HERE AND THERE

National Newsletter
PI OMEGA PI

National Business Education Honor Society
Member of the Association of College Honor Societies

A Message from Taya Moore
National Student Representative
Northwest Missouri State University

Greetings! The Biennial Pi Omega Pi and the 2003 NBEA National Conventions were held in Dallas, Texas, April 15-19. Not only did I get to see what Dallas had to offer, I also gained knowledge on effective ways to teach business courses. I would like to thank all of the Pi Omega Pi Chapters, as well as NBEA members, that presented at the convention.

I was glad to see the number of Pi Omega Pi members at the convention. I expect that everyone enjoyed their stay in Dallas and took away a few good ideas to implement in the classroom along with some great memories. I know I did. I would also like to congratulate those chapters that were among the top 10 chapters for this past year.

With finals approaching, I would like to wish everyone good luck and a great summer. For those graduating, I wish you the best of luck in all that you do.

I will be attending a regional convention this year, although I am not sure which one. I am looking forward to the next NBEA convention in Chicago and the Pi Omega Pi convention in Anaheim in 2005. Have a fantastic summer! Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.

President's Report
Ginny Richerson, Gamma Upsilon Chapter
Murray State University

The 2003 Biennial Convention held in Dallas provided numerous educational as well as social opportunities for 87 Pi Omega Pi members and sponsors. Even our own past president, Nancy Zeliff, has questionable dancing and acting talents!!!! Just kidding, Nancy.

Congratulations to Alpha Pi Chapter (Mississippi State University); Gamma Phi Chapter (North Carolina A&T); Chi Chapter (Indiana State University); Alpha Beta Chapter (Eastern Kentucky University); Beta Chapter (Northwest Missouri State University); and Mu Chapter (Emporia State University) for presenting informative Pi Omega Pi sessions.

New council members were elected for the 2003-2005 school years. I have moved up to President; President-Elect is Thelma King from North Carolina A&T State University; Secretary-Treasurer is Marcia James from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater; Newsletter Co-Editors are Darla Stone and Ann Jankovich from Kansas State University; and our new Student Representative is Taya Moore from Northwest Missouri State University. Due to numerous Constitution and Bylaws changes, the office of Past President was eliminated and the offices of Secretary and Treasurer were combined.

Your new council will meet in July to discuss future initiatives for Pi Omega Pi. We welcome your feedback to help us prepare for our next biennium. If any of you have any questions or concerns, please forward them to me ASAP.

Looking forward to a FANTASTIC Pi Omega Pi 2003-2004.

Reminder: Due to the changes made at the 2003 Biennial Convention to the Pi Omega Pi Constitution, the competition calendar year will be January 1 to December 31. The projects for competition will be **due January 31**. There will be four issues of *Here and There* except for the year 2003 which will have only three issues: April, October, and December.

Delta Pi Epsilon
Continue your commitment to the business education profession by joining Delta Pi Epsilon. Contact the Delta Pi Epsilon National Office at Post Office Box 4340, Little Rock, AR 77214, Telephone: (501) 219-1866; or email dpe@iap.net.

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Here and There
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38th Biennial Pi Omega Pi Convention
2003 Convention Highlights
Dallas, Texas

The 38th Biennial Convention of Pi Omega Pi met in Dallas, Texas, April 17-19, 2003. In conjunction with the National Business Education Association, the convention kicked off with a social. Chapter members and sponsors had a chance to get to know each other and begin the convention full strength.

Led by National Student Representative, Melissa Schram, the Friday business meeting included a presentation of the candidate for that position, Taya Moore. An overview of the Constitutional and By-laws changes was discussed. Throughout the day, members attended NBEA sessions, and eight chapters gave presentations on various topics including financial literacy and teaching strategies.

The Saturday business meeting included a vote on the Constitution and Bylaws changes. All changes were accepted with the exception of the National Competition and the naming of the Top Ten Chapters. Those will stay in effect. Major changes included a change in the National Council to include the following offices: President, President-Elect, Secretary-Treasurer, Editor, and National Student Representative. The competition year was also changed to January-December. The convention ended by attending the NBEA closing session. The 39th Pi Omega Pi Biennial Convention will be held in Anaheim in April 2005.

