

Professorial Concerns and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Topic modeling text data from a professors' social media forum

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19 December 2021

Abstract

This study uses three years of post and comment text data from subreddit r/Professors, before and after the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, to assess the impact that this event had on the online community. Topic modeling is used to identify patterns in posts over time, and thematic analysis is used to identify overarching themes. The best topic model, using NTM topic modeling with 8 topics, is identified after testing LDA, NMF, and BTM models with a range of topics and evaluating these models using metrics and topic review. The topics identified in the optimal model demonstrate that the primary impact of the pandemic was new professional concerns about online learning. The themes identified show that the online community, united through shared experience, provides a place both to get advice and express frustrations in an anonymous environment.

Keywords: topic models, social media, professors, college, online learning, pandemic

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1 Introduction

Reddit, a content aggregator and discussion platform, is home to many communities united around shared experience or interest. One of these communities, r/Professors, is a community “by professors and for professors.” As an anonymous, global, and sizable forum, it offers a different perspective on the professorial experience than other professional communities.

Reddit data is fascinating and offers great potential understanding of the behaviors of communities over the course of the pandemic. However, the large volume makes purely qualitative analysis undesirable. For this reason, topic modeling, which identifies latent topics present in documents computationally, is essential if we want to study more than a sample of the posts available.

This study uses three years of data from r/Professors, both before and after March 11, 2020, to assess the impact of the pandemic on this online community. Three topic modeling algorithms are tested, each with a range of 2-50 topics, to find the best possible fit for the dataset. Once the topic model is established, the topics are used to reflect on changes in post content over time. Using the topic probabilities, posts are identified to represent each topic, and thematic analysis is done using both the top words in each topic and these posts. This hybrid method uses quantitative modeling to identify patterns in the text data and then qualitative evaluation to understand the significance of these patterns.

The results showed that:

- Common topics in r/Professors include: emotion, career, course planning, writing, communication, assessments, finals, and online learning.
- Common themes in r/Professors include: connection, frustration, teaching, and non-teaching work.
- Like other subreddits, r/Professors is a community united around shared experiences, and as a result is frequently oriented towards advice or commiseration.
- The primary observable change in the subreddit when the COVID-19 pandemic began was a new focus on online learning practices. The emotional or personal effect of the pandemic was not as evident.

These results demonstrate the way that the professional orientation of an online community, despite anonymity, means that the concerns posed by the pandemic are framed primarily as a professional challenge. However, this does not mean that there is not a significant and ongoing focus on expressing frustration and making connections with other community members. The results also suggest that, when considering this Reddit text data as amalgamated posts, NMF is the best choice for topic modeling.

2 Background

Reddit is a web content aggregation and discussion platform founded in 2005 (Medvedev, Lambiotte, and Delvenne 2019). It has over 330 million active users each month, with users from the United States accounting for more than 40% of the screen views (Amaya et al. 2021). Communities called subreddits are structured around shared interests, and users can post text, images, videos, or links where others can respond in comments. Self-formed and self-moderated, subreddits can become coherent online communities based around group norms (Medvedev, Lambiotte, and Delvenne 2019). Accounts are required for posting, but user profiles are largely anonymous (Proferes et al. 2021). The accessibility of Reddit data has made it a popular subject of analysis, both qualitative and quantitative (Amaya et al. 2021). Between 2010 and 2020, at least 727 manuscripts were published that used Reddit data (Proferes et al. 2021).

2.1 Communities of Interest on Reddit

Subreddits are popular subjects for studies on online interest-based communities and how they are formed. Some are communities oriented around shared life experiences: Feldhege, Moessner, and Bauer (2020) used topic modelling on posts and comments from r/depression, and found that the most common topics were feelings, the Reddit community, motivation, and time. Another study of a subreddit for the homeless found that posts primarily commented on social issues, communicated concerns, offered care, and managed the community (Bhandari and Sun 2021).

Others are tied together more by shared interest than experience: Klein, Clutton, and Polito (2018) found that conspiracy subreddits united diverse individuals only under shared epistemological concerns. Using topic modeling, Maloney (2019) observed ‘dynamic contestations’ in a gaming subreddit, where subgroups worked towards different interests in the same community.

Some communities are specifically oriented around professional groups. Henninger (2020) found that medical professionals used subreddits to seek validation for professional decisions and resolve concerns about systemic problems, and that the anonymity provided a type of support that doesn’t exist elsewhere. Ming, Matteson, and Sun (2021) studied the library and information science professional communities on Reddit and found that the majority of posts either spoke about library services or library careers.

Professional communities specifically for teachers have been studied: a study of teaching subreddits found that the spaces were continually-evolving, with two different subreddits described as a conversational space and a bulletin-board space (Staudt Willet and Carpenter 2021; Carpenter and Staudt Willet 2021). One study identified teacher subreddits as “affinity spaces,” based around a common interest and characterized by a high level of engagement (Staudt Willet and Carpenter 2020). The most similar to the study at hand, Sengupta (2019) found that university academic subreddits focused on either challenging issues in academia or more general experiences, but were united by similar expressions of solidarity.

2.2 The COVID-19 Pandemic on Reddit

In the almost two years since the COVID-19 pandemic began, Reddit became a rich source of information to understand how community concerns were affected. Many of these studies focused on mental health-related subreddits. Low et al. (2020) used LDA to explore new trends in mental health subreddits during the pandemic. Arillotta et al. (2021) found that substance-abuse subreddits focused on four themes during the pandemic: drug intake during lockdown, drug-related behavior and post-lockdown plans, lockdown-related psychological issues, and peer advice. Nutley et al. (2021) found that eating disorder subreddits focused on six themes: changes in symptoms, exercise, quarantine, emotional well-being, seeking help, and health risks. Also studying Reddit eating disorder communities, Feldhege et al. (2021) found that the pandemic marked a decrease in discussion of symptoms and an increase in mental health and treatment concerns. Chen and Sokolova (2021) used LDA to study the Depression subreddit during the pandemic and proposed an eight-topic model, covering: relationships, emotion, clinic, work, family, entertainment, and school.

Other studies have looked at the impact on communities that are not explicitly focused on mental health. Yan and Liu (2021) looked at university-specific subreddits and found that negative sentiments were significantly higher in 2020, and in 2020 in-person teaching was more associated with negative sentiments than online teaching was. Zhang et al. (2021) looked specifically at teenagers on Reddit during the pandemic, finding that negative emotions in posts increased when the pandemic started.

3 Research Questions

- RQ1: How do the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic appear in professors’ discussions in online communities?
- RQ2: What topic modeling method is best suited to complete and combined Reddit post data?

4 Methods

4.1 Data Collection

Data was collected using the Python Pushshift.io API Wrapper (PSAW), a wrapper that makes collecting all posts from a certain subreddit and time period straightforward (Marx 2020). The pushshift.io Reddit API was designed by the moderators of the subreddit r/datasets (Baumgartner 2021). It is important to note that not all posts will be returned by the API because there is a mechanism for users to opt out of having their posts included (inspiredby 2019). the pushshift.io API is the method of data collection for many studies.

Table 1: Submission from API

id	selftext	title	created
myf0wc	I’m teaching about correlations and want to have students collect numerical data on 2 variables so that they can run correlation tests (something simple that could be done during a class period). Any ideas for something that would be somewhat fun? Something related to human behavior, culture, language, or human biology would all work well for the course.	Correlations students can track on themselves?	1619391782

Table 2: Comments from API

link_id	body
t3_myf0wc	Are you looking for something you know has a definite correlation (like height and shoe size as another poster mentioned), or are you looking for correlation between two factors, like murder rate and the consumption of broccoli within a population?
t3_myf0wc	Height and shoe size.

All posts and comments between June 1st 2018 and June 1st 2021 were collected. Table 1 shows an example of a collected post, and Table 2 shows the comments that correspond to that post.

4.2 Data Cleaning

Submissions and their corresponding comments were matched by ID. Table 3 demonstrates the matching. For each post, the title, body, and comment texts were combined to create the full text. Table 4 demonstrates the text amalgamation.

All posts with no text were removed – these are typically images, videos, or links that are posted for discussion.

Text of the title, text of the body, and text of all comments were combined for each post. This complete text data was cleaned of symbols, punctuation, and uppercase letters. Table 5 shows the cleaned text.

Table 3: Joined submission and comments

id	selftext	title	created	comments
myf0wc	I’m teaching about correlations and want to have students collect numerical data on 2 variables so that they can run correlation tests (something simple that could be done during a class period). Any ideas for something that would be somewhat fun? Something related to human behavior, culture, language, or human biology would all work well for the course.	Correlations students can track on themselves?	1619391782	Are you looking for something you know has a definite correlation (like height and shoe size as another poster mentioned), or are you looking for correlation between two factors, like murder rate and the consumption of broccoli within a population? Height and shoe size.

Table 4: Post with combined text

created	full_text
1619391782	Correlations students can track on themselves? I'm teaching about correlations and want to have students collect numerical data on 2 variables so that they can run correlation tests (something simple that could be done during a class period). Any ideas for something that would be somewhat fun? Something related to human behavior, culture, language, or human biology would all work well for the course. Are you looking for something you know has a definite correlation (like height and shoe size as another poster mentioned), or are you looking for correlation between two factors, like murder rate and the consumption of broccoli within a population? Height and shoe size.

Table 5: Post with cleaned text

created	full_text
1619391782	correlations students can track on themselves i m teaching about correlations and want to have students collect numerical data on 2 variables so that they can run correlation tests something simple that could be done during a class period any ideas for something that would be somewhat fun something related to human behavior culture language or human biology would all work well for the course are you looking for something you know has a definite correlation like height and shoe size as another poster mentioned or are you looking for correlation between two factors like murder rate and the consumption of broccoli within a population height and shoe size

4.3 Data Preprocessing

Words were tokenized, as shown in Table 6. Tokens that were on a stopwords list or shorter than 2 characters were removed, shown in Table 7. The remaining words were then lemmatized, shown in Table 8. Finally, the cleaned and lemmatized text was reamalgamated, shown in Table 9.

Table 6: Post text split into tokens

created	tokens
1619391782	['correlations', 'students', 'can', 'track', 'on', 'themselves', 'i', 'm', 'teaching', 'about', 'correlations', 'and', 'want', 'to', 'have', 'students', 'collect', 'numerical', 'data', 'on', '2', 'variables', 'so', 'that', 'they', 'can', 'run', 'correlation', 'tests', 'something', 'simple', 'that', 'could', 'be', 'done', 'during', 'a', 'class', 'period', 'any', 'ideas', 'for', 'something', 'that', 'would', 'be', 'somewhat', 'fun', 'something', 'related', 'to', 'human', 'behavior', 'culture', 'language', 'or', 'human', 'biology', 'would', 'all', 'work', 'well', 'for', 'the', 'course', 'are', 'you', 'looking', 'for', 'something', 'you', 'know', 'has', 'a', 'definite', 'correlation', 'like', 'height', 'and', 'shoe', 'size', 'as', 'another', 'poster', 'mentioned', 'or', 'are', 'you', 'looking', 'for', 'correlation', 'between', 'two', 'factors', 'like', 'murder', 'rate', 'and', 'the', 'consumption', 'of', 'broccoli', 'within', 'a', 'population', 'height', 'and', 'shoe', 'size']

Table 7: Tokens with stop words removed

created	tokens_nostop
1619391782	['correlations', 'students', 'track', 'teaching', 'correlations', 'want', 'students', 'collect', 'numerical', 'data', 'variables', 'run', 'correlation', 'tests', 'something', 'simple', 'could', 'done', 'class', 'period', 'ideas', 'something', 'would', 'somewhat', 'fun', 'something', 'related', 'human', 'behavior', 'culture', 'language', 'human', 'biology', 'would', 'work', 'well', 'course', 'looking', 'something', 'know', 'definite', 'correlation', 'like', 'height', 'shoe', 'size', 'another', 'poster', 'mentioned', 'looking', 'correlation', 'two', 'factors', 'like', 'murder', 'rate', 'consumption', 'broccoli', 'within', 'population', 'height', 'shoe', 'size']

Table 8: Lemmatized tokens

created	lemmatized
1619391782	['correlation', 'student', 'track', 'teaching', 'correlation', 'want', 'student', 'collect', 'numerical', 'variable', 'correlation', 'test', 'something', 'simple', 'done', 'class', 'period', 'idea', 'something', 'somewhat', 'fun', 'something', 'related', 'human', 'behavior', 'culture', 'language', 'human', 'biology', 'work', 'well', 'course', 'looking', 'something', 'definite', 'correlation', 'height', 'shoe', 'size', 'poster', 'mentioned', 'looking', 'correlation', 'factor', 'murder', 'rate', 'consumption', 'broccoli', 'population', 'height', 'shoe', 'size']

Table 9: Final cleaned, tokenized, and lemmatized text for post

created	lemmatized_text
1619391782	correlation student track teaching correlation want student collect numerical variable correlation test something simple done class period idea something somewhat fun something related human behavior culture language human biology work well course looking something definite correlation height shoe size poster mentioned looking correlation factor murder rate consumption broccoli population height shoe size

5 Analysis and Results

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

The sample included 16,459 submissions to the subreddit. Submissions had an average of 10 words in the title, 107 words in the body, and 19 comments. There were 6,959 unique posters. These submissions corresponded to 380,049 comments, which had an average of 51 words. There were 22,345 unique commentors on the subreddit posts.

