

# Using Your First Years Efficiently:

*(What I wish I'd known)*

*i.e. what I did wrong...*

*Here are the biggest mistakes I made in the early years...*

- Taught different courses every term/year
- Took contract projects with little or no publication potential
- Took on poor students *(just to get students)*
- Took on students/projects with topics outside my interest areas
- Wasted my summers doing all the wrongs things
- Never took any vacation *(and still didn't get the papers out)*

*Here are the things I learned to fix these...*

# Students and projects:

*Things I learned about grad students ...*

- 2 great ones are better than 8 poor ones...
- Insist they work business hours (*and check up on them*)
- Don't pay them indefinitely (*tell them up front how long they have*)
- MSc project = 1 paper (*I write them from the thesis*)
- PhD project = 3 papers (*no defense until they are written*)  
(*Minimum: 1 in press, 1 under review, 1 close to submission*)

*Things I learned about projects ...*

- Plan them out as papers (*if it's not publishable, then don't take it...*)
- Both you and the student must be thrilled with the topic  
(*Otherwise you'll never get the papers out*)
- Multiply the amount of time and money you think you need by 3

# Summer and time management:

*Then...*

- May – “I’m exhausted!” (mental break, unimportant busywork)
- June – “It’s conference season!” (prep and travel)
- July – “Gotta get those grad students done!” (thesis review/revisions)
- August – “Back to school!” (course prep)

*Now...*

- end of April –take 2-3 days off (*forget totally about work*)
- May (week 1) – course updates (*while it’s fresh in my mind*)
- May (weeks 2 to 4) – write journal papers (*work at home, submit at least 1 by May 31*)
- June – Help students prepare for conferences; continue to write papers
- July – VACATION (*1 whole month – essential!*)
- August (weeks 1 to 3) – thesis review/revisions, write papers
- August (week 4) – course prep (*work at home, avoid time-wasters*)