Congratulations to the Top Ten Chapters
1. Beta Kappa – East Carolina University
2. Zeta Eta – Kansas State University
3. Alpha Pi – Mississippi State University
4. Beta – Northwest Missouri State University
5. Mu – Emporia State University
6. Chi – Indiana State University
7. Alpha Delta – Bloomsburg University
8. Lambda – Fort Hays State University
9. Alpha Beta – Eastern Kentucky University
10. Alpha Psi – Bowling Green State University

Taya Moore
Student Representative
Beta Chapter
Northwest Missouri State

Alpha Delta
Bloomsburg University
Received the Convention
Participation Award

Beta Kappa
East Carolina University
Ranked First Place
Top Ten Chapter

2003 Convention Presentations

Beta Chapter – Northwest Missouri State University
Andrea Collins, Teresa Feick, Jill Jackson, and Joni Jackson

"Financial Literacy-Keeping Your Credit in Check"
Resources and websites to help students learn life-long
strategies in money management, investment planning, and
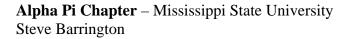obtaining and maintaining a positive credit status.

Alpha Pi Chapter – Mississippi State University
Steve Barrington and Jackie Martin

"TGIF!"
TGIF, a presentation based on fun and exciting ideas that a
teacher could implement in the business classroom such as
Jeopardy, Hollywood Squares, Bingo, Crossword Puzzle
Creators, and other game ideas.

Alpha Pi Chapter – Mississippi State University
Steve Barrington

"Going Beyond Debits and Credits"
Role playing to expand accounting students' knowledge of
accounting as a career.

Alpha Beta Chapter – Eastern Kentucky University
John Friend and Laura Vice

"How Would Socrates Teach Our Business Class"
The Socratic teaching method to encourage students to
learn and to think critically.

2003 Convention Presentations

Mu Chapter – Emporia State University
Jennifer Owen, Anthony Whetstone, Cheryl Stanley, and Ashlee Jackson

"Problem-Based Learning in Business"
Types and Advantages of using problem-based learning, problem
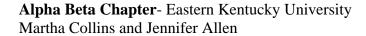assignments and case problems in business education.

Gamma Phi Chapter – North Carolina A&T
Ivy Anderson

"Redefining Classroom Applications"
New ways of applying business concepts that will help
students learn and retain information.

Alpha Beta Chapter- Eastern Kentucky University
Martha Collins and Jennifer Allen

"Creating Open-Response Questions"
How to effectively plan, write, and design open-
response questions by giving different examples of
test questions.

Chi Chapter – Indiana State University
Jeremy Monroe and Chris Street

"Personal Financial Literacy Education"
A focus on the outcome of making available personal financial
literacy education to all high school students in Indiana, the
Midwest, and nationally.

Sponsor Awards

5-Year

Marcia James, Psi Chapter, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

Jan Cooper, Delta Mu, Delta State University

Nancy Csapo, Zeta Epsilon, Central Michigan University

20-Year

Ann Jankovich, Zeta Eta, Kansas State University

Patricia Leonard, Epsilon Epsilon, Rider University

Patricia Arneson, Alpha Rho, Wayne State University

Chapter Awards

75 Years, Theta, Illinois State University

50 Years, Gamma Upsilon, Murray State University

Chapter Activities

Beta Chapter
Northwest Missouri State University

Beta Chapter had a busy February and March. After completing the national project reports, Beta Chapter graded skill events for a district FBLA conference and graded web development events for two district FBLA conferences. Eight members, one sponsor, and one alumni member will attend the Biennial Convention in Dallas.

Lambda Chapter
Fort Hays State University

Throughout the past couple of months, the Lambda Chapter has been quite busy with the induction of three new members, completion of the National Project, and meetings. The group took a trip to the local Technical College last week and listened to presentations by their Business Instructors. The next chapter meeting should be very insightful because it will be held at the local high school where the principal will talk about the interview process and expectations that he has for beginning teachers.

Mu Chapter
Emporia State University

The Mu Chapter has been very busy these last few months. Two students were initiated at the spring induction ceremony. Members have been raising money for the upcoming conference in Dallas, participating in the "Scholarship Challenge," and introducing speakers at the annual Computer and Business Teacher Conference. Pi Omega Pi is also working in conjunction with the Student Committee and other School of Business organizations to prepare an "Everything You Want to Know about Business Day." The coordinator of the Masters program on campus spoke at a meeting in February. At the end of March, two members spoke to the local FBLA organization about Pi Omega Pi and Emporia State University.