5.2 Exploratory Visualization

Figure 1 shows the most common words in the cleaned and processed corpus.

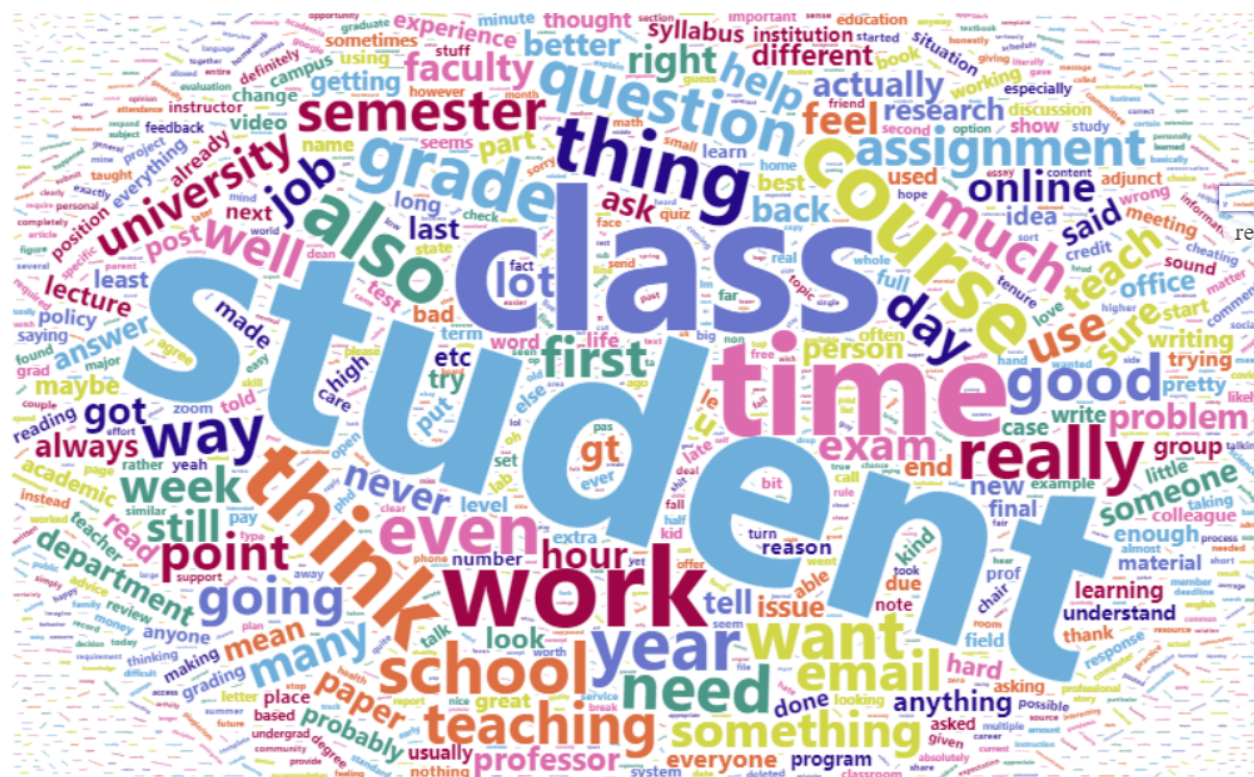


Figure 1: Cloud of most prominent words

Figure 2 shows the word count distributions for post titles, post bodies, comments, and comment counts for posts. All are right-skewed, with the vast majority having low word and comment counts. Some posts have a high total word count due to being in the small amount of posts that have an extremely high comment count.

Figure 3 shows the number of posts each day on r/Professors over the period in question. There is an overall increase, but a good deal of cyclical patterning as well.

Figure 4 shows that the majority of posts fall on weekdays and are posted at nighttime UTC.

5.3 Models

Topic modeling allows us to identify topics, defined as frequently co-occurring groups of words, in a set of documents. Topic models are a form of latent semantic analysis: with topic models, we model latent variables (topics) based on observable variables (words). In the case of social media data like Reddit, the

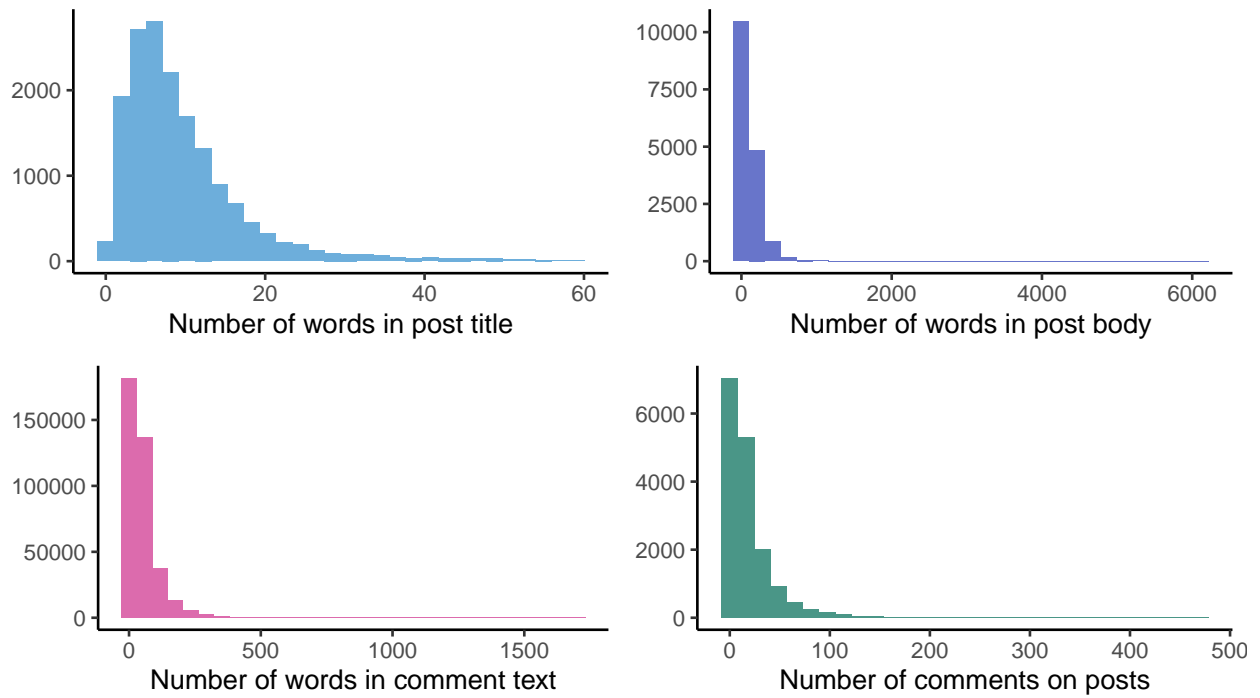


Figure 2: Distribution of words in posts and comments on posts

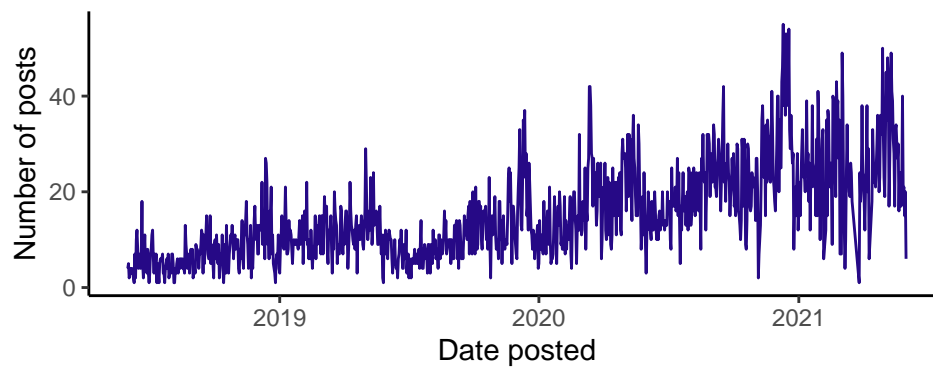


Figure 3: Posting frequency by day over time

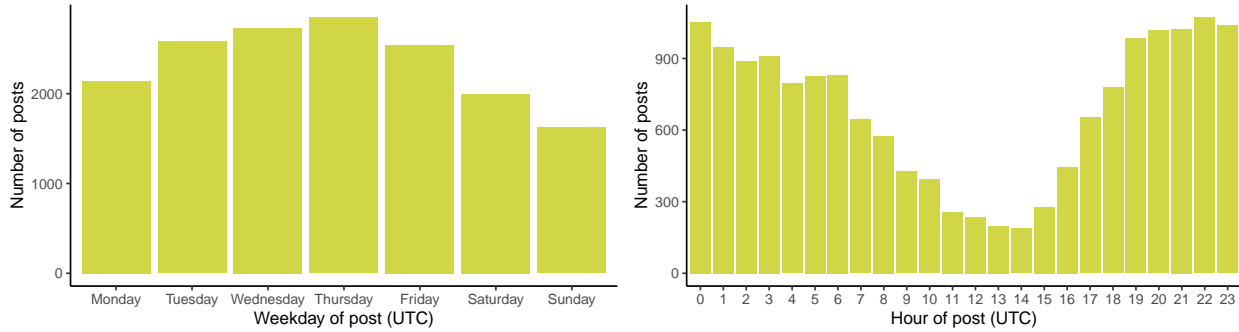


Figure 4: Posting frequency by weekday and time

sheer volume of text data makes topic modeling extremely appealing. In this case, each subreddit post, combining all submission and comment text, forms one document in the corpus.

Topic modeling assumes that each document is a distribution over topics, which are in turn distributions over words. The number of topics must be assumed, but what those topics are does not need to be known. We know the probability of each term occurring in each document (this is the document-term matrix). What we want to find is the probability of each topic occurring in each document (the document-topic matrix).

5.3.1 Optimal LDA solution

Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) is a generative, unstructured statistical model. It finds the best distribution of k topics over words (topic-term matrix) using Gibbs sampling. From there, the document-topic distribution is also calculable. LDA is best suited to dense texts, such as novels, where the topics are expected to overlap and there is a good amount of data.

Jaccard and coherence measures were used to assess LDA models with 2-50 topics. Jaccard measures how much the topics overlap, while coherence measures how separate the topics are. Ideally, these metrics would be balanced. The library `scikit-learn` was used. Figure 5 shows this process. In the interest of maximizing Jaccard without excessively minimizing coherence, the $k = 17$ topic solution was selected.

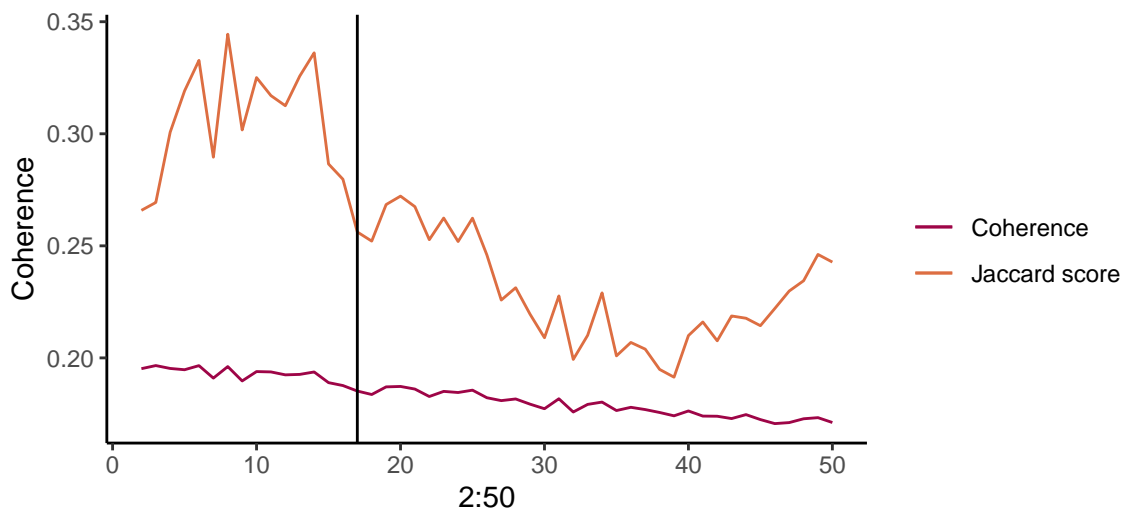


Figure 5: Metrics for LDA model selection

5.3.2 Optimal NMF solution

Non-negative Matrix Factorization (NMF) is in-between LDA and the next topic model, BTM, in terms of whether it is ideal for dense or sparse texts. Unlike LDA, it uses direction computation rather than sampling. It takes the visible matrix (document-term), and generates the weight matrix (document-term) and the latent matrix (topic-term).

