SAFETY MOMENTS

AT THE INTERNATIONAL CHEESE COMPANY SEVERAL YEARS AGO, A SIMPLE LEVEL MEASUREMENT TOOL WAS MISAPPLIED. SO CHEESE KEPT OVERFLOWING THE LARGE VATS.

A SIMPLE REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE FOR A PROCESS CONTROL COURSE, RIGHT?

SOMETHING A LITTLE DIFFERENT, AND MAYBE A LITTLE FUN, BUT NOT A LOT MORE, RIGHT?

YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER HOW CHEESE IS MADE, HOWEVER!

CHEESE IS MADE WITH BACTERIA. AND ALL THAT CHEESE OVERFLOW WENT INTO DRAINS, EVENTUALLY LEADING TO A WATER TREATMENT SYSTEM, WHICH USED... YES, ITS OWN BACTERIA TO TREAT THE WASTE.

SO WHEN THE CHEESE BACTERIA BEGAN TO EAT THE WATER TREATMENT BACTERIA, IT ALMOST TOOK DOWN THE ENTIRE WATER TREATMENT FACILITY OF A MAJOR CITY. NOW, THAT’S A REAL SAFETY ISSUE!

IS THIS WHAT BACTERIA LOOK LIKE? NO, BUT IT’S A GOOD BRIDGE TO STUDENT PERCEPTION.
There are so many safety concerns our students don’t know and aren’t even aware enough to be concerned. BUT if we lead with the importance of safety in all we teach, we can better ensure they will be prepared. And hopefully they themselves will pass it along.

But students may not think of the ‘smaller’ cases with similar long-term impact, or that critical every-day safety mindset. And there are certainly a lot of safety concerns to talk about! And that’s fine! Those cases certainly get large-scale consequences across.

When students think of safety, their first thoughts tend to be of large-scale explosions, with dramatic visual impact.

So how do we improve this? How about a ‘Safety Moment’ at the beginning of each class?

For examples, look up “Safety Minutes” from AIChE and CEP, or the “Safety Moments” produced by Northwestern, Yale, The University of Minnesota, and many others.

And if you lead with a Safety Moment in each class, it sets the proper safety culture mindset to guide students in their careers.

Address some real-world concern with actual examples relating to the concepts. Like cavitation if you’re teaching about pumps, or runaway reactions in kinetics, or any sort of flammability limit concerns. There are tons of examples you can pull from, and lots of resources available.

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