

Teaching Matters

January 30, 2013

If you teach in college for 40 years, and you teach an introductory psychology class of 250 students each semester, you will have taught 20,000 students in that course over your career. What is the statistical probability that one of the students whom you taught, and perhaps inspired, will develop an effective treatment for alcoholism, or a way to reduce traffic accidents, or a better method to teach reading, or a way to reduce domestic violence?

The statistical truth is that for most of us, we are more likely to impact our world through our teaching than through our research. All of us here can point to those teachers who changed our lives for the better. The lesson is that teaching matters. Teaching matters. We need to be doing more of it, not less. I fear that if we don't increase our commitment to teaching as college professors, we will lose this privileged existence that we enjoy. With privilege comes responsibility. And I think we are shirking ours.

—from “Goodbye Dr. Chips, or When Will College Professors be Required to Teach No Courses?,” a talk by **APS Fellow Ludy T. Benjamin, Jr.**, Professor Emeritus, Texas A&M University, at the [National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology](#), January 3, 2013.