



SI-10

### The ZBT Advantage

**Z**ero-Based, Improvement Thinking, widely practiced in business circles, can be a powerful strategy for improving your teaching and your students' learning. What is zero-based thinking?

It means that before you begin a new term, you seriously reevaluate your current practices, methods, course content, learning activities, instructional design, teaching and learning assumptions, etc. For example, it may mean dropping sections of a course that has experienced content inflation over the years and now has become impossible to learn in the time allotted with traditional methods.

This strategy requires that you justify everything you do including: your instructional design, the assignments you give, the learning activities you plan, the number and type of tests you include, and the specific ways you intend to continuously evaluate the results of your teaching.

Ultimately, using zero-based improvement thinking may mean deleting or altering some cherished outcomes that have seemed so necessary in the past but today are inconsequential.

Zero-based thinking works because it produces clarity and simplification, and simplification allows you to focus your energy on the correct targets to reach the goals you set.

For best results, use the six Critical Success Factors of good teaching to guide your evaluation. These crucial areas are leadership, classroom or on-line management, instructional design, communication and evaluation.

## TFS e-Mentor Success Insights

To teach for success this term, begin now to root out the time-wasters, the trivial, the repetitive, the inflated content, the nice-to-know. Then allow only the most essential, fundamental, important and crucial content, learning activities and assignments to remain. When complete, you can safely add back some extras without threatening your most important learning outcomes

*~John H, (Jack) Shrawder, Exec. Director  
TFS National Faculty Success Center*

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