

Bill Jasper's First Night

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Bill Jasper was teaching his first course for University of Maryland University College, a course in "Productivity and Quality Control." Because he did not want to waste a lot of time the first night of class, he immediately introduced himself and said a few words about his background. Then he launched into the course requirements, explaining that students without the catalog prerequisites for the course would have to drop. "I believe in student attendance," he stated firmly. "I will take 1% off the final grade for every class you miss, and I will not give make-up exams."

Next, he discussed the class schedule (Exhibit 1). As he handed it out, Bill told his thirty-three students: "Don't worry about your grade; I'll curve the exams so that no one will flunk." He also explained that he hadn't had time to develop the complete schedule beforehand, but that he would distribute one later in the term.

"So far, so good," thought Bill, but he was disturbed by the unexpected "traffic flow" in his class. Six students straggled in as much as twenty-five minutes late. He decided that during the break he would explain to the late comers what they had missed. He felt rather insulted that several times students got up and left the classroom with their books.

About forty minutes into the session, several students raised their hands. Bill called first on an earnest-looking, elderly woman near the back of the room. "How many exams will we have?" she asked. "When will you give

them?" Bill was a little surprised, since he thought he had covered that information, but he went over it again.

"What about grading?" asked another student. "What if my term paper is late?" Bill responded that the final grade would be calculated as follows: 50% for exams, 30% for class participation, and 20% for the term paper. "The term paper must get to me on time," he stated. "I will take off one letter grade for each week your paper is late."

After answering all questions, Bill announced a ten minute break, during which he talked to a few of the late students. He was pleased to learn that one of them was involved in a productivity improvement program at her workplace and wanted to learn how to manage such a program. "Her overview of an actual work situation would be a terrific way to kick off next week's lecture," thought Bill, but as he called the class to order, he realized he had forgotten to ask the woman her name.

Now that the "logistical concerns" were out of the way, Bill began discussing the topics for the evening. To give the students a good course overview, he read the summary paragraphs from the chapters of the textbook. He also distributed a skeletal outline (Exhibit 2) of his introductory lecture. He moved along at a good clip. To obtain additional student input after he got few volunteers for his open-ended questions, he called for comments from a few students listed on the class roster. None of those responding seemed to have more than a minimal knowledge of the basics. Unfortunately, few of the students from the roster were in class, so Bill then started pointing at those seated near the front of the room for responses.

As Bill was launching into his favorite part of the lecture—how quality control and productivity need to mesh—a student raised his hand and said, "That isn't how it is in the real world where I work. All they want is quantity; they don't care about quality." Bill said that he knew this was a problem for many organizations, putting them in a vicious cycle of creating mediocre products, which then required more work later to correct problems. The student seemed satisfied. A few minutes later two students, one after the other, stood up, mumbling apologies about having to leave and walked out the door.

Bill plunged ahead, asking only a few questions. He was surprised at how fast he covered all the material he had prepared for the first night. That morning he had told his wife that he had enough material for at least two meetings, but when he reached the end of his final page of notes, he had to end the class about forty-five minutes early. "I guess there's no harm done," he thought. "I went over all the key points on the handout."

As Bill drove home, he reflected on his first night of teaching for

University College. When he was a student, he had felt that he could teach many of the classes better than some of his ivory-towered, removed-from-the-real-world teachers. But now that he had an opportunity to teach his own class, he wasn't so sure.

BILL JASPER'S FIRST NIGHT
EXHIBIT 1:
SYLLABUS

Instructor: Bill Jasper
Course: TEMN 350, Productivity and Quality Assurance
Section: 4031
Text: James H. Harrington. The Improvement Process: How America's Leading Companies Improve Quality. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987.

Schedule - First Half of Term

Date	Topics	Chapter Assignments
1/31	Introduction to course Importance of productivity improvement and quality assurance	
2/7	Introduction to productivity improvement The changing environment of work and organizations	1 & 2
2/14	Management and employee awareness and commitment	3 & 4
2/21	Evaluating and describing work and organizations Work measurement	5 & 6
2/28	Work-distribution analysis Operations auditing	7
3/7	Operations auditing results Quality control concepts	8
3/14	Midterm Exam - to be continued	

Requirements

Exams: Midterm and final
Term paper: 20 pages

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EXHIBIT 2:
LECTURE OUTLINE

Importance of Productivity to Quality Assurance

- Productivity improvement - what is it?
- How does it relate to quality assurance?
- Exactly what is quality assurance?
- Where's the beef? or why should a firm or individual care about them?
- Quality assurance and control may sometimes be opposed to high output.
- Ways the two can coexist.
- Techniques to be examined include:
 - work measurement
 - work distribution analysis
 - operations auditing
 - sampling
- statistical/control charting
- quality measures
- specifications to standards
- quality & productivity monitoring