Sigma Chapter
Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Sigma Chapter met on campus for the February meeting. Planning continued for attending the national convention. Three members and the chapter sponsor will attend. Members voted on two potential candidates. The March meeting was held at a local restaurant, and one new member was initiated. Members volunteered to assist with proctoring computer applications exams at the university's annual High School Curriculum Contest in March and to serve as ushers at the Massey Lectureship in April. Members voted to purchase Pi Omega Pi honor cords and t-shirts. All members will receive recognition by either scholarships or awards at the annual School of Business Honors and Awards Banquet on April 4. Alyson Warren will receive the NBEA Award of Merit and the chapter's Pi Omega Pi Award. Alicia Clubb will receive the Dr. Henry and Jackye Gold Scholarship and the Delta Kappa Gamma Scholarship. Lindsay McCarter will receive the Business Education Alumni Scholarship.

Morgan Young will receive the Chief Greg and Patti Pyle Scholarship, the Ruby Bowen Business Education Scholarship, and the Lois Tipton Crow Business Memorial Scholarship.

Psi Chapter
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

With spring break approaching, Psi Chapter was quite busy judging numerous national projects, as well as conducting formal initiation. This year's initiation was held at Dr. James' home, and followed by a delicious potluck dinner for all in attendance. The chapter was excited to welcome new initiates Katherine Dykas, Stephanie Miles, Brad Naumann, Allison Wagner, and Katie Yost. For the remainder of the semester, Psi Chapter will be focusing on a fund-raising activity, as well as getting ideas for next year's national project.

Alpha Beta Chapter
Eastern Kentucky University

Alpha Beta Chapter has been very busy raising money to attend the Pi Omega Pi National Conference. Members are very excited to not only be attending for the first time, but presenting as well. Dallas, Texas, here we come! Chapter projects were completed in February and members are now very busy practicing for presentations at the conference. Chapter members are planning on recruitment in April and May and looking forward to a new Pi Omega Pi year.

Alpha Pi Chapter
Mississippi State University

The Alpha Pi Chapter at Mississippi State University has been working on many projects. Members have held fund raisers to help raise money for the Convention in Dallas along with selling T-shirts to the other Pi Omega Pi chapters bearing a design for the 2003 Biennial

Convention. The Alpha Pi chapter inducted four new members into the chapter in February. Chapter members are in the process of preparing presentations that will be presented at the convention in Dallas. All members are in the process of planning a student teacher reception honoring the Alpha Pi members that are student teaching and that will be graduating in May. The Alpha Pi chapter looks forward to seeing everybody at the 2003 Biennial Pi Omega Pi Convention in Dallas.

Beta Kappa Chapter
East Carolina University

The Beta Kappa Chapter successfully completed the national project before the February 28 deadline. Chapter members spent many hours working on the project. Beta Kappa members are preparing to attend the NBEA convention in Dallas, TX. Chapter members will be leaving on April 15 for the long drive to Texas. After the Beta Kappans return from the convention, members will be busy planning for the annual spring awards banquet that will take place at the end of April.

Zeta Eta Chapter
Kansas State University

Zeta Eta Chapter was pleased to have finished and mailed all of the Pi Omega Pi projects on time. Chapter members are eagerly anticipating the 2003 Biennial National Pi Omega Pi Conference and National Business Education Conference in Dallas, Texas. There will be seven Zeta Eta members attending the conference. Chapter members were asked to create the backdrop for the Kansas Silent Auction donation to take to Dallas. Members decided to purchase Pi Omega Pi honor cords. The chapter will initiate two new members at the April meeting. Members will have an end-of-the year meeting and officer election at Mrs. Jankovich's house in May.

Member Articles

Business: The Universal Subject ——————————————

Andrew Turner
Beta Chapter

Northwest Missouri State University

Teaching is going to be one of the most challenging, yet rewarding, professions that I can enter. Teaching allows me to impact a student's life forever. That is a lot of pressure and responsibility. Everyone remembers almost every teacher they have had in school, maybe not the names, but mainly the class and that particular teacher. Thinking about students remembering me for the rest of their lives is mind-boggling! People ask me why I chose to become a Business Education major rather than the traditional history teacher or English teacher. I think it is important for all teachers or future teachers to ask themselves the question: Why are you teaching the subject you chose to teach? The answer to that question should help the teacher in planning a daily lesson or set objectives for the student.

