

## Teaching Seminar - Week 4

### Grading, Cheating, and Blackboard:

- Grading:
  1. Be wary of being harsher on conceptual mistakes as opposed to mechanical ones.
  2. Before beginning to grade take some time to think about your perspective when grading – whether you're giving points or taking them away can change how solutions are read.
  3. Establish a rule for how to grade parallel solutions. Students may just write down everything they can think of that might relate to the problem or work it out multiple times.
  4. Lessons from the readings include establishing a rubric to ensure consistency, writing exam problems with a particular intent in mind and being conscientious about this, and then grading questions according to this intent.
  5. Consider being VERY specific in problem statements if you'd like to see the problem worked out using a particular method.
  6. Awarding partial credit when grading is very popular, but it's important to stay as consistent as possible and remember the intent of questions (i.e. How much credit should the correct answer without much correct work get? How do you handle methods that you haven't heard of before but seem to have led the student to a correct answer?...). Often, we should just be prepared to hear students out when they come asking about the grading.
- Cheating:
  1. MUCH easier to be preventative than to deal with it (i.e. space students out for exams, write multiple versions of exams, etc.).
  2. The process of dealing with cheating can be extensive.
  3. Make sure you know your University and Department's policies on it and what the process involves!
  4. If you're a TA/TF, make sure you know your professor's stance on it and interest in preventing/handling it!
  5. Be honest and upfront about it to your professor or Department authority if you think it's happening.
- Blackboard:
  1. Pros: grade transparency (student always aware of where they stand, can check that grade on their exam/HW matches what's online, etc.), encourages picking up of exams/HW.
  2. Cons: grade transparency (potentially enables students to focus too much on their grade and points, instead of the material of the class...lose the big picture).

### Lessons from Today:

- Similar to last week, developing a familiarity and trust with your students will enable better communication and openness about grading and expectations.
- Be prepared to hear students out when they come asking about the grading.
- Clarity and directness can go a long way. Many grading details and expectations about exams can be expressed on the syllabus and in class in preparation for the exam. Point totals and instructions on the exam can help make it clear what types of solutions are expected and how points for the exam will be broken down.
- A rubric and answer key (by you) can be easily pointed to when questions about grading arise and help with consistent grading.
- Cheating should be prevented as much as possible, but clearly addressed when it occurs for the sake of honest students and yourself.
- Grade transparency via Blackboard can help keep students more aware of their progress and prevent any surprises (for them) at the end of the semester.