Jaccard and coherence measures were used to assess NMF models with 2-50 topics. The library `scikit-learn` was used. Figure 6 shows this process. The $k = 8$ topic solution was selected because it is where Jaccard score and coherence are approximately equal.

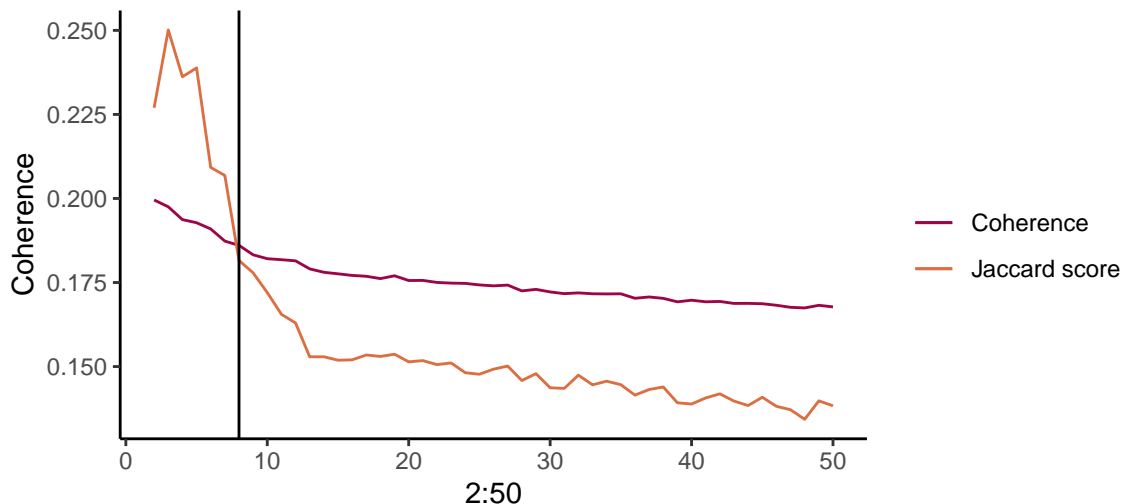


Figure 6: Metrics for LDA model selection

5.3.3 Optimal BTM solution

Biterm topic modeling (BTM) is best suited to sparse, short texts, like Tweets, because it does not fail where other models do when the document-term matrix is sparse. Rather than a document-term matrix, BTM creates a co-occurrence term-frequency matrix: it looks at biterns, or paired terms, and the frequency with which they occur together. Using this matrix, it performs spectral clustering to create topics.

Due to computing limitations, more intensive stopwords removal was performed prior to the BTM modeling. BTM is designed primarily for short texts, and applying the method to more than 16,000 documents with an average of more than 1,000 words per document was memory-intensive. Removing words that occurred in a very small or very large proportion of the documents reduced the average word counts and made BTM modeling possible.

Jaccard and coherence measures were used to assess NMF models with 2-50 topics. The library `biternplus` was used. Figure 7 shows this process. The $k = 15$ topic solution was selected because it balances between the increasing Jaccard score and decreasing coherence.

5.3.4 Comparing LDA, NMF, and BTM

Table 10 compares the best LDA, NMF, and BTM models. In the interest of minimizing Jaccard and maximizing coherence, the NMF model is preferable. Upon review, the topics generated by the LDA and NMF models both made logical sense, while the BTM topics were less comprehensible. Both in terms of explainability and metrics, the NMF model was the preferred choice.

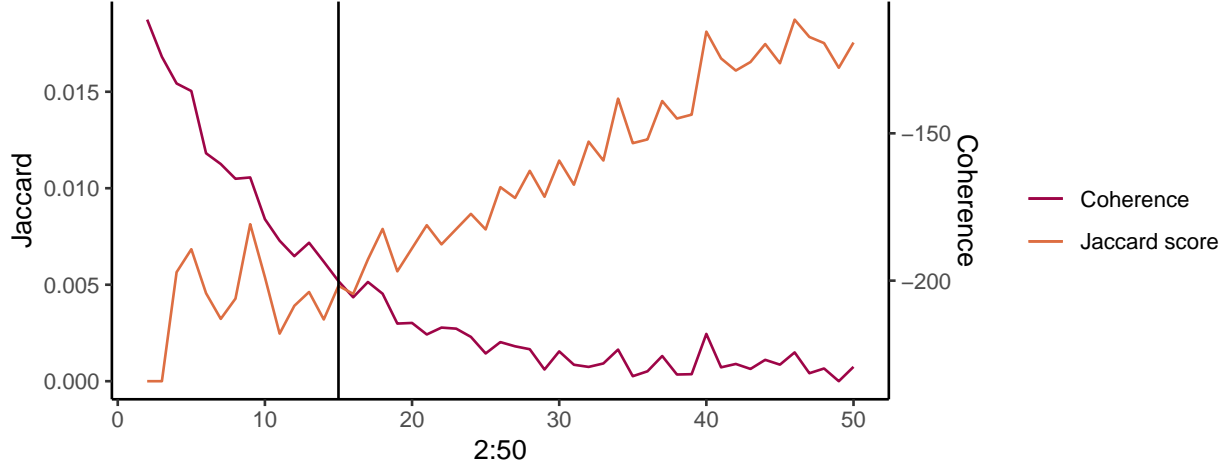


Figure 7: Metrics for BTM model selection

Table 10: Metrics for final model selection

Model	Number of topics	Coherence	Jaccard	Perplexity
LDA	14	0.1841163	0.2512313	914.208624762737
NMF	8	0.1853369	0.1815610	
BTM	15	-200.1086631	0.0049443	12611858.6763204

5.4 Evaluation of Results

5.4.1 Final topic model solution

Table 11 shows the top 10 words in the 8-topic NMF model. These give an image of what the topics contain. Topic 1 covers emotion and interpersonal relations. Topic 2 is about career-related subjects. Topic 3 is about course planning. Topic 4 is about writing and research. Topic 5 is about email communication. Topic 6 is about assessments. Topic 7 is about finals and grades. Finally, Topic 8 is about online learning technology.

Figure 8 shows the proportion of total posts in each topic every day (using a cutoff of $p = 0.05$ to determine if a post contains a topic or not). Some topics were fairly steady with a slight decrease (1, 4). Others were fairly steady with a slight increase (5, 6, 7).

Three topics have interesting and distinct patterns. Topic 2 is periodic decreasing, with local minimums

Table 11: Topics in final topic model

T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8
think	job	class	paper	email	exam	grade	video
thing	faculty	course	writing	syllabus	question	assignment	zoom
really	university	semester	use	hour	answer	final	online
even	teaching	week	book	week	test	grading	lecture
feel	research	time	assignment	office	quiz	point	use
good	position	teach	write	day	final	credit	meeting
way	year	day	word	send	time	work	record
time	tenure	teaching	essay	time	ask	semester	using
also	adjunct	online	research	sent	problem	extra	watch
want	school	lecture	page	reply	multiple	late	face

around December and local maximums around June. This topic mainly covers career discussions between professors, indicating that summer is the time when professors are able to plan their career and potentially change jobs.

Topic 3 is periodic with local minimums in around May and local maximums around November. This topic is mainly characterized by planning courses and asking for advice to do so. It is interesting that this seems to be on a yearly cycle rather than a semesterly cycle.

Topic 8 surges when the pandemic begins and then slowly decreases again. This topic is characterized by all concerns unique to online learning: recorded videos, Zoom lectures, and online meetings.

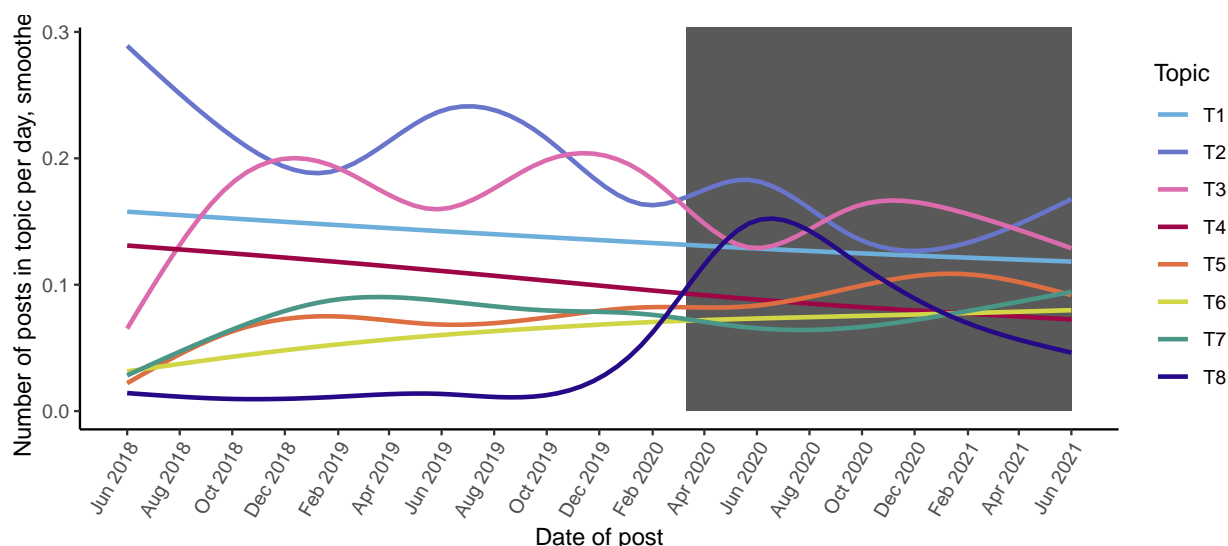


Figure 8: Topic frequency over time, COVID-19 pandemic marked with grey

Some topic pairs are slightly positively associated while others are negatively associated. Figure 9 shows a correlation heatmap between topics. Topic 7 and Topic 2 are slightly negatively correlated, meaning that if a document has a higher probability of being in Topic 7 (finals and grading), it has a lower probability of being in Topic 2 (career). On the other hand, Topic 7 and Topic 3 are slightly positively correlated, meaning that if a document has a higher probability of being in Topic 7, it has a higher probability of being in Topic 3 (course planning). If a post is covering finals, it makes sense that it would discuss course planning as well but not the professor’s career. The topics that are less student-oriented, 1 and 2, tend to correlate negatively with the other topics.

5.4.2 Thematic Analysis

Once the topic model was selected, posts with the highest probability of being in each topic could be identified. Appendix A contains five high-probability posts for each topic. To combine qualitative and quantitative methods, 10 representative posts and the top 20 words from each topic were used to do thematic analysis. The words and posts were reviewed iteratively, first identifying possible codes for each set of words, before doing a close reading of the posts to add codes, returning to the words to refine the topics, and again returning to the posts to look for codes that were not observed on the first pass.

When topics were labelled with codes, some shared between topics, the codes were then clustered into themes. Four broad themes were identified: connecting, frustration, teaching, and non-teaching work.

Figure 10 shows the codes and topics corresponding to the connecting theme. This theme indicates how the posters on the subreddit connect with other posters. Humour, especially satire or sarcasm, is common. Some posts and comments invite others to share their experiences, opening a forum of discussion. Some posts

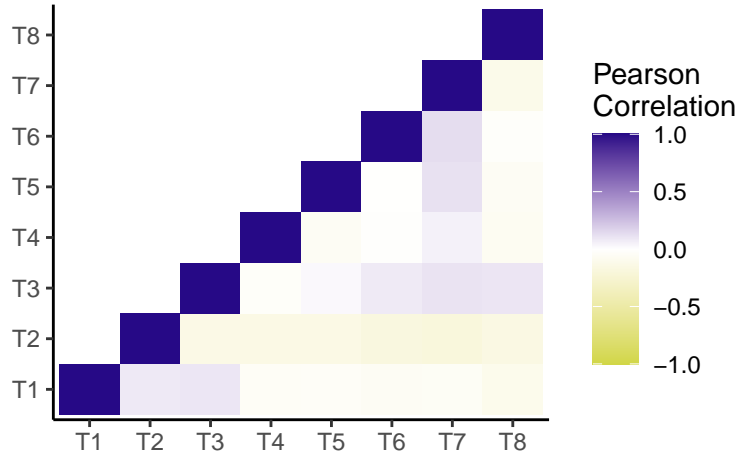


Figure 9: Correlation between topic probabilities in documents

spontaneously provide suggestions or tips for challenges that professors face, and even more frequently posts explicitly ask for advice. Finally, professors post anecdotes about their experiences, often for humorous or sharing purposes.