For me it started with our DECA chapter. I enjoyed putting together promotional campaigns, coming up with budgets, and selling my campaign to a judge. That was it! If someone were to ask me three years ago why I wanted to become a business teacher, I would tell him or her because of DECA. Now my answer has changed. I see business as the universal subject. It encompasses all areas of other subjects. You incorporate mathematics in business through different formulas of productivity. English is used in all sorts of business letters and reports. History is used in the strategies portion of business; for example, through past experiences a promoter can now predict the life cycle of a new product. Business encompasses nearly all subjects and combines them. I want to teach students business because I am teaching them something that I know they will encounter in the real world. And that is where it matters the most. If kids do not take what they have learned and put it into action in the real world, what is the point of school?

I encourage every business teacher to get away from the books, do not abandon them; but don't hesitate to teach outside the norm. Put on mock interviews to prepare the student for his/her first job, make up fake money to invest in the stock market, allow the student to create his/her own small business; anything to get the minds started toward the real world outside the classroom. Business is the real deal and we as business teachers, and business people, must sell our product to the students. Hopefully all teachers will sell their particular subject to the student with passion and enthusiasm that will have a positive and lasting effect on students for a long time.

In-House Training Proposal ——————————————

Shawn Steiner
Lambda Chapter

Fort Hays State University

Many schools have an In-House Training class in their curriculum, and most of these schools are located in rural areas, although a few schools in larger towns have an IHT class because some students are unable to commute to an external destination. The proposal is for a small town, which would use the school personnel as employers of the students. The steps for implementation are to introduce the proposal to the school board and if it is approved, jobs will be generated from the teachers and staff of the school for the students. The last step would be the students completing the jobs.

Generation of Jobs

The process for job generation is to announce to teachers at the beginning of school during teacher orientation that the IHT class would welcome any jobs that a teacher may have. This is the best way to advertise the opening for jobs needed for IHT students. Putting reminders in the school bulletin every so often would also help teachers remember throughout the year. If during the year, the teacher thought of a job that a

student might perform for someone else, they could then ask if the student could perform this task for them. The job would just be preformed one time for the teacher to limit repetition and allow a wide variety of jobs for different experiences for the students to explore. Some of the jobs students might be responsible for are:

- Create programs for athletic events
- Set up a database of all properties for the district
- Create a database of all students in the district
- Set up a template for permission slips or letters to parents
- Create a log sheet for bus drivers
- Create a school handbook for each of the schools in the district
- Help teachers download new software on their computers
- Type up the notes of a school board meeting

When assigning students to faculty, you should see if a student has an interest in doing a specific assignment. Also, you should check to see if the student has performed a similar task in the past to minimize repetition.

Carrying the Project Out

The only thing left would be to assign a student to the teacher or staff who has a job and for the student to do the task.

Designing Web Sites ────────────────────

Sarah Eatinger
Mu Chapter

Emporia State University

An important part of any web site is the way it is designed. A poor design will determine how many people visit and return to the web site. Some principles to keep in mind while teaching your students how to design a web site are time to load a site, organization, audience, links, consistency, color, text font and size, and graphics.

A huge part in surfing web sites is time. Everyone gets frustrated if a site takes ten minutes to load. A person will stop the site or remember never to return. In order to have a web site load faster, a few things should be taken into consideration. First of all, the site should be kept simple. Too many graphics are hard on visitor's eyes, and also take a very long time to load. Too much color is another attribute of a web site that can slow it down. Other characteristics that can slow down a site are having too many frames and too much animation.

Where to place information on a site is also a point to keep in mind. All of the important information should be located at the top of the page. Visitors should not have to scroll down to get a list of links. Lots of space around text or graphics soothes visitors' eyes. It also helps the eye to focus on what is significant.

Since all monitor sizes are different, it is hard to know what will show up for some visitors and what will not. Each browser loads differently as well. If you design your site in Explorer, you should test it in Navigator to see how it looks.

