professors decrease, and adjuncts increase, governors and Board of Trustees must realize that it's the control system, stupid.

The system has become so dysfunctional and corrupt that Michael McKinney, Chancellor of the Texas A&M University has instituted a bonus system giving professors up to \$10,000 based on student evaluation. These consumer/satisfaction bonuses go to the top 15 percent of the faculty. Certainly a fine performance system to increase retention rates and destroy student learning.

The monograph *Measuring Learning Rather than Satisfaction in Higher Education* can be obtained from the American Accounting Association, 5717 Bessie Drive, Sarasota Florida 34233-2399. TLC members: Free Non-members: \$15.00

[Table of Contents & Preface for the Teaching, Learning & Curriculum Monograph](#)



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