

## Becoming an Efficient Teacher at Morningside Academy

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I taught at Morningside Academy (MA) for 3 summers and 2 school years as a full time classroom teacher from July 2001- August 2003. As I am now pursuing a Masters in Special Education, I think my reflection may have more clarity about the big picture since the details have faded. I feel fortunate to have "gotten my first masters at MA". I think the wealth of information in that school is what makes the walls turn bright, bold and cheerful colors, not Kent Johnson's decorating taste! (Almost like a scene from Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory:)

My chart symbols show estimated hours and actual hours. A comment on the estimated hours- during this phase of the graph, I can say the estimate is with precision. Because I began and finished work each day at the same times, I know that my estimate has little error. For example, The first summer I know that I had put in 100 hour weeks because I would get to school at 6:00 am and leave at 12:00 pm (18 hours X 5 days=90hours/week + 5 hours X weekend days=10 for a total of 100hours/per week). The error did that exist would not show a difference on the chart. The error consisted of spending an hour or less after school each day talking to parents, faculty, staff etc. These conversations were not always school related. Microwave meals, too.

I'll explain the 100 hours in depth since this comes as a shock to most. And, I admit I am a little nutty about meeting my goals. Because of this, Kris Melrose encouraged me to chart my hours in September 2002. (Where the "actual hours" phase change line was drawn.)

The setting events associated with 100 hours per week of MA are mentioned below. I didn't want my class to suffer from the trials and tribulations of a first year teacher- more than they had to. Furthermore, after hours I engaged in activities such as sharpening pencils (for 4th graders), moved my classroom 4 times during the first week of the six weeks, organized the new math curriculum being used from the publisher (filing). This was on top of learning new scripts, refreshing myself on boardwork, establishing classroom management and of course running about 150 charts between my afternoon and morning sessions (after-school correcting & dot-dropping). Activities I did not think to ask for help with or assign to the office staff or even to the children. I contracted through the summer and needed to

prove myself for the school year. After hours, Joanne Robbins or Sue Malmquist would stop by quick allowing me to snag some valuable Q&A sessions- highly reinforcing. During my first summer, I lived with my boyfriend's brother and sister-in-law while my boyfriend was still in Oregon. This also served as motivation to stay at school- slight avoidance. I loved, loved, loved every minute of my learning experience even through the moments that I thought "This is not humanly possible!"

My private thoughts and overt actions showed love-love-loving to be efficient. I put my time in, I was learning to learn. With Kent as my mentor, I could skim scripts and put my own flare to them, really teach reading comprehension, dot drop in class, while running my daily point sheets, and maintaining my high praise rates (at times 4/minute). That sounds too perfect- I was implying I was getting better. I learned the quirks of the new copier, to cut down my talk time after school and let the kids sharpen their own pencils. And, each break in the school year I took time to reflect and design programs for my class on how I could do it better than before. The most noticeable change in my classroom management was after reading *Structuring Your Classroom for Academic Success* by Stan Paine in December 2001. (1st phase change on the chart)

My charting stopped when I realized I was happy with hours spent at MA. I became aware I was efficient and that considering the difference between 60 and 70 hours was not meaningful to me. I was willing to put in the time it took to be prepared for the children and my chart showed my hours decelerated by divide 2 from summer 2001 to summer 2002.

Kent, Thank you for the opportunity!

2001 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 1 2003

- - actual hours (intervention)
- Δ - estimated hours
- ★ - published curricula being used
- - charts (scc) running



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 Academy foundations Beth Swatsky  
 Hours at Morningside