A web designer should keep his/her audience in mind while designing the site. If it is a children's toy company site, then it should be fun and entertaining for a child. On the other hand, if it is a clothing store web site, then it should be user friendly with lots of pictures of merchandise and an easy order form. The pictures should contain items of clothing, instead of animation found on a toy web site.

A helpful link bar is a very important part of a successful web page. The links should be located in the same place as they were on the home page. Most sites place the links on the top bar or the left-hand side. Links should also be easy to tell from other text. Make them a different color that stands out, and still contrasts with the background. A link to get the user back to the previous page as well as a link to the home page should be

located on every page. Links listed on a web site should work. Never include links that lead to a dead end and check to make sure that the links continue to work after putting them on your site.

Consistency is also important when designing a web site. Just about everything should look identical or be located in the same areas on every page of a site. The background color, text color, and link colors should all be uniform. If there is a link bar at the side of the page, it should stay there on all the link pages. If it is moved, the visitors will not be able to complete what they would like to do. The font size and style should also remain the same between pages. Reader's eyes adjust to the fonts and when the fonts change their eyes must adjust again.

The color of a web site and the items on them should also be kept in mind when designing a site. Backgrounds should be a neutral, pale color, and the font should coordinate and contrast with it. Think in terms of clothing and what colors coordinate well with each other.

When it comes to which font style to choose, a person should go with one that is easy to read, not one that is frilly. The font style should not change frequently on the site. This is also hard on reader's eyes. In order to change the look of the words, one should use bold, italic or underline the text. The size should also be easy for everyone to read. One needs to remember to check the site in all browsers because the look can change.

The home page of a Web site should be the homepage. It should be interesting for the visitor, but not overwhelming. The homepage should inform what the site is, what the goal of the site is, have contact information, and should have the links to get to the other contents of the site. If the visitor gets lost, he/she should be able to return to the homepage easily to figure things out.

Graphics of a web site should complement the information and not over-power it. There should only be one main graphic on a page. If one has two stories, and they have small graphics that go along with them, then that is acceptable as well. Too many are distracting, and people will leave the site. The graphics should not be very big due to time and space concerns. To enable the visitors to see a larger picture of something, a thumbnail picture should be provided. The visitors can click on the thumbnail if they wish to see the picture.

A fun activity to have your students complete after covering these topics would be to surf the Internet and have them compare these techniques with what is actually on the Web page. Then your class could design their own Website following these design principles.

Behaviorist Classroom Motivation ———————————————————————

Brian Walters
Psi Chapter

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

By using behaviorist classroom motivation effectively, teachers can maximize student performance. This is the method some may see as the most effective way to motivate students in the classroom. When used with the correct amount and types of rewards and with proper punishment for poor behavior or performance, this method can bring out maximum potential. Parents show concern when teachers refuse to reward children who may perform at different ability levels from other students in the class. Rewards for unrecognized activities, such as studying hard and repeated assignment completion, motivates students to continue good behavior and performance.

Documented information states that behaviorists explain motivation with concepts such as "reward" and "incentive." When certain behaviors are repeated, acting in certain ways can become habitual (Woolfolk, 2001). An educator can attain a certain level of respect from students when praise and rewards are given for behaviors such as studying or extra work at practices for sports. This is the reason for grades. Grades are rewards for completed work, but can serve as a punishment for unsatisfactory work depending on the performance of the student. The key is to reward the good behaviors (Johnson and Johnson, 1999). Teachers should not only recognize actions such as a good performance in school plays or letter-earning performance in

sports, but also recognize good studying habits. These concepts should not be used only for positive behaviors. The same applies to negative actions as well. Punishments shouldn't just be given without explanation!

Whether it is daydreaming in class, cheating on a test, or slacking off on wind sprints, some sort of negative feedback should be given to the student/athlete to let them know the teacher/coach is disappointed. The teacher must tell the student that they believe in their ability to achieve rather than just focusing on what needs improvement. (Freiberg, 1999).

In conclusion, the best way to motivate students in the classroom is to practice a steady diet of reward and punishment. Other methods of motivation can be encouraged as well, such as being an enthusiastic teacher or having an excellent teaching style that can have an effect on how motivated your students will be. When a teacher lets a student know how they are doing, it enables students to know the expectations of the teacher. Thus, the students will know when they are achieving at a high level and when they are not. Some students are excellent workers and may be self-motivated without much stimulation, but students who are poor workers may require more incentive to do a better job on schoolwork or behave better in class.

