

Week of September 10th (Dusty)

An email was sent out reminding everyone to grade the sample problem. The objective will be to compare how everyone grades and try to establish a tighter distribution in scores. We don't want to force people to grade the same way but have people be aware of the fact that different grading styles exist and can lead to scores that either accurately or inaccurately reflect the student's performance.

Grading and Notation

- (Max 15 minutes) **[Big Group]** Current problems, concerns, questions, frustrations...
 - There's been a room change. We will now be in SMLC 120 for the rest of the semester.
- **[Big Group Board]** Make a chart on the board with the scores that everyone gave. Have them do this as they come in.
 - (10) **[Small Groups]** Have mixed groups. Ask them to decide what the major disparities in grades are based on.
 - (10) **[Big Group]** Recap and discuss whether groups came to a consensus, or why not? What were the most important ideas in the problem and did the grading reflect that.
 - We all noticed that, more or less, everyone agreed on how to grade the particular problems. There were some outliers and those who gave those either extremely good scores or extremely bad scores were asked to defend their positions. A good discussion ensued.

Grading Homework

- (5) **[Big Group Board]** What to do before you start grading? Point distributions, look at several papers before you make those decisions and start grading.
- Brief Disclaimer: Promptness, the importance of getting papers back early. You should not have outstanding homework when you assign new homework. It should never take more than a week.
 - Now, of course, you may have someone else helping you with your grading. This person may also have four other classes to grade for. Hence, it may not be possible to get exams/quizzes/hw back to a student as promptly as you would like. In such an event, providing solutions before the work is passed back would give students and opportunity to check the solutions against their memory of their work.
- (10) **[Small Group]** How to establish these: consistency, fairness, efficiency
 - (5) **[Big Group]** Recap.
- (5) **[Big Group]** How to give comments when grading.
 - Should explain points taken, but comments should be brief.
 - Some of the reasons for how graders allocated points:
 - Different perspectives on what the problem was testing
 - Different perspectives on what was important and the different weights placed on particular parts of a solution.
 - What constitutes an appropriate level of justification when giving an answer
 - Was the problem not worded correctly or was it ambiguous, hence more points given than earned.
 - The derivative problem: does the student understand the first derivative, can he/she calculate it, are there any problems with reasoning?
 - $(a+b)^2 = a^2 + b^2$. A situation like this clearly demonstrates a lack of understanding (well, there are different settings in ring theory for which this is true, but this is trigonometry and precalculus). But an error like $2*3=5$ is just an honest mistake that should not be penalized much (if at all), so long as the error does not indicate a larger problem with understanding.

Exam Grading

- Brief Disclaimer: Promptness, decide when to schedule exams and be consistent. Thursdays and Fridays are good so students have time to meet with you for help in the days leading up to the exam, and so you have time to grade and they can decompress over the weekend.
- (5) **[Small Group]** How does it differ from homework grading? How should it relate?
 - **[Big Group]** Recap.
 - Exams can be harder to grade than homework or quizzes, because they are naturally longer. Hence, leave yourself plenty of time and make sure you are refreshed when grading exams.

Assessment

- (10) **[Lecture, Big Group]** Summative vs. Formative Assessments (introduce summative and formative assessment, ask them how they would do that assessment, and just do a chart on the board)
 - Formative: Use homework, quizzes, to evaluate your teaching
 - Martha's Idea: at the end of every class have a "quiz" about what students think was most important that day and what they are still confused about
 - This is also a great way to take attendance and get to know your students better.
 - Mid-semester evaluations (just mention)
 - You can even give these twice.
 - Summative: Exams and quizzes that check student knowledge
 - When giving comments, try to be constructive. Simply circling something that is incorrect may not get your point across. Of course, your reasoning may be that you want students to come and ask you *why* you circled that and *why* they lost points. However, some students may not be that motivated and actually more frustrated by the fact that they don't even understand the comment. So, use that technique wisely.
 - Don't want to write on their exam? Use post-it notes. Very useful.
 - General comments may be something you can address in class. If you circle everyone's similar mistake and then address it in class, this can prove to be a big time-saver and helpful for the students.
 - Only curve at the end of the semester, if you can curve at all.

Questions

- (15) **[Big Group]** Questions and "grace" time.
- General comments about grading:
 - Some graders give points for ANYTHING. Unless one perhaps uses this as a book keeping technique, such a practice should be avoided. For example, the grader gives 1/10 points for attempting a problem so that if they are looking at the grade book, they know 0/10 indicates the problem was not attempted at all. This is particularly useful practice when it comes to grading quizzes. A zero would indicate the student did not show up for the quiz, but 1/10 indicates he/she was present for the quiz.
 - Grade one problem at a time. That is, grade every No. 1 first and then grade every No. 2, and so on.
 - Establish consistency. Look over all of the problems of every exam/quiz/hw and figure out what the general errors are. Did students figure out how to do a problem differently?

Coming across a different solution may throw you off, especially if you're sleepy and been grading a lot already.

- Try not to let your (positive or negative) opinions of a student influence how you grade; most of all, your negative opinions. We do not always know what a student is going through, so try to remain unbiased. A great way to prevent any bias from entering your grading, ask students to put their names on the back of the first sheet or last sheet so that you don't automatically spot the name at the beginning.
- Make sure that poorly written work is not mistaken for incorrect work.
 - You may want to warn a student that if they do not do something to improve their writing, you will have to take off points in the future.