

attempting to improve my teaching effectiveness by continuing personal research and using innovative teaching approaches, such as the box method for financial statement consolidation.

What is the box method?

My husband, Dr. Sheng-Der Pan, and I created over the last 12 years the box method, which is a unique approach to the consolidation of the financial statements of a parent company and its subsidiaries, whose voting stock is substantially owned by the parent company. For financial reporting purposes, these legally independent companies are considered as members in a single corporate family, so their financial statements should all be consolidated. There are several different accounting theories leading to different methods of consolidation. Under the box method, various matrices are prepared for these theories. Under each theory, accounting data are systematically analyzed and placed into various boxes within the matrix. This method is logical and easy to understand. Most important, the method simplifies the process of consolidation. A typical comment from many students' evaluations reads: "The box method for business combinations was far superior to the method in the text."

How does accountancy differ from that in your native Taiwan?

The United States has the best accounting system in the world, which is based on a double-entry system of debit and credit. It has been borrowed by many foreign countries as near as Canada and as far away as Taiwan. Generally speaking, large and publicly owned companies in Taiwan have adopted this accounting system. They use the same conceptual framework and even the same accounting principles as those prescribed by the accounting profession in the United States. For small and family-owned Taiwanese companies, however, the traditional century-old Chinese single-entry accounting system is still in vogue, although the number is decreasing. Accounting education has been playing an important role in Americanizing accounting systems in Taiwan. Many accounting professors were educated in the United States, and many prominent universities have been adopting American accounting textbooks for more than three decades.

Can you say something about having a spouse who is also a professor of accountancy at the university?

Having a couple, like Dr. Sheng-Der Pan and me, work at the same institution has become a common phenomenon in recent years, although it might be somewhat unusual to have a husband and wife hired by the same department, as full professors on the tenure track, at the same time, teaching the same accounting subjects, and sharing the same office. The major advantage of having a couple working together is in the sharing of professional expertise, research, and teaching methodologies. However, there is a disadvantage. After working the whole day in the same office on campus, we still have to share the same office at home to continue our unfinished professional debates. Alas, we have no choice!

What advice do you have for students majoring in accounting?

In general, I would say a good accounting student must be a hard worker. I tell my students, "You must push your pencils hard, do your homework, and try again and again." Accounting is not an easy academic field, but rather it is a difficult professional discipline. Generally speaking, only those students who push their pencils hard and persist will succeed. In particular, accounting students must realize that their chosen career is a service function. You are going to work with people, so you have to be cooperative, honest, and responsible. All these necessary characteristics of a good accountant should be established when you are still a student.

What do you do for relaxation?

I have a wide-range of hobbies, including Chinese classical music, landscaping, calligraphy, and painting. I also collect ancient artifacts, such as coins, paintings, and pottery. My husband, however, is not impressed by my ceramic collection, which he calls "junk stuff." Also, for greater efficiency, we establish responsibility centers at home. While I am responsible for preparing meals and taking care of the laundry, my husband is in charge of yard work, and more important, keeping books, consolidating bank statements, and preparing income tax returns. In this aspect, I feel fortunate to have a spouse who is a Fresno State accounting professor.