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How Would Socrates Teach Our Classes ─────────────────────

Laura Vice
Alpha Beta Chapter

Eastern Kentucky University

Are your students engaged and motivated? How well do your students understand the course material? Are you excited about the learning taking place in your classroom? A method tested and proven at some of the most prestigious law schools in America can be very effective in our business classrooms. This method is the Socratic method, named for the late Socrates. This article will discuss (a) the Socratic method, (b) its benefits and constraints, and (c) helpful hints for using the Socratic method.

The Socratic Method

The Socratic method promotes critical thinking. "This method of instruction focuses on giving students questions, not answers."[1] Using the Socratic method, the teacher asks the students questions as the means to delve into the subject. The most effective use of the Socratic method of questioning is calling on individual students at random. However, some questions can and are more beneficial to be asked to the whole class. Rick Garlikov, who has conducted studies in classrooms using the Socratic method, states that the Socratic method, "is teaching by stimulating students' thinking in certain focused areas, in order to draw ideas out of them; it is not 'teaching' by pushing ideas into students that they may or may not be able to absorb or assimilate." [2]

Benefits of the Socratic Method

The Socratic method can be very beneficial in business classrooms in the following ways. This method:
1. Engages students' curiosity and arouses their thinking.
2. Provides constant feedback.
3. Identifies any misunderstanding the students may have as the material is being taught instead of waiting until a unit test when the material is ending. This timing gives the teacher an immediate opportunity to probe with more questions that might help the student understand at the time of original learning.

4. Encourages students to prepare for class in the event they are called on. Questions should challenge their conceptual understanding and not be merely factual.
5. Keeps the attention of students because no one wants to be caught off guard.
6. Encourages and helps students to communicate effectively.
7. Develops students' critical thinking skills.
8. Makes teaching more interesting.

The Constraints of the Socratic Method

Although the Socratic method can be very beneficial, it has the following constraints:

1. Challenges the students. The students are not always willing to be challenged.
2. Challenges the teacher. This method takes preparation and dedication to be effective.
3. Takes time. This method will take longer than the lecturing method.

Helpful Hints for Using the Socratic Method

As a business teacher, you can effectively use the Socratic method in any of your classes. The following tips may be helpful in your efforts to teach your class as Socrates would:

1. Use leading questions designed to guide students to see a particular point.
2. Structure questions in logical steps based on the students' prior knowledge.
3. Use incremental questions that are easy to follow and do not take large jumps in the content.
4. Proceed with this method only if your classroom is managed well and students perceive you as a fair teacher.
5. Be prepared for class with a tentative list of points that you want the students to understand. Prepare tentative questions that lead to the point you are trying to establish.
6. Be flexible and willing to address topics for which students need further explanation.
7. Provide enough background information to challenge students to think critically, but not so much detail that it stifles their opportunity. Challenge them to assimilate the concepts for themselves.

This method can be very effective in our business classroom. With this method, accounting, management, marketing, and business communication courses can all be transformed and come alive for the students. Socrates would ask questions, not give answers. Give the Socratic method a try!

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Technology in the Classroom ———————————————— **Steve Barrington**
Alpha Pi

Mississippi State University

One of the most effective ways to involve students in the classroom is to incorporate technology into the classroom. This allows students the opportunity to access a wide range of resources and information. Teachers have said that students seem to be more motivated to learn. It will also allow teachers the opportunity to use different types of learning styles to help make the learning of the students easier.

The benefits of having technology in the classroom are numerous. Teachers are beginning to see the positive effects for students exposed to technology and one of the benefits is that technology interests many students. When students are interested, it helps to motivate the students to want to learn and work. Technology should be a part of every classroom, not just the business and computer classrooms. If teachers use the technology

correctly, it has been shown to help with many basic skills including reading, writing, and mathematics. Technology allows the students the opportunity to use the skills they learn in class and apply them to the new real world of technology. The biggest drawback to using technology in the classrooms, is that teachers do not know how to use it to the fullest. Teachers are unprepared and do not have enough experience to use technology to its full potential. When teachers are not able to use the technology to the fullest, they are stuck using methods from the past. However, even with the drawbacks to technology in the classroom, the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages. Teachers having and using technology in the classroom is a great idea and all teachers need to consider this opportunity.