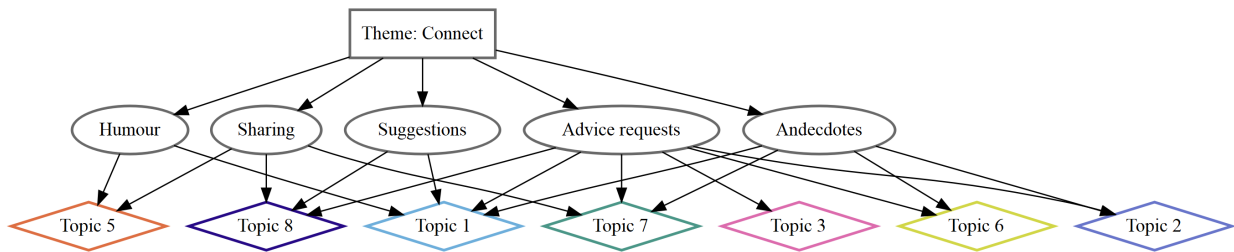


Figure 10: Theme 1 and codes

Figure 11 outlines the theme of frustration. Professors express frustration with their academic careers (relating to difficulties with tenure, for example), their university administration (a lack of support or an overabundance of bureaucracy), their students (perceived entitlement or other behaviors that generate additional work), and their workload (the number of hours that they are expected to work, combining teaching, research, and administrative duties). These frustrations are often aired in the form of a rant, which may even be explicitly labelled as such.

Figure 12 outlines the theme covering teaching. Professors discuss pedagogy, exams, and grades, but there are also many discussions around cheating and plagiarism. These discussions can take the form of advice, debates, or commiseration. Finally, technology, including video calls, learning management systems, proctoring software, and video recording are frequent points of frustration.

Figure 13 covers the final theme, which includes all work aspects that are not teaching. Interpersonal communication covers conversations and emails with students, other professors, or administration. Tenure is discussed as a goal or point of frustration. Publishing and research are also brought up, as is the general workflow that may be involved with this type of work. Finally, mental health, frequently in the context of students, is discussed as a professional concern that professors must navigate to be considered to be good at their job.

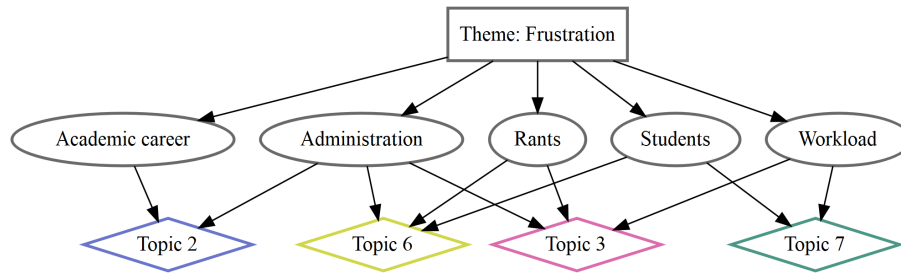


Figure 11: Theme 2 and codes

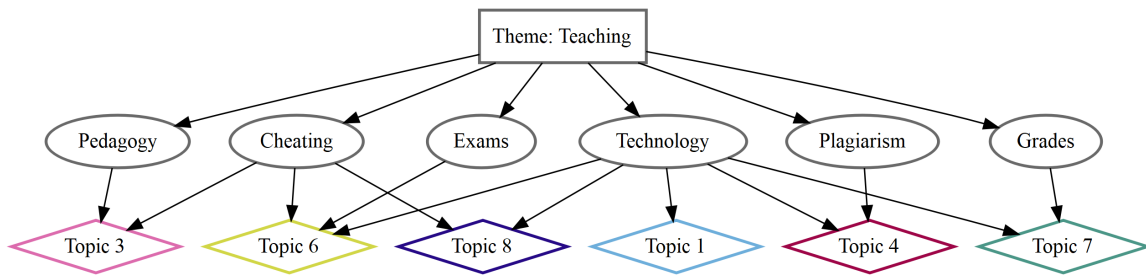


Figure 12: Theme 3 and codes

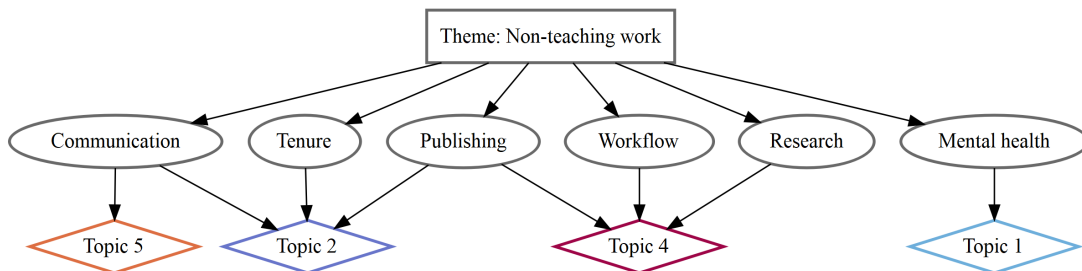


Figure 13: Theme 4 and codes

6 Discussion

6.1 Research Question 1

While one new concern appears when the pandemic begins, the majority of topics and themes are consistent both before and after March 11, 2020. This one observable change was related to online learning, specifically the pedagogical and technological issues that come with teaching and assessing students remotely.

6.1.1 Communities of Interest on reddit

These results demonstrate that r/Professors, like other professional subreddits that have been studied, is a community of individuals united by experience. Not necessarily sharing the same opinion, the posters face many of the same challenges, resulting in a strong focus on advice, suggestions, and commiseration. In addition to the common theme of connection, professional concerns, about teaching or non-teaching professorial work, dominate a large portion of the posts in the subreddit.

It also supports the theory that the anonymity may be a key feature of the Reddit community. Many posts express frustration, even rising to the level of ranting, in a way that may not be possible if the emotion expressed was attached to a name and an institution. In this anonymous context, posters feel free to express their concerns.

6.1.2 The COVID-19 Pandemic on Reddit

These results suggest that r/Professors, like many other subreddits, underwent a change during the pandemic. When learning went online, a newly-prominent topic appeared in the posts, focused on Zoom, technology, and remote learning. Many of these posts overlapped with both the advice and frustration categories, indicating that posters were struggling to adapt to the new professional requirements that the pandemic created. After an initial peak, this topic slowly decreased, indicating either an adjustment or a return to in-person learning, depending on the collegiate institution in question.

There was no spike in negatively-themed posts, however. The theme of frustration was prominent, but it was prominent before the pandemic started. This suggests that the subreddit worked more as a place to express specific professional concerns related to the pandemic rather than personal emotional issues. It is not surprising that this would be true of this professional subreddit but untrue of the many subreddits focused on mental health which have already been studied.

6.2 Research Question 2

The NMF model performed the best on the Reddit data. When the submissions and comments were amalgamated into posts, the resultant documents were long enough that BTM's comparatively poor performance is unsurprising. The text was also not long or consistent enough to be considered a truly dense text. Because the documents in this study were neither especially dense or especially sparse text, it is unsurprising that the NMF model performed well. The LDA model also produced usable results.

Social media data is not all made the same: Reddit posts and comments are longer than, for example, Tweets, to begin with. The processing of the data also matters: when looking at each post as a larger, whole conversation, the documents in question are made significantly different in length and quality than if the individual submission bodies and comments had been treated as separate documents. This underlines the importance of testing different topic models before selecting the best fit.

6.3 Limitations

Some limitation originate in the dataset. Any deleted or removed posts are absent from the dataset. Given that posts are removed by moderators for specific reasons, and users presumably also delete their posts with a particular aim in mind, these missing posts may differ significantly from the rest in some way. The dataset is also text-only. The majority of posts are text posts, but there are still posts made of links, images, and

videos that have very high comment counts. Considering that many of the images contain text (for example, screenshots of Tweets or memes), including this text in future analysis would be desirable.

Second, this is only a study of one particular online community environment. We cannot assume that it represents the entirety of professors, people from all countries, or all online discussion forums. Each specific trait of this subreddit contributes to the unique combination of behaviors that are found in the data. It is located on Reddit, which has a specific culture and demographic; it excludes a large portion of people who do not choose to engage with Reddit at all. While these results are useful for posing questions about other social media platforms, other demographics, other interest groups, or humanity more generally, they cannot be used to draw conclusions.

Finally, this model is built on data that was generated in a very specific moment in time. The model and its insights may not be transferable to other time periods.

7 Conclusion

When handling a large amount of text, as with Reddit data, topic modeling combined with thematic analysis is a powerful way to identify patterns and understand those patterns in context. Looking at three years of data from a subreddit for professors, this study used topic modeling, coding, and thematic analysis, as well as exploratory data visualization, to detect overarching themes and trends over time. NTM topic modeling, suited for text data that is neither especially sparse nor dense, was a good fit for Reddit data where each post is considered as a whole conversation and treated as a single document.

These methods demonstrate the primary subjects of discussion in the subreddit: emotion, career, course planning, writing, communication, assessments, finals, and online learning. The topic of online learning became prominent at the time the COVID-19 pandemic began; this indicates that the most observable impact of the pandemic on the online community was how it changed the day-to-day work that professors had to perform and the associated concerns they faced. At a broader level, posts thematically tend towards connection with other community members (through advice or commiseration), expression of frustration (with students, colleagues, or institutions), teaching (struggles and approaches), and non-teaching professorial work. These themes show that while the community is professionally oriented, it also serves as a place to honestly relate to others that face similar professional struggles.

A Appendix A

Table 12: Topic 1 posts

created	title	selftext	comments
2020-04-30	Graduation Gift Idea for my PI	<p>will be defending in the near future and want to get something for my PI but I have zero idea of whats appropriate. I take gift giving rather seriously but I actually dont know my PI very personally. He has always kept a strict line between professional and personal. He thinks wine is over rated, doesnt drink scotch, but he likes beer... beer just is not a "Thanks for the doctorate!"-kind of gift. My backup plan was a framed picture of the hooding ceremony but with the quarantine and everything.... doesnt seem like thats going to happen. I thought a reddit for professors would have a few ideas and experience with this sort of thing.</p>	<p>oh hey! Thats exactly what I was looking for. Thanks! Did not know there was an AskProfessors sub...seems oddly specific. The right sub is r/AskProfessors, and this is even part of their FAQ, https://www.reddit.com/r/AskProfessors/wiki/faq#wiki__what_kind_of_gift_should_i_get_my_professor.3F Him and I are both organic chemists by trade. I know he really enjoys the craft but I am not sure to what extent or what his pallet is. I do some home brew myself and have a deep appreciation for pretty much all beer bc of that but I do not know if he is the same. I think this is the direction I am leaning though. A nice mixed 6 pack of local brews and a well crafted thank-you letter. I have not heard of Weeping Radish! The description online sounds pretty good. I recently had a "Campfire Therapy" pale ale by Angry Scotsman. Had not seen a smoked pale before and it hit heavy on the smoke but mellowed out after a few drinks and was very enjoyable. How much does he like beer? Beer can be a really appropriate gift, especially to someone who enjoys the craft. I discovered my PI liked beer when I accidentally chose a brand she enjoyed for a Friday afternoon seminar. She complimented me on my choice. (some context: the town where I went to school was responsible for 1% of the global sales of Natty Lite so it wasn't exactly a hotbed of beer appreciation). Personally, I enjoy finding unusual, quality beers. I generally prefer darker beers and can highly recommend Weeping Radish Black Radish as on of the best American produced beers I've ver tasted. Surprisingly, I also like lambics for a lighter drink. My current favorite are rauchbiers (smoke-beers) which have a heavy, smoky taste, though most people do not like them. A really good pack of beers can definitely be an enjoyable gift. Even if you choose badly, at least they can be used to steam shrimp. The best thing I've ever gotten? A really personal email appreciating what I've done, copied to the Chair of my department and the Dean. Having a rep as a good advisor makes a big difference to me.</p>
2020-07-24	UNCW professor Mike Adams found dead at his home	NA	<p>No sympathy from me. Don't forget he actually put a student's life in danger: https://www.thedailybeast.com/unc-professor-allowed-to-harass-lgbtq-students</p> <p>"Last August, Adams published an article about Merghani, using her full name, stating she is bringing a "Queer Muslim Jihad" upon campus. Merghani said she feels personally threatened and unsafe on campus after the professor published the blatantly anti-Muslim, anti-LGBT rant "suggesting I'm a terrorist without a hint of truth or any regard for my personal safety." With the rate at which mental health issues are still taboo and under reported I would say that suicide may well be the leading possibility. Even though he had the money coming, he was being forced out of what had become a huge part of his life. That going away plus other, often unknown, stresses is easily enough to make people do unfortunate things even when outsiders would not think so.</p> <p>I'm not sure what I hope for in an outcome other than if it was suicide that this helps to shine some more light on this issue. Men die at more than 3.5x the rate of women from suicide and they are less likely to seek treatment. It is a national tragedy among many. I know right, big yikes to me huh Yikes, get off the conspiracy theories homie. I assumed the first few comments would be people dancing on his grave. My, but the readership of this sub just grows in quality by the week.</p> <p>Suicide wouldn't surprise me, but from the article it looks like he got a 500k settlement and will still get whatever part of his state pension he qualifies for; he's retired and lives by the coast along some rather nice beaches.</p> <p>So, I'd also not be surprised if it were something other than suicide. Hell yeah Who said anything about murder? Based on the info available, this is very likely a suicide. You're defending murderers instead? At least I'm not defending racists. Hard af I don't really care Reported. And the world is a better place. Unbelievable. And yet: all-too-believable.</p> <p>Strange and ugly times. Most likely destined to get worse.</p>

