



**Human
Factors
and
Ergonomics
Society**

FELLOW PROFILE

Name: Michael S. Wogalter

**Degrees,
certifications,
etc.:** Ph.D., Human Factors Psychology, Rice University (Houston),
1986
CPE, Board of Certification in Professional Ergonomics

Current status: Active

Homepage: http://psychology.chass.ncsu.edu/faculty_staff/mswogalter.php
<http://www.safetyhumanfactors.org>

Biography (How you got involved in the field, your major career activities and milestones):

I was introduced to the Human Factors/Ergonomics (HF/E) field as an undergraduate by Prof. Ed Rinalducci when he was on the faculty at the University of Virginia. As an undergraduate, I had two graduate courses with him in the Human Senses, and Engineering Psychology. After UVA, I attended several graduate schools specializing in neuropsychology and cognitive psychology. After taking many graduate psychology courses, I ended up at Rice University. The faculty at Rice treated me as a colleague and it meshed perfectly with the kind of education I wanted because they had the flexibility to adjust their requirements depending on each student's achievement. In lieu of most classes, I worked with several faculty members on research, and as a result I learned many different kinds of methodologies. Towards the end of my graduate career, I was fortunate to work closely with Prof. Ken Laughery, who I have continued to work with to this day.

My dissertation topic was in the area of eyewitness identification, specifically on the effects of giving verbal descriptions of faces on subsequent recognition. My research also examined aspects of lineup fairness and the effects of visual imaging of faces on memory tests. At Rice, I also started working on warning effectiveness issues, a relatively new area of research, which subsequently, became my main area of research.

I have worked mainly in academia. I was on the faculties at the University of Richmond and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute before taking a position at North Carolina State University where I rose through the academic ranks to full professor. Over the years, I have been fortunate to teach and advise some great graduate and undergraduate students in various research projects.

I have three sabbaticals (a great opportunity for faculty members) during my career at NC State. In one of the sabbaticals, I was a Visiting Scholar at the Liberty Mutual Institute for Safety in Hopkinton, MA. I thoroughly enjoyed working and interacting with many bright

researchers there on several ergonomics-related research issues.

In addition to my academic work, I have participated as an expert witness in numerous product and premises liability cases. These cases gave me an opportunity to see human factors/ergonomics issues in a very different viewpoint than I would have seen by only being an academic. It generated and strengthened my research program on warnings and risk communication. Some of it has also benefited my research on human computer interaction and information design. The forensics work has been at times difficult and stressful but has also been invigorating, intriguing, and lucrative.

Employment History (Last 5 positions):

1992-present: Faculty member in Human Factors and Ergonomics graduate program, North Carolina State University (Raleigh), current position: Professor of Psychology.
1997-1998: Visiting Scholar, Liberty Mutual Research Center for Safety and Health (Hopkinton, MA)

1989 - 1992: Asst. Professor of Psychology, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (Troy, NY).

1989 - present Consulting on various legal cases regarding Human Factors/Ergonomics issues.

1986 -1989: Asst. Professor of Psychology, University of Richmond (VA).

What were your significant contributions to the field?

Topic areas include the following:

(1) Warnings: Factors that influence effectiveness, design and cognitive issues, hazard perception

(2) Forensics: Human factors experts, investigations

(3) Human Computer Interaction: Information design, formatting, psychical & cognitive interactions

(4) Eyewitness identification: Post exposure process effects on memory and fair lineups

Whether these contributions are "significant" is, of course, for others to decide.

Also, I have held a number of offices in HFES. Some of the more significant ones were: Secretary-Treasurer and member of Executive Council (1996-1998)
Chair, Program Chair of the Forensic Professional Group
Chair, Program Chair, and Newsletter Editor of the Safety Professional Group
President & Director of the Carolina Chapter of HFES

Did you receive any notable awards or recognition during your career?

HFES Arnold Small Lecture in Safety (2007), together with Kenneth R. Laughery, Sr.

Fellow, International Ergonomics Association (2007)

HFES A. R. Lauer Award in Safety(2003)

Which articles in the journal *Human Factors* would you say were the most influential to you and your research or practice?

My first journal publication was in *Human Factors* in 1987 on the "Effectiveness of Warnings." It was influential to me as a personal accomplishment (together with several coauthors including Professor Kenneth R. Laughery), because it was accepted for publication while I was a graduate student and probably helped me land my first academic job. The article was also influential to the warnings area because it examined multiple factors across several experiments and introduced several kinds of research techniques to the area. Nevertheless, the short articles in *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society* were much more influential to me and my career than the journal. A lot of new research publications are pushed out the door each year because of *Proceedings* and the annual meeting.

Please provide any links to your online articles, essays, blogs, Wikipedia pages, etc., that pertain to your research, publications or practice.

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What advice would you give someone considering HF/E as a profession?

There is still so much to be done!! There are still significant and substantial careers available in Human Factors/Ergonomics. In particular, I would suggest to them to keep a look out for new niches to pursue.