Striving to Be Tough but Fair

Tips to help you find your balance between building a rigorous course and a good working relationship with your students

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Presentation Background



Observations drawn from Foundations Algebra, College Algebra, Trigonometry, and Beginning Statistics courses



Beginning Statistics is the only course I have taught fully online asynchronous



Many factors are considered – statistical significance difficult to guarantee



Observations made over the course of several years



Criteria for "success" is students engaging in their own work and earning passing grades as a result

The Most Common Problems

Students use apps like Mathway and Photomath to solve equations

• Ask less problems of this variety, this also helps improve their communication skills and critical thinking

Students use websites like Chegg and CourseHero to look up answers

- Create custom questions
- Free response helps here too!

Students collaborate or recycle previous semester's work

 Use random values and pull questions from a large bank wherever possible to keep things fresh without causing extra work for yourself each break

The Role of Free Response

- Improves communication skills
- Helps you determine when they have internalized the meaning of the values
- Makes it easier to identify if answers are duplicated between students
- Provides more compelling evidence of cheating/plagiarism when answers match an external resource
- Connects the material learned to a real-life application

The Righteous Quest: Academic Integrity

- Virtually all textbook math questions are already answered extensively on sites like
 Chegg
- Students can upload their own questions to be answered
- Questions are often addressed within an hour, making timed tests ineffectual as a sole countermeasure

If you make challenging questions, unmotivated or stressed students will post your questions. It is only a matter of time.

You can use this same resource to your advantage...

What should I do then?

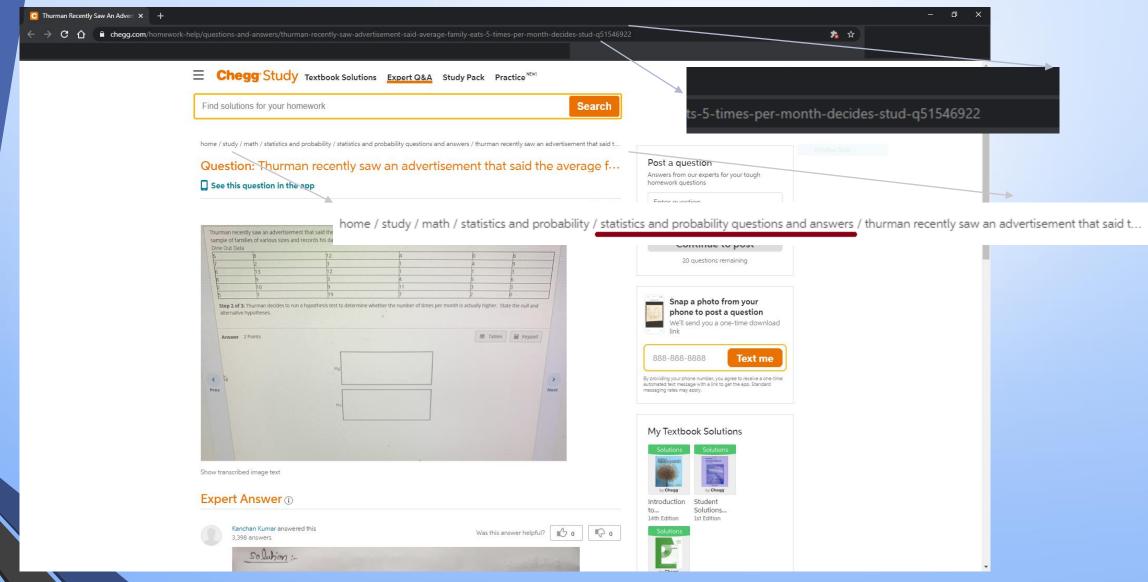


You can petition Chegg or Course Hero to take down any work you can prove is your own. Their policy on intellectual property can be found here.



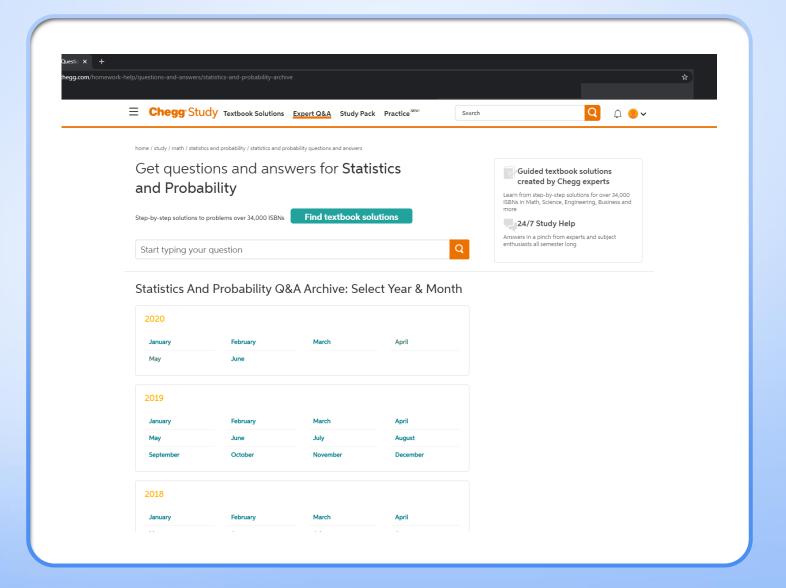
Identifying the party responsible: there is a question ID number in the URL

Question ID Tracking



Question Archive

Once you know your question ID, consider when the assignment may have been completed and use quick sort methods to find your question in the archive.



- Correcting this cannot be done by wishful thinking alone
- Reducing student stress reduces impetus to cheat
- Building strong relationships with your students can help
- Being extremely available can make you their new alternative to Google
- Setting clear boundaries can help you stay sane while doing it

The Platonic Ideal

Summer 2020 – SLCC made synchronous online learning an option

Previous semesters as much as 25% of the student roster would engage in some form of academic dishonesty, often more than once

This semester only 3% (one student) chose to engage in such behavior.

What was different?

- •Video communication they saw my face and heard my voice and knew a person was on the other end
- •Completion-based grades were easily obtained
- Easy out of class communication

My Success Story

Class Structure

- My statistics class was comprised of:
 - Mastery-based homework from the publishing company
 - Instructor-created supplementary activities to reinforce applications
 - Exams
- The addition of completion-based assignments similar in style and difficulty to the supplementary activities gave students a graded self-check
- These assignments may be less rigorous, but prompted more questions that translated to higher grades in follow-up activities and far less cheating

Advice for Novice Online Instructors

- Mastery-based learning takes the pressure off of getting it right the first time
- Completion-based grades help students feel less pressured and ask more questions
- Free response, application-based questions help gauge student understanding and act as a litmus for breaches of conduct
- Video may take time to make, but it is worth it
- Office Suite many additions were made to help with voice recording and documenting
- Find an additional online resource that is your go-to for a quick answer to repetitive student questions (I like mathispower4u.com)
- Search online for your own questions at the end of each assignment to tell you whether things are going to plan and whether you need to update that assignment

Thank you all for coming!

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