2019-03-14	Rare student appreciation moment	<p>Yesterday, a former undergraduate student (I taught classes, but she was also working in our lab with another advisor) came in to tell me she was changing majors and moving to another town. She hugged me (not completely out of the Latin traditions, but still weird for me), then told me I was one of the best professors she had. I am not exactly popular with students. The timing is funny too, because I am moving from academia to industry by the end of the semester.</p>	<p>That is a good idea. I'm at a Canadian university and my department is like this too (call profs by their first name). It may just be a case by case thing. I sometimes keep notes on my computer of moments like these that are not documented on a card or letter - helps a lot when I'm feeling inadequate. Brazilian culture is a lot more informal than every other country I have visited so far in my opinion. However, even when compared to my alma mater 200 miles from here, students and professors are much closer. I am rarely called professor by students, for example. It is kind of a lack of boundaries. Not that I am a sucker for formal treatments, but sometimes it just seems odd.</p> <p>Could I ask what you mean by a difference in local culture? What do you find different? Most professors here are more intimate and warm with students than I feel comfortable being. That, a Latin culture, and the fact that I tend to be more exigent than average with assignments (and plagiarism) seem to add up pretty fast to the way they see me.</p> <p>&#x200B;</p> <p>It's kind of a cultural problem. The problem is that I don't adjust well with the local culture... I just started teaching in the fall of '17 and my wife told me I should do this. I didn't see why until I had my first "I suck at this, I should quit" day. Always nice! I have to ask though, why do you feel you're not very popular with students? That is so nice! I am so happy for you that your student recognized you and thanked you personally. It always feels so good when you get that. Couldn't add this, but I keep a folder of cards and notes like this. It helps on a bad day. Indeed...</p> <p>&#x200B;</p> <p>I still have a semester to go! (until middle of June)</p> <p>It is also interesting the way students look at me when they learn I am going to work in one of the big ones in our area. Feels Goodman. Nice!!! Sorry to hear you are leaving, but it looks like you had an impact.</p>
2018-11-01	Anyone need a slutty costume for Halloween?	NA	<p>I agree with you what you said. It is just annoying to me even though it is my own personal comfort which has been built into me. I don't even think I would want to do that outside of a classroom to a casual acquaintance, personally. We should be able to do it, but we should also be able to use a single restroom for everyone, but people aren't comfortable with that either.</p> <p>Personal comfort dictates a lot of what we do and don't do I think. I feel we should be allowed to say what is proper in a classroom without wondering if that is a woman or a man. I'm not really sure that's even sexism, just comfort level in talking about bodies that look like yours versus ones that don't. I don't think there is any ill will or prejudice in that short of constructive criticism. &gt; good ol' intercourseism . :)</p> <p>Your comment is now pure. ^([Contact Me](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TaLiE3OegFc)) Good ol' sexism . :) I don't think I would be comfortable saying that to a guy. Maybe it's a same gender only type of thing! When I was a TA for a lab, I had to tell a dude whose pants were way below his hip, that he wasn't shooting a rap video.</p> <p>But I couldn't tell any of my female students that though. :) I know what to meant, I was saying I wouldn't recommend a male say that to her. Could be taken creepy.</p> <p>Although, when you dress for class like you're in a cheap porno, maybe you should get a lot of comments about how you're half naked at school.</p> <p>I saw butt cheek, man. Butt cheek. &gt;she has also been caught cheating, but somehow landed a medical school interview like WTF?</p> <p>&gt;I wouldn't advise it either.</p> <p>I meant as a male instructor I think I would be scared to tell her that. I wouldn't advise it either. True story, she has also been caught cheating, but somehow landed a medical school interview <U+0001F644> As a male I would be scared to do that. Side note: I had a student dress up as a Playboy bunny one year. In class, I literally looked at her and said, "dude, you're half naked in class. That's not okay." Academic camo So should we professors dress up as our syllabi, since evidently they are so terrifying to students that they never read them? Aw, that's almost hilarious. aaaahahaha. nice!</p>

2020-03-19	Creating calm for students	In the chaos of moving online and all these changes I created a Padlet for my students for us to share fun and positive things instead of the constant bombardment of COVID-19 news and online class stuff. We all need some mental positivity.	<p>Update: Padlet is going well!! It's a nice mental break. Thank you for those that were positive and supportive. To those that are struggling, I do get it, and I'm sorry for that, but let's try and help one another than be negative <U+0001F44D> Get a life and move on Aye aye cap, I'll be perfect and inspired at all times. I won't have any weak moments in this time of high pressure. Glad you're so perfect at all times that you can continue enforcing Reddit discipline. Then make your own post about it! Don't shit in someone else's positivity because your having a bad day We're all having our own experiences with this, okay? Thank you! What a wonderful idea, thanks for sharing and creating that environment for your students! Yes!! Oh I love this! May I steal it? I didn't say I needed to create their calm or that they couldn't manage themselves, but why not add to it? Positivity breeds more positivity. Geez. Okay first this really wasn't the post to vent this. This was about something positive. Thanks for being a Debbie downer. Second I can guarantee my uni is in worse shape than yours because we were already budget cutting and laying people off before all of this. But again, that's not what THIS specific post is about. They can create their own calm - they already have, if their work is any indication.</p> <p>Feeling like you have to manage their mental states is a fabulous way to burn out. Well sure, but I found out today that is quite likely our summer term will be gone, International Ed is telling students to postpone arrival (30% of institution budget) and at least 9 of my colleagues may lose their jobs until things get going again (and that was just the worst of it- it just felt like a long crappy day and no end in sight). Love it! I think that's a great question to ask! I think in my discussion I will ask for one thing positive going on right now.</p>
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Table 13: Topic 2 posts

created	title	selftext	comments
2020-10-03	Faculty position for an international graduate	<p>Hello, I need some advice from international professors who are teaching in the U.S.. I am international and going to graduate from my Ph.D. program (in the U.S., social science) next year. I am looking for jobs at universities that sponsor for visa/green card. Is tenured-track the only route or should I also consider lecturer or adjunct faculty? I am not sure if lecturer or adjunct faculty can be sponsored for long-term residency. Thanks very much!</p>	<p>Thanks! It is more difficult during this time for international applicants... I have a colleague in a similar situation. The person was not able to start this fall. It's possible but, honestly, the government is making it really hard to sponsor foreign faculty members. We'd hired someone international for a position and it's been a nightmare to bring him on—we've never seen anything like it when bringing in foreign faculty before. So there's no harm in applying but if you're made an offer you could be waiting at least a year before you could start. I don't have personal experience. But, a co-worker is research faculty and got her green card through being one. Green card is for permanent jobs. Does not have to be tenure track, but can't be temporary - one year contract for example. Will depend on university as well. Good luck! At my institution only TT might be sponsored for a green card.</p>
2021-04-24	Potential job offer: what questions should I ask?	<p>I'm an adjunct in an area with a faculty shortage. My dean said she would like to give me a formal job offer for a full-time position next week, assuming her final budget numbers come through. I asked about a hiring committee, and she said because of the type of position, she has full discretion and it will not go to committee. This would be a lecturer position (I do not have a PhD) with a 3/4 teaching load at a private university. I talked to a colleague, and they say this sounds like a temporary position since it's not going to committee.</p> <p>What does "temporary" mean, really? Is it renewable, and if so for how long, and could it lead to anything more permanent? I would be leaving a regular 9-5 job for this position. The dean and I already discussed salary, and I'm fine with that part, but the potential lack of stability makes me nervous.</p> <p>What other questions would you recommend that I ask before accepting the offer? Other than lack of stability, is there anything else I should consider?</p>	<p>I work in an area with a faculty shortage (nursing) and we have many full time lecturers that get renewed annually for many years. If there is a need it may have a little more security. Things you can ask when you get the contract or look in the faculty handbook to see what the terms of that position generally are. Thank you. I'm a CPA, so plenty of industry jobs, thankfully.</p> <p>If it didn't get renewed, it would be sad, and I might end up in a job I don't like, but I would be employed. I am also considering going for a PhD at some point in the next few years. Thank you. This is helpful. I think this particular position might be closer to the first option, although the department does have a lecturer who started out as temporary and has been there for over 15 years now. I don't know how that transition happened, or if it would be possible for me.</p> <p>I do not like my full time job. At all. I don't know how your university operates, but perhaps it would be helpful if I described how these things are handled at my university.</p> <p>* Non-tenure track positions are normally for one year, after which the position may or may not be renewed. There is a five-year limit for any specific individual, after which their career at my university is ended. * Separately from the above, my university has a small number of ongoing non-tenure track positions that offer a high degree of job security until retirement.</p> <p>In your case, you need a LOT more information, and you need more than oral assurances. If your current job offers reasonable job security and you enjoy it, then you should think long and hard about quitting it.</p>

2020-06-20	I am retiring after over 30 years in public education at the end of next year. Most of it has been as an administrator. I have a doctorate. I really want to make the jump to higher ed faculty. Any advice?	NA	<p>I'm not sure how it is in education but STEM fields have non-tenure track positions (instructors, professor of practice, etc.). This could be an option that I see perfectly fine if you can teach. No research required for instructors and most teaching professors. My degree is a Ed.D., and not from a research institution. I genuinely have a passion for teaching. For 8 years I taught some graduate courses to aspiring principals. I had very good reviews. Could go either way, depending on where you are and what kind of institution you're applying to. For somewhere looking for an active researcher, you're not a likely candidate. For somewhere looking for a full-time lecturer, your adjunct work may put you ahead of freshly-minted PhDs lacking similar experience (depending on what "some" means). For the community college that I started at, you'd probably be an attractive candidate. The only way you'll really know for your situation is if you have information interviews with faculty or heads of departments near you. My doctorate was earned 15 years ago in Educational Leadership. I published a few articles a five years ago. I have done some adjunct work. I would really like to teach full time. Good for you, should be "fun" to do all that teaching in retirement. Enjoy your golden years! I second this. The field will be critical. If you were a school administrator and your degree is in education, you might be able to pick up some adjunct work, but that will depend on supply/demand in your region. For any kind of permanent position, your doctorate is long past its expiry date unless you've been actively publishing or contributing scholarship in other ways. I should state that I can't speak to the situation at community colleges. In my experience, positions at community colleges in remote areas do sometimes get filled by people who wouldn't have a chance in other places. What field? By higher ed faculty I presume you mean tenure track? That's going to be exceedingly difficult, especially right now. If you really want to try it, I guess the first step would be to try to get some publications out there, since a 30+ year old doctorate is absolutely not going to cut it for TT positions. If you just want to adjunct you should look around for colleges in your area. I expect that experience in online teaching/course design will be helpful right now.</p>
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2020-09-01	PhD Career Shift?	<p>I have a PhD, and have been working as a part-time adjunct in my field for about six years. I have been focused on teaching and not doing any research. In part, this was due to my location limitation (California). I have also been working in my field outside of teaching (consulting, etc.).</p> <p>I am now interested in getting a full-time faculty position, and I am no longer bound by location. There is no opportunity to do this at my current college. I already know I will not qualify for positions that require research experience. I would need something full-time to justify a move to a new location, even if it's just a one-year contract. There are lots of positions listed online, but I need some help avoiding the black hole of applicant pools. Advice appreciated!</p>	<p>Ya, I was going to suggest CCs a good place to start. California has a robust CC system that would be pretty decent gig (though the pay is lower for California expenses). Even an R2 or good SLAC would rarely hire someone who had been out 6 years without any publications in most fields. OP might look at community colleges. That is tough. Idk when you earned your degree but you should have three or four publications from your dissertation. Get it out now and look for publication within your dissertation. Not knowing your field that is my best advice. A PhD is a research degree. Six years no publications (the time it takes to become associate prof n earn tenure) is going to keep you from R1 universities. Publishing is you best n really only shot at a better university.</p>
2019-10-15	STEM Ed Masters	<p>I'm an education faculty member in a biology dept at a master's granting university, and my dept is encouraging me to accept master's students for an MS in biology with a bio ed thesis (as opposed to a bench/field focused thesis). Given my own experiences in a master's and PhD program and the countless stories we read about, I want to be sure this degree would enable my students to either get a job teaching at a community college or be competitive for phds in biology/science Ed. Master's in bio ed are currently rare (my own master's thesis was a bench project, and then I completed a science education PhD), so I come here posing two questions to get a broader survey on their utility after asking my immediate network:</p> <p>Community college faculty, would a candidate for a teaching faculty position with a MS degree in a science with an education-based thesis (not bench or field science) be competitive?</p> <p>R1 faculty, same question but for your PhD positions?</p> <p>Thanks for your time!</p>	<p>Im currently teaching at a smaller 4 year college with an MS in medical science. It depends. I took took classes on pedagogy and was originally going for a PhD so I took all PhD level courses. I also have about 8 years worth of research experience.</p> <p>All of that put together is what got me the job. The masters on its own, would not have. I also knew people at the university. Its a small four year school with about 3,000 students. Even then I am only hired part time. They are going to need to go to some obscure schools to get a good chance at being hired, especially if all they have is the MS without any other experience.</p> <p>Why is my research experience relevant here? They still want money for funding to renovate the labs, to do that they need students doing research internships. On top of that they also want students to present at conferences. All of this is what my research helped me with.</p> <p>While the pedagogy and the fact that I was TA helped some, they liked the research a lot too. Private college here. We would not accept anything below PhD for teaching positions. A PhD in sci-Ed would be acceptable/preferred for our non-tenure line contract (5yr renewable) teaching positions. Tenure line positions need bench science projects and backgrounds. I'm not in Biology, but another STEM field (math) at a community college. Currently we do accept people with a Math Ed. Masters, but the unwritten stuff says that we'd rather not. Apparently there have been more and more issues of rigor brought up because these ed. based masters are becoming popular. A lot of the local programs look pretty watered down.</p> <p>Search committees know that but still might look through a CV. Those candidates can still be competitive, but are working at a small disadvantage.</p>

