

CS 2910 Final Paper

Before I became a TA, I imagined that most of my assignments were graded by infallible TA's, but after becoming a TA myself, I realize that TA's sometimes make mistakes. In my experience, sometimes TA's can get a little too carried away with deducting points, especially when the student in question provided an answer this is not represented verbatim on the grading rubric. Additionally, I noticed that it is easy for TA's to get wrapped up in being overly critical of the student in question while grading assignments. This psychological effect was especially apparent to me during exam grading. Please don't get me wrong, though, I have the utmost respect for my fellow TA's, all of whom do their jobs well, and I myself am not perfect either. But, sometimes I feel that this attitude can go too far unchecked, which often results in grades that may not accurately reflect the student's understanding of class material. This predicament is mitigated in the case where there are test regrades available, but it still not perfect in my opinion because of the possibility that students from certain backgrounds may have trouble challenging these grades, even if they should have rightfully gotten more points. And, in the case where there are no regrades available, or where regrades are discouraged, this results in more inaccurate grading results. In order to help address this problem, I think it might be helpful to address this topic in the CS2910 lectures. I realize that it isn't possible for every graded assignment to be graded perfectly the first time, but I do think that there is room for improvement, and I think that if TA's are made aware of this effect and the inaccuracies it causes, the problem would be reduced. I also think this would save faculty time by reducing the number of total regrade requests. Though I believe this change could be positive, there are ways that it could cause negative effects, depending on its implementation. For example, TA's could end up going overboard and taking too much time to grade in the fears of making a single mistake, which would cause them to bill for more hours and result in a loss of funds that actually go towards helping students through office hours. In other words, a balance must be struck that maximizes accuracy while keeping resources like office hours and TA billed hours as close to prior levels as possible. I also think that it should be stressed that TA's don't have to get everything perfect, but that it would be beneficial to possibly consider other answers that could be considered correct for a given question when grading. I think a 5 minute addressing of this topic during a 2910 lecture would be sufficient to keep this idea in the back of TA's minds throughout the semester.

Prior to TA'ing for CS 2110, I thought that most people have different questions when it comes to understanding class material. But, what I've found is that most people's questions are almost exactly the same. Because of this prior belief, I used to be more hesitant about asking questions in a class setting. Now that I know just how common most questions are, I finally believe what teachers say about multiple students having the same question at any given time, and I have become more comfortable voicing questions during lectures.

I am very grateful for having the opportunity to TA this semester. It was one of the most rewarding things that I have done so far at my time here. I really enjoyed working with the other TA's during lab sections and being able to answer the questions of other students. I think it is a great thing to be able to help others through difficulties, and it is great to be able to see someone's understanding of a concept improve right in front of you. The 2910 lectures were also interesting, particularly the one with Prof. Weimer, as I thought it brought up many interesting topics. I enjoyed discussing the philosophy behind teaching, and it was nice to hear what actual professors, like Prof. Tychonievich and Weimer, think of the subject.