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Drawbacks to Technology in the Classroom
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Reading in Business Education

Jacquelyn Grehl
Beta Kappa

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Many challenges face the world of business education. The first thing that many think of is the challenge of keeping up with the latest technology. Teachers must be trained in using and teaching the latest technology. In addition, schools also have to pay for new equipment to stay up-to date; this can become expensive. While these things are certainly pertinent issues in the business education classroom, there is another issue that teachers face each day that does not pertain directly to technology. This challenge is helping students who may have trouble reading.

Problems with reading skills are very apparent in the classroom. In computer classes, students must be able to carefully follow tutorial directions. Students must also be able to read and interpret these directions in order to turn them into actions. Students in business classes are responsible for reading textbooks and information for research projects with which they may be involved. Students that may have difficulty reading will have trouble completing tasks such as these that require careful reading or interpretation. Difficulty with reading does not have to mean a severe learning disability. Students can simply have difficulty reading instructions and putting them into actions. Students may also read too fast and skip many important details.

While business educators are trained to teach business and technology, it is every teacher's responsibility to ensure that students are receiving adequate practice in reading. Some teachers may not have any idea where to start with helping students read. There are many tips and practices that are taught today to prepare future teachers for reading in the secondary classroom.

The first thing many textbooks suggest is to read directions and any other information for students out loud so they will still have the opportunity to understand. Sometimes, it is important to demonstrate techniques for students before they have to read tutorials with step-by-step instructions. It is also helpful to be willing to assist students on a one-on-one basis if they do not understand something that they have read.

Some students may not have an identified reading problem, but may simply read carelessly or skip very important parts of the reading. There are many practices to help these students understand that they must read carefully and thoroughly in order to achieve. Some teachers have students read the instructions out loud to the class. Another idea is to have students take notes about the reading that they have done. Others give the students a guided reading sheet, in which the teacher finds important topics from the reading and ask students to

fill in questions as they read. This helps students to focus on important topics if they are unable to differentiate the important parts of the reading.

The wide array of subjects and topics that are covered in business education give business teachers the perfect opportunity to incorporate basic skills, such as reading, into the classroom.   Teachers can assist students with their reading skills without taking time away from the business curriculum by simply assisting students with their daily reading activities. Helping students read will help them in the classroom and in their future careers, which holds true to the values of business and workforce development education.

The Zero Factor: An Excel Lesson in Academic Success ────────────────

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Are your students notorious for failing to turn in assignments? If so, you might want to use the following lesson to demonstrate how much work it takes to make up for a zero in the grade book. This lesson is ideal for an introduction to Excel as it allows you to highlight some of Excel's features in a meaningful way.

Before beginning the lesson it is necessary to create a mock Excel record of grades for a model student. You will also need butcher paper and sticky notes to gather data from students. (A SMART Board is another great way to collect student data.)

Begin this lesson by posing the following question to your students: If this "A" student (referring to mock grades) decided not to do an assignment and received a zero, how many "A" assignments would it take to make-up for that zero? Have each student make a prediction and record it on a sticky note. Once all students have made a prediction ask students to categorize their predictions on a sheet of butcher paper. With the predictions categorized, you can easily glance at the data to synthesize it for discussion. The majority of students will predict within the range of one to three assignments, which makes for a fun demonstration.

The next step is to add perfect scores to the mock record; this is the perfect opportunity to demonstrate the Average function, the what-if analysis, and worksheet navigation. Continue adding scores until the student's grade is within the "A" range. I guarantee that your students will be amazed to discover how many assignments it takes to recover their grade when they fail to turn in an assignment.

To take this lesson further, post each class's sheet of butcher paper on a classroom wall. Have students put the raw data in an Excel worksheet to create a chart. An extension to this would be to have your students use the data to create a parent letter in Word, which describes the activity and their reaction to it. To show how Word and Excel can be integrated, have your students paste the Zero Factor Excel chart in their parent letter.

 I used this mini-unit to introduce and then conclude a large Excel unit in 7th and 8th grade computer exploration classes. Student interest was high throughout the activities and a lasting impression of the importance of turning in assignments was made. This mini-unit could easily be used with high school computer application students.

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