Table 14: Topic 3 posts

created	title	selftext	comments
2020-05-03	How to Catch Chegg Cheaters (they exist in every class)	[removed]	NA
2019-01-30	How to cope with having classes that are longer than I'm used to?	I have no problem with teaching long classes. But I just got a new position at a university, and the classes are on a semester schedule and meet T and Th from 8-9:50. I'm teaching cultural anthropology (but I am primarily a physical anthropologist). I'm used to twice a week classes lasting an hour and 15 minutes on the semester schedule. I also teach on the quarter system, and these classes are longer, but they typically occur over a shorter time span. Right now, I don't entirely know how to set up my class since it involves more teaching hours than I'm used to. Tips?	<p>If it is officially okay, and you plan to be primarily lecturing, I might set up a 5-10 minute break midclass. Alternately, include more student active time; you don't have to be speaking the entire duration of class, and the longer class hours allow your students to do more interesting in-class activities that don't have to be broken up by the days in between class. I ran into this issue with an undergraduate statics course at 6 o'clock at night. To make it feel like less of a marathon I separate the class into three sections. 1. Review of the previous weeks material. (You can look up scaffolding) and open questions. 2. Class activity (active learning pedagogies) 3. Lecture on new material and assignment clarification</p> <p>Also feel free to have students lead for a portion of each class. They can play the role of teacher for certain topics. The classroom is a learning environment. Your job is to create learning opportunities. You don't have to fill every minute with lecture.</p> <p>Hope this helps. How large a class are we talking about?</p> <p>Break that time span into a few parts, maybe 10-15 min long. Have an objective or concept for each part. At the beginning and at the end, and if you can, on the board throughout the class, have a list of these concepts/objectives and how they fit into the course/topic as a whole.</p> <p>Two hours is a long time. Having an outline of what you're doing and what you've done will help save everyone's sanity. Ask your students for input - what do they want to see the class look like on a daily basis, re: ending early, starting late, or adding breaks. A 2 hour class that early in the morning...I can't imagine the amount of blank stares you're probably looking out into! Just think: You could be me and spending a 2 hour class talking about accounting instead.</p>

2019-12-08	Small class size justification memo	<p>I am teaching a new class with an upper limit of 18, but a requirement of 15 students.</p> <p>The class will be great, but without having been taught before, I have only 10 students signed up for the class right now.</p> <p>Have any of you written successful memos to administration (dean and provost) to offer a class even though the class threshold might not be reached?</p>	<p>I have tried. So far, no success. I'd definitely include the part about fulfilling a function, particularly if you have quotes from other staff or community members. If it's the only class (or one of very few) doing digital media, that should be mentioned, too. It is not a requirement, but the class fulfills a function for public affairs and college events to the community. It is also a major skill building class for mass communication students - podcasting, multi-media storytelling, digital media production.</p> <p>I will look into the current and previous semester enrollment to compare numbers - thanks.</p> <p>Writing a memo today to justify the class and looking for other strategies. Does it fulfill any requirements? If it's a Life and World class (or whatever- GenEds get weird classifications), how do the other L&W enrollments look? Will you be screwing over students if you drop the course now? Could they slot into another L&W course at the same time?</p> <p>On the other hand, what is the general requirement to run a course? We have to have 6 (unless it is a major requirement- then they can run with as few as 2!). If it's an unfair expectation, compared to other classes, you can also try that tack. I'd look at last semester's course schedule and find classes with 10 or fewer students. How in the hell can the cap be 18 if the minimum enrollment is 15? What is the % threshold for other classes. 15 minimum might make sense in a class with cap size of 30 or 40, but not 18. I'd recommend pointing to a percentage of fill metric, as well as how often the course is offered, as a basis of argumentation.</p>
2018-09-12	How do you switch gears between classes?	<p>Adjunct with a few years experience teaching intro courses; first time teaching upper division.</p> <p>I teach a back-to-back block where the first class is an senior level theory course and the second class is a freshman level gen-ed survey course. The seniors in the theory class have a background in the field and know the language so to speak, and class is usually a mixture of lecture and stimulating discussion. The freshmen, on the other hand, have little if any exposure to the course concepts.</p> <p>In the first few weeks of the new semester, I've noticed I'm coming in pretty hot to the intro class. Part way through a lecture or at the end of the class, I realize that I've been lecturing as I would have with the seniors and probably talking over the freshmen's heads or leaving some of them in the dust.</p> <p>I teach another intro section of freshmen later in the evening and lecture tends to be much more at their level. Any tips on how to switch gears and recalibrate my brain in a 5-10 minute walk across campus?</p>	<p>Will definitely give this a try! Hmm. Now that you point it out I realize that when I've done this before it's really to just kill time while I set up my notes and slides. Made myself *actually* pause and listen in the last class and it definitely helped reset! Are you me?</p> <p>Intelligence Community and National Security then Intro.</p> <p>It is funny. I talked about the possibility of making Wal Marts polling places in the upper division and my lower division thought it was great.</p> <p>Looks like I have the majors on the right track. Perhaps start with a ten minute warm-up? Something like, in groups of three, discuss what you thought was the most significant aspect of this week's reading, and feed back to the rest of the class. I feel like letting the students speak first will allow an appropriate pace to be set I usually wind up teaching a couple back-to-back classes that are wildly different every semester. I don't know if it's great advice, but I generally spend a little time at the beginning of class checking in with my students, asking about their day/week, giving some space for them to ask questions about any ongoing projects. I don't spend more than five minutes or so on this, but it really helps me "re-acquaint" myself with that group, so by the time I get into lecturing I'm well aware of my audience.</p>

2021-01-13	<p>Overloaded classes</p> <p>Administration: We are going to overload some of your online classes because students will obviously drop Me: Whatever, I don't have much say anyway</p> <p>*month later*</p> <p>Me: Semester starts in a week, no one has dropped from any of my classes, every class is full, administration is still trying to squeeze a couple of students into my online sections</p> <p>Is this happening to anyone else?</p>	<p>Instead of creating new sections so you can be paid appropriately. Makes sense. I won an internal grant for a course release which eliminated a prep. Admin merged 2 of courses and gave me back the prep. Got access to LMS the Friday before classes started. Time to assign 16 exams and 14 extra textbooks. Then they'll drop like flies. Yes. They've also added to my hybrid section and it shouldn't matter since the class is split into thirds for F2F. Yep, let's ignore science. I have the opposite going on this semester. The department put the minimum into my classes and is telling students "Go ask Prof. Boysenberry to add you". wtf, dude, don't make me the baddie. I have had 8/52 drop one week into my class, after staff worked all through break putting together and shipping the parts and tools for them to do the at-home labs. Yep. All of my classes had their caps raised. I'm sure I'll get the three person waitlist added in one of them at the end of the week.</p>
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Table 15: Topic 4 posts

created	title	selftext	comments
2020-12-03	As a student, is there a way to check plagiarism with TurnItIn before submitting a paper?	My school uses TurnItIn for checking plagiarism, but I can't seem to find a way to test my paper online. I have an important research paper that I am writing, I haven't plagiarized anything but I just want to be safe because it's my last semester before graduating this month.	Ugh, which part of "no student posts" is confusing to you? If it's a research paper I could see a whole page of bibliography being red because honestly there just aren't many sources easily accessible to students. That could easily be 25% When you submit it, you can check the Similarity Report on Turnitin. You can see everything it picks up, then you can delete your submission. If you have problems with any of this, contact your professor who may need to adjust some of the settings (though this should work by default). Yeah... but that still means 40% of your paper is direct quotes. That's too much—you shouldn't be relying so heavily on quotes in your papers. Literally only 60% of your paper is your own thoughts and ideas. By that right, you should only receive 60% of your points. I take off points for anything over 30% even if it is just quotes, even if it is properly cited. Because that means the student isn't doing enough of their own analysis/reflection/coming up with their own ideas. Turnitin, Safe Assign, ect...isn't just about direct plagiarism, it's also a tool we use to see things like quotes taken from digital textbooks, articles, ect.... That's the thing though, I've had papers in the past where I haven't plagiarized, yet TurnItIn says it was over 40% plagiarized. When I went in to review what was detected, it was mainly quotes and references that were highlighted. The references must have been used in other papers and formatted exactly the same, because everyone uses citationmachine.net. My professor didn't bother reviewing the "plagiarism" and docked points because of it. Pro tip: if you haven't plagiarized, you'll be fine
2020-10-25	Is reusing a paper I wrote for another uni self-plagiarism?	Student here, hey! Long story short, I'm currently doing an Erasmus exchange in Italy and turns out a paper I have to write for my host university has the same topic as one I wrote a few months ago in my home university in France. Although I know that both uni use different plagiarism checkers softwares (my home uni uses Compilatio whereas my host uni uses Turnitin), I'm still worried that professors might have a program that cross-checks papers submitted in different unis and checked through different softwares... Do I risk getting caught? We're talking about a 10 pages-long paper and me willing to make the most of my Erasmus I really fancy the idea of reusing the same paper, since it's my work and everything, although I know it's not very ethical...	As many have already commented here: be a better person. You are being lazy and horrible and it's unacceptable that you even asked. This should be posted in r/AskProfessors. It *may not* be plagiarism necessarily, but unless you disclose this was a paper not written for this course to your current professor, it *is* academic dishonesty, as you're submitting the paper under false pretenses. No, you don't risk getting caught. The purpose of education isn't to do the bare minimum to squeeze by which, in your case, may involve academic misconduct. The purpose is to learn things and improve your research, writing, and analytical skills. Also, quit being lazy about a 10 page paper, which will take you very little effort to complete. Yes, it's self-plagiarism. Be a better person. Read the rules for this subreddit.

2020-01-14	When you read research papers, do you print them off first or read in Adobe (or other on-line)?	I always start in Adobe but find myself wanting to flip back and forth. I feel bad printing because some research papers are pretty long. But it's such a PIA to flip around.	E-reader or iPad with an app that lets you page back and forth more naturally. I can't stand scrolling through a PDF. Zotero -> digital -> straight into word doc Most efficient way to work. Notes are for losers. Get that article/chapter/book written. I use all digital, but I actually hate it. I crave hard copies but feel ashamed of myself for printing out hundreds of pages a month, so I stopped about 2 years ago. LiquidText on the iPad. Amazing app. I read the abstract on the computer, and maybe skim through, but if I decide to actually read it I'll print it out. Edit to add some things I do to make myself feel better about lots of printing: I print on both sides of the page and use whatever toner-saving mode the printer has (prints out sort of gray instead of bold black) Sony Digital Paper - an A4 sized e-ink reader...invested in it 2 years ago and never printed research papers/solicitations/thesis etc again.. I've used hard copies almost exclusively until recently. I bought a Kindle Fire 10" to use exclusively as a PDF reader, and I'm never going back to primarily printing. It's almost as good as paper, but its organizational functions—like being able to tag PDFs—are amazing and I can walk around with 100s of PDFs. I went completely digital somewhere along the line and don't miss it. Funnily enough, definitely as a PhD student I was all about the stacks and making notes and all papers spread out all over the place. The most I do nowadays is make notes in a txt file if I'm reviewing something. I always start off by skimming them in PDF form (although I don't use Adobe). I print them off if I can see it's a helpful article I'll want to read in full, highlight, etc.
2020-02-09	RegardingHey all, re-search, au- thor-ship, and what questions are okay to ask..?	I have been working on a paper with a co-author and today she suggested that she actually has a similar paper with some other people and asked what I would feel about combining the papers I haven't had such an experience before so am not sure how to respond. I do know that my advisor warned against there being too many authors on a paper and situations similar to this So what would you recommend I do? What questions should I ask before making the call? I'm not too against combining the papers (it seems like it will improve the paper), but am worried about things like authorship and there being too many chefs in the cook	Ah didn't know about the sub reddit. Thanks for letting me know! Thanks so much for the detailed reply! You might want to try /r/askacademia, too. I concur. > I'd recommend negotiating a friendly separation from your co-author and finishing your paper without them. Generally agreed, but a lot depends on your timeline to completion. If your realistic options are (1) shared co-authorship on a bigger paper vs. (2) getting sniped and having a project that you can't publish, option (1) is vastly superior. It depends on a ton of factors such as your field, the nature of the overlap, the actual number of authors, whether there are two LPUs of work, etc. Talk to someone knowledgeable in your Dept. The whole late-in-the-game "oh by the way I'm doing a concurrent similar paper with others that I didn't tell you about" makes me quite nervous. If you decide not to combine papers, I'd recommend negotiating a friendly separation from your co-author and finishing your paper without them. I would be really worried about my work appearing in the other paper.

2020-
10-01

Weird
cita-
tions
on my
paper?

I've been noticing something weird over the past year. I published a medium-quality paper in a low-tier (but not quite predatory) journal about a year ago as a favor to the editor. Since its publication, it has been cited a *lot* more than I had expected (both considering the content and the venue). I checked a few of the papers and it's obvious that these citations are fraudulent; they're citing it for things that aren't even in the same broad area of science. (e.g. like citing a biology paper for some sociology insight). Most are in the "probably predatory" journal category, but there are also some in reputable venues. Mostly different authors from different institutions..

I have no idea why they've all picked my paper for this. It doesn't excite any specific search terms and the venues are wide enough that it's not impact factor hacking by the publishers of my paper.

Any ideas on why this happened or what (if anything) I should do? Should I complain to anyone or just ride that sweet H-index boost?

Yeah, a few are MDPI journals (which didn't surprise me), but most aren't. MDPI? Maybe. Dunno if there are other centrally controlled networks that would be up for that. Do you think that journals would collude across publishers and disciplines? I've had papers cited that don't make a lot of sense and once for the kind of thing you reference-I publish in primate behavior and had a paper cited in a physics journal! I've always just figured that the author is trying to pad their citations to make their paper look stronger and assumes that reviewers won't check references.

I don't know who you'd complain to; I'd just ride the H-index! Same w other papers? If so, manipulating the impact factor via a journal level citation club?

Table 16: Topic 5 posts

created	title	selftext	comments
2020-11-03	Reminds me of "Professor, what can I do to get an A?" emails.	NA	NA
2020-02-18	This email from Pearson...	NA	NA
2019-09-27	Email etiquette	<p>I'm an upperclassmen undergrad at a university in North America. Recently one of my professors came into class talking about how so many of us don't know how to email professors "properly." I use email "etiquette" sparingly. Like when I'm asking for something special like a meeting outside of office hours, special extension, specific question etc I'll sign it with regards and all that good stuff. Pretty much anything where I ask something of the prof beyond their official duties I will put some effort into a "polite" email. But otherwise, I often just sign my name at the bottom of the email and use super concise/direct language so nobody gets their time wasted, especially if its a business-as-usual type email. I feel like its more respectful to be curt and avoid formalities unless absolutely necessary because we're both busy people with a lot of stuff to do. Do the profs on this sub have any thoughts of email etiquette between students and faculty? Any funny email stories?</p>	<p>[deleted] Time to become an adult and learn to communicate professionally. As you get to know an organization, you can mimic what they do.</p> <p>Emails that start with "Hey! or Yo!" are answered, but I will provide "Read the syllabus!" replies if they can't bother to use a greeting.</p> <p>For the record, I have a brief section on email etiquette in my syllabi. You should at the very least always start your emails with a salutation and the professor's title (Hello Dr. XX... Hello Professor XX... for instance).</p> <p>Your email should be written in normal, professional English (no text-speech or unnecessary abbreviations), and should at least have a once-over for spelling and grammar.</p> <p>You should end your emails with a nice sign-off and a signature (Thank you, [Name]).</p> <p>You should also get into the habit of making it clear in your emails which class exactly you are from, so that they can find your information. It's really simple for you to add "I'm in your XYZ 1000-03 MWF class" and saves a good amount of time for your professor having to go through rosters.</p> <p>Your subject lines should be relevant to the topic and polite. (A good subject example might be "First Assignment" and a bad subject example might be "question," because the first one actually lets them know what it's about).</p> <p>That is all very basic email etiquette. If you don't do this, you might as well get into the habit because you'll need to do this at most places of employment anyway.</p>

2019-09-30	What to do when a prof doesn't reply to an email about asking for reference?	This could mean he hasn't seen it, or he doesn't want me to write me a reference. Would it be inappropriate for me to send him an email again just to check whether he has received the email or not? It's been multiple days since I sent him the email...	Seconding the recommendation to wait a bit longer. Also, you'll likely get more feedback at [/AskAcademia](https://www.reddit.com/r/AskAcademia/). Wait at least 1 day and then email again. Some of us receive hundreds of emails a day and yours might be buried or forgotten. In the second email, say something in the line of "I am not sure whether you've received my previous email. Here it is again. Also, attached is my CV in case if you need it." Find another reference. Unless you personally know this prof to be chained to their desks, I'd give it at least a week before following up.
2020-09-24	How are your emails doing?	So, I've been conferring with a few colleagues, but it seems like our collective experience has thus far been a rather precipitous drop in emails across the board: from staff, students, and admins. We're fully online this semester, so this is the exact opposite I expected. It isn't unusual to go through the better part of a day with zero emails at all, and I recently received a total of four emails across the span of two days, all of them from students. Nothing from any admins, including even the email-happiest of all of them, who often sent two or three emails a day, often filled with little more than random musings on policies. Is anyone else experiencing the same thing?	I question how you are functioning at all... Yes it's definitely declined. I was going back and deleting all the emails and I noticed that we used to get twice daily updates from the Dean (in the early Covid days). That's quieted down to necessary business emails only. Less e-mail and thank god for that. Don't question it!!! Just enjoy. i've been using a private server. so far no fascist chanting, but i guess that could change. Fully online. Fewer emails from admin and colleagues. A slight uptick in emails from students. I did tell them right up front that I will check emails twice a day, at the same time each day, and I noticed that they actually try to email right before those times, so I can go a good 5-6 hour block with nothing, then BLAM, twenty emails within a fifteen minute time frame. 27 in the last 2 hours alone You funny ! Wait till you find out that nobody does reply all in this magical place either. I agree. It finally feels like people are learning. > I hope it'll be a long-term realization that a lot of the service/events we do aren't really all that necessary. Goodness, I hope so I have noticed a significant downturn in committee work and correspondence. I hope it'll be a long-term realization that a lot of the service/events we do aren't really all that necessary. I think people are trying to be more judicious about sending emails to not flood everyone's inbox- I know I certainly am. Just my guess though. Sorry to stray off topic; but does your university have any open positions at the moment? I don't care which field, I can learn.

Table 17: Topic 6 posts

created	title	selftext	comments
2020-02-13	During an upper division sociology exam, I had 5 students ask me the time-frame for WWII.	NA	US. The question was pertaining to marriage and divorce spikes before and after the war. Whose timeframe? UK, US, USSR, or Japan? :) After WWI and before Korea.
2020-07-02	Smh. CEO of exam monitoring software Proctorio apologises for posting student's chat logs on Reddit	NA	NA

2020-
12-18

Exam
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alter-
na-
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than
exam
soft-
ware?

I have not used Respondus because it feels like it would just be a nightmare to deal with hundreds of students installing this software and using webcams while taking exams. But, I cannot really use short answer questions because I have far too many students for this kind of grading. Has anyone used any other strategies for exams other than exam software?

I also really debated the backtracking issue for accessibility reasons. Instead I decided to give them twice as much time as I thought they would need to do the whole thing. Most of them finished in the time I would have normally given them, so I think it generally worked out. I also made sure all of their practice quizzes had the same set up so they were used to it going into a test. Having multiple question groups from which LMS (Canvas) pulls different questions for each exam; using the "shuffle answers" option for m/c questions; not giving them too much time to answer (I use 1 min per question unless it's an essay); mixing different types of questions together; have a lot of short answer open questions; setting the exam to show one q. at a time with no option to go back; I also heard that some profs have the whole class on Zoom during the exam, monitored by TAs (but I have never done this). Respondus is useless unless you are in the room with them, because if they have another device on them they can still open another browser there). I've done more or less the same (though I was convinced by our accessibility folks to allow backtracking). This was my first semester with the huge classes so I don't have a comparison case but the "good" students do well and the "weak" ones don't. Large tests banks where students get randomly pulled questions, re-writing questions so the answer does not come up easily when I google them (I find scenario questions help with this), and making them do the test one question at a time with no backtracking. My tests are mainly things the LMS can grade automatically (multiple choice, matching), but I also include a few short answer questions that are worth a few more points than the multiple choice. But how many you would want to include would depend on the number of students you have. It's not perfect but my averages have not been that far off what I see in person. Grades also seem to map pretty well onto the amount of general course engagement I see from individual students.

2019-06-28	Excuses for missing exams...	<p>Apologies if this sounds like a rant...because it pretty much is. I'm a new-ish instructor and I am appalled by the excuses students give in order to get more time to study for exams. I've had plenty of legitimate excuses (with documentation), but one that I got today is so ridiculous. Student emails me 10 minutes before the start of the exam to tell me that she doesn't have enough gas in her car and she doesn't have any money to buy some.</p> <p>My questions are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why didn't you email me this last night when you got home and saw that your car was on E? 2. This was the best you could come up with, 3. Why do you think I'm going to believe you when you have missed more classes than you have attended and when you do come to class it's with freshly manicured nails. <p>I'm letting her make up the exam, but what I'm guessing she didn't read in the syllabus is makeup exams are much harder than the original exam (especially when you irritate me). Rant over. What is the best/craziest excuse you have heard?</p>	<p>"When you retake the course." Yes! Highly recommend this strategy. My solution for my undergrad classes that have more exams is to not allow any make-ups and just drop one low/missing exam grade. For athletes and other students who know they will have to miss an exam day, I allow an exam to be taken a day or two early. My student did at least say "Can I make it up?" Online graduate student who had a three-day window to take the exam she knew about 7 weeks in advance:</p> <p>"I live with my cousin and I had to babysit her kids, so I could not find time for the exam. When can I make it up?"</p> <p>The presumptuous question at the end really made it stand out. I don't get too many because I don't require excuses. I let them take as many missed tests as they want during the final exam period. They don't get extra time. They get a different but not more difficult test. They have to tell me through survey what they need to makeup the second week before finals. If they miss the survey they don't get to make it up. Much easier that way</p>
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2020-11-11	Big thanks to my University for giving us zero notice before telling students (and us) that the last week of class and final exams will be 100% remote "out of an abundance of caution"	Here's to coding 100 a question exam into Blackboard. Cheers.	<p>So fun! Can't wait till it happens again in the Spring! I had so many issues with Blackboard for the midterm. A few students got kicked with 10-15 questions left, and they were randomized, so I had to find their individual unanswered questions and make them separate addition quizzes. Doing some digging to see if there's any alternatives out there. Tomorrow, really?? Damn.</p> <p>At least I know the exam will be remote and I can work towards the GA entering it. Blackboard is so cumbersome for this. Brah, tell them that out of an abundance of caution there will be no final exam.</p> <p>Or, change your exam format to be more Professor friendly.</p> <p>Or, give them all I completes and require them to take the exam when they return.</p> <p>Or, get a bottle of your favorite whiskey and get to work.</p>
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Table 18: Topics 7 posts

created	title	selftext	comments
2021-05-15	Final Grades in, No Loose Ends, So Far	Always loose ends, just anticipate it, such as: Hey, I just looked at my grade and can I turn that assignment from March in for the points?	Literally got an email from a student I taught over a year ago asking if they can make up points to raise their grade. Mind boggling. But their grade is missing that one point!!!! They NEED to have it to keep their financial aid!!!! I got to just enter pass/fails this time around :) It was ammmmmazzzing I'm giving it one more day then making grades official. Everything has been entered into the LMS with the final grade listed for a few days now. I even did an announcement telling them everything was done. Actually didn't give an A to several students this semester and not a single one complained. It's shocking. Yeah I only had one loose end and that was because I miscalculated a grade. Submitted a correction and got it taken care of. Granted, I did get bombarded with grade bump requests before final grades were turned in. But they were surprisingly quiet after the fact. Normally I get at least a few requests after final grades go up. Bonus: The assignment from March is 1% of their grade and their current grade is 43%.
2018-08-11	Professor allows students to pick their own grade	NA	NA
2021-05-11	Figuring out averages?	I have a student who was getting a C and who tried to turn in an assignment about a week after grades were submitted. I said no. Then the student wanted to talk about contesting the course grade saying maybe I would accept the final project for half its grade. I didn't do it but let's figure this out: the existing C averaged with the C half credit would average out to a C. So what was the idea....?	It surprises me how many ask what their grade will be before all the assignments/exams are in. I can't predict your grades. I don't know how you'll do. I had a student who was getting a C ask me if I thought she could pass the class. I was like, 'well you are passing, so yes?' I find many students don't understand how grading works. They just have no idea. They just seem to understand more points = good. I've spoken with students who just...did not understand why I couldn't tell them, with certainty, what their final grade would be when they still had upcoming assignments and the exam. There just seems to be a certain cohort of them who don't understand that their grades are tied to the work that they do. I'm pretty sure the idea is that the student isn't good enough at math to work that out. I added this to my syllabus recently: " I don't negotiate grades. Unless I made a clerical error, grades are final." It doesn't deter everyone but it does reduce silly requests, especially since they read it at the beginning of the semester. Is the existing "C" with a zero on the assignment? Because then, depending on what your point total is, the added points from the missed assignment could raise their grade. Having said that, it's a week after grades were submitted so :/ A simple "no" will do here.

2019-05-02	Would a professor ever scrap the grade weighting scheme on the syllabus? And what does “running total of all grades” mean on blackboard.	<p>Okay so the syllabus says that hw is 50% midterm 20 % final 30%. But on blackboard the tests are worth 100 (so are all the homework’s). Making them weigh much less. Basically my grade has looked a lot better than what it really is the entire semester, because I did poorly on the midterm (and maybe the final too) but I did great on the homework. But the catch is that on blackboard when you click “grading criteria” it says “none, running total of all grades.” Should I be assuming that I am looking at my actual grade or should I assume that the final grade will be the syllabus weighting scheme. More so, if my grade is what the syllabus reflects. Would I have an argument in raising my grade. If I said to the professor or the department something like, “I was under the impression all semester that I had this grade and I could still raise it significantly after the midterm because it says “none” under grading criteria “running total of all grades”, I would’ve dropped the class if this wasn’t the case etc.... All my other professors have the syllabi grading scheme under “grading criteria”.</p>	<p>I had this talk *again* with my students yesterday. One still asked me right after whether the running total is their current grade. No. I just said it’s not. I literally just explained that. The syllabus applies to you, as do the rules of this sub. Sorry to break it to you. I’m generally more active in r/college than any other subreddit, but every time finals season comes around I want to scream because of how often I get downvoted for saying things like "asking your professor for this will reflect badly on you" and "no, you don’t deserve a higher grade." I mostly come to r/Professors to get a bit of my sanity back... This time of year can we get a banner that says "don’t post this here" Ugh. Generally, the syllabus is the document that you should be looking at to explain your grade, but any time there is confusion you should ask your professor.</p> <p>&gt; Would I have an argument in raising my grade.</p> <p>No. I never weight grades on the CMS. It’s just a place for students to check that we have the same raw scores recorded for assignments.</p> <p>Those raw scores are then weighted by the balance given in the syllabus to calculate the final grade.</p> <p>If the professor is sticking to the syllabus, I don’t see that you have any argument to make unless they directly and explicitly told you that the grade reflected on Blackboard was accurate. This is the wrong sub for this question.</p>
2020-08-10	Grading Advice	<p>I wanted to see some different perspectives on how other instructors grade. Do you use a point system? Weighted percentages? Do you assign grades based on a scale rather than the actual points...or do you give a grade based on the actual points? Do you base your grades on a curve relative to the class or do you give A grades on stand-alone requirements?</p> <p>I don’t particularly like that, in Canvas, grades decrease as students turn in work (the grade that is shown is what is expected if a student got a 100% on the assignments that haven’t been completed yet...if a student got a 95%, his/her grade would go down...seems a bit demoralizing). Anyone know how I could modify this?</p>	<p>I don’t use Canvas specifically, but is there an option somewhere for 'Ignore blank grades'? [deleted]</p>

Table 19: Topics 8 posts

created	title	selftext	comments
2020-03-13	If you are preparing online lectures, I made a video tutorial on the process I use with a Mac, PowerPoint, GarageBand and iMovie.	NA	<p>On a MAC, Keynote recording is easy. GTFO. Most of us have about 6 days to turn in several well planned in class lectures into online format. It is "swell" that you did this, but this method requires a LOT of time. Admittedly I just skimmed the video but this looks like total overkill in comparison to either just using PowerPoint's built in recording and exporting features or just recording the screen using Camtasia etc.</p> <p>Maybe the Mac version of PowerPoint doesn't have the features so this is necessary.</p> <p>Edit: just realized the video is 7 years old, might have been necessary back then. If anyone has the experience, how does this compare to using the record feature of PowerPoint? That links each slide to audio and or video and you can edit those individually for each slide. Then you can save it as a self-playing slideshow, or a video file like mp4. Maybe upload the video to YouTube and provide links to students. This is the basic approach I was going to try, since I don't want to (or really need to) stray too far from what's familiar. I've tested it and like it. But I see many profs here recommending Zoom or other platforms.</p>
2020-09-30	Add Closed Captions to a Video using Free Software	<p>Hello! This sub has been a valuable resource to get assistance with new technology now that I am teaching and researching remotely. Do you know of any way to add closed captioning to a video using free software? A student of mine recorded a video of herself for a conference and now we need to add closed captioning. The video is 4 minutes long and 83.6MB and I have a word document with a transcript of her speech. Thanks for any help you can provide!</p>	<p>If you have access to VoiceThread through your institution, it can add closed captions to a video! I've used it through Blackboard and it really helps! You can use the free version of Screencast-o-matic. https://screencast-o-matic.com/blog/accessible-video/#:~:text=Captions%20From%20File,video%20during%20the%20publishing%20process. In YouTube, you can upload your document, then wait a bit and it will line up the words with the sounds in the video. Auto captions will NOT suffice for section 508 or ADA compliance. Do you have zoom? Play the video full screen and zoom record to the cloud, enable transcript</p> <p>It's better than Youtube, but annoying Youtube is pretty good, but editing the SRT files is a pain. I've had better luck downloading the untimed transcript with https://downsub.com, editing that file, then reuploading to Youtube as an untimed transcript. (You have to delete the autocaptions before uploading, though.) I upload everything to a private channel on youtube which automatically adds captions that you can edit (though the software is surprisingly good... for instance, it got Mikhail Bakhtin with no input from me). You can use the youtube video, download it, or download the srt file and upload it to your editing software. It takes about 20 minutes to do everything with upload times, etc. but it's the easiest free option I've found. You can add your own captions at amara.org. For 4 minutes it wouldn't take too long.</p>

2020-10-14	How has your teaching changed this semester?	<p>Hi all! I'm a grad student researching how teaching has shifted in K12 and higher education during the pandemic. Particularly, I am interested in what sorts of technologies you have used to ensure that students are engaging with course materials, not cheating on exams, etc. (I'm thinking of HonorLock, for example).</p> <p>If you are willing to share so that I can get an idea of what sorts of technologies and techniques are being used outside of my own university that would be greatly appreciated!</p>	<p>Last year I just had an unlisted YouTube channel for my lecture videos and 50% (at best) of my students actually watched the videos. This year my college paid for Kaltura, so I've been using that to record my video lectures. I like it because I can insert quiz questions into the video. It has exponentially increased student engagement with the video lectures, since answering the questions counts as a quiz grade. Since Kaltura is integrated with our LMS I don't have to grade anything manually - I just set it and forget it.</p> <p>My college also paid for Adobe Acrobat Pro licenses for myself and the other Chemistry professor. We use it for making fillable pdf lab data sheets and class activities. It's very helpful. TIL that Zoom has a roster feature! Thanks :) Anti-cheating technology is horribly intrusive for minimal legitimate security. It's all easily defeated with common resources. I'm redesigning assessments and weights to make cheating less attractive, but acknowledging to myself that it's likely inevitable in this environment. Assigning notetaking as part of a grade. Never have before but I got really tired of people skipping the videos and just going straight to the assignments and getting basically a cargo-cult understanding of math that shows up as dreadfully low test scores.</p> <p>Using the "Show your work" environment in mylab. I think I'm going to continue this even after we can have face to face classes again, getting work on a problem or two can really help us clear problems up before the test comes. I just use my LMS (Moodle), Zoom, and Perusall. I don't have major assessments or papers this semester, because I switched to a model where they owe a 2-3 paragraph response every week for consistency purposes (and it would be almost impossible to cheat on them since they are new each week).</p> <p>My kids' teachers use Google Classrooms, KAMI, and ALEKS. I have fundamentally changed how my exams work to mitigate cheating instead of trying to use technology to handicap students. Build a classroom of trust, not fear! I finally figured out how to use more features of my learning management software (Blackboard) and video platform (zoom). I use the zoom roster feature to let me know who hasn't attended the online course (it is meant to be synchronous with the videos saved as an 'emergency' backup), and then I remind them at least once.</p>
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2021-04-09	More efficient ways of uploading lecture recordings?	<p>So, I frequently have students with disabilities in my courses, and my lecture recordings need to be captioned. There are no services available to me at work to caption anything in Zoom, so I have been uploading my videos as unlisted videos on YouTube to auto-caption them. Honestly, I don't really mind doing this because sometimes I edit a couple of things in my videos and then upload them anyway (if there's an error in something I said or I want to clarify something, for example) rather than just give students the Zoom recordings.</p> <p>The only problem is that this means it takes some time to upload the video on YouTube. I'm teaching all day, so it's not like I can have the video processing on my laptop in the background. I have to wait until I'm not teaching to be able to upload the videos. For multiple classes, I have to do this multiple times. I sometimes wish that I had a second laptop where I could just let my videos upload in the background as I'm teaching throughout the day, but that's not really feasible. The videos don't have to be uploaded on the same day as the lecture, but I don't necessarily want to spend a whole day doing nothing but uploading a week's worth of lectures either...</p>	<p>Zoom has auto-captioning at our institution (I think it's called "Live Transcript" or some such). I'm not sure if that's something that has to be purchased or if it comes standard, but it's under the "Record" button, if I remember correctly.</p>
2021-02-23	PC recommendation for handling Google Meet/Zoom	<p>Anyone have recommendations?</p> <p>I've been using a decade-old XPS13 laptop for office; somehow it hangs when in google meet. Looks like graphic memory issue. I am now upgrading. Should I look for anything with a good graphics card like RTX 3070 (HP Omen 25L is in my mind). Honestly I am not into gaming. But I will be using for video editing and rendering, so good GPU might come handy and perhaps more important than i5 to i7 or i9 upgrade?</p> <p>Thanks!</p>	<p>Thank you. You may want to post over in r/suggestapc. My 2011 iMac has no trouble with Zoom or OBS (I even found that I could use OBS as a virtual camera on Zoom, after upgrading to the latest OBS). I think that almost any desktop machine of the past 5 years should be plenty of power—no need to get a fancy graphics card unless you're into it for some other reason. Unfortunately I haven't used desktops in forever <U+0001F605>. No suggestion there. I use the touchscreen/stylis for lectures. I basically write on the screen as I talk.</p> <p>Expecially useful when students have math problems. for just video meeting you don't need anything fancy. my kid is on an I3 with a built in GPU (I think, its like 6 years old) and it handles his virtual meetings fine Desktop for workplace. Correct, video editing is not my priority, Zoom/Meet with video. But XPS 2 in 1 cant even handle that! I have Matebook X Pro at home, perfect even for video editing. Again 2 in one, but I rarely ever use its touch screen!</p> <p>When do you use touch screen of laptop? I am more into keyboard shortcuts, it saves so much time. Desktop or laptop? I assume video editing is not your main use (if not, you would have gotten a mac)?</p> <p>If video editing is not your main use, laptop should be OK. Unless you record everything with 4k resolution, most newer model laptops should handle it well.</p> <p>I am highly partial to 2-in-one laptops with stylus (HP Spectre and lenovo are great) Don't fret too much about something that high because prices are inflated. A mid-level card like a 1060 is fine</p>

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