

**A comparison of web-based and paper-and-pencil homework on  
student performance in college algebra**

Shandy Hauk\*  
WestEd & University of  
Northern Colorado

Robert Powers  
University of Northern  
Colorado

Angelo Segalla  
California State University,  
Long Beach

\*Corresponding

Author: Shandy Hauk  
WestEd – Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics Program  
400 Seaport Ct, #222  
Redwood City, CA 94063  
Email: [shauk@wested.org](mailto:shauk@wested.org)  
Phone: 650.381.6445  
Fax: 650.381.6400

Postal Addresses for Co-authors:

Robert A. Powers  
Department of Mathematical Sciences  
University of Northern Colorado, Campus Box 122  
Greeley, CO USA 80631

Angelo Segalla  
Department of Mathematics and Statistics  
California State University, Long Beach  
Long Beach, CA USA 90840-1001

## **A comparison of web-based and paper-and-pencil homework on student performance in college algebra**

### **Abstract**

College algebra fulfills general education requirements at many U.S. colleges. The study investigated differences in mathematics achievement between undergraduates in college algebra courses using one of two homework methods: *WeBWork*, an open-source web-based homework (WBH) or traditional paper-and-pencil homework (PPH). We assessed learning for 439 students in 19 college algebra classes at a large public university in the United States. Twelve classes used web-based homework called WeBWorK and seven had traditional paper and pencil homework. Analysis of covariance revealed no significant differences in algebra performance or achievement gain by homework group, ethnicity, or gender when statistically controlling for previous mathematics achievement. Results support the conjecture that WeBWorK is at least as effective as traditionally graded paper and pencil homework for students learning college algebra in moderately sized lecture-based classes.

*Keywords:* computer algebra systems, college mathematics, post-secondary education, teaching and learning strategies.

## **A comparison of web-based and paper-and-pencil homework on student performance in college algebra**

Web-based homework (WBH) is an internet-based accessory to mathematics and science learning gaining popularity in the U.S. To date, the most growth in, and research on, WBH systems has been in large lecture-based courses (Dufresne, Mestre, Hart, & Rath, 2002; Gage, Pizer & Toth, 2001; Pascarella, 2002). As in our earlier report (Hauk & Segalla, 2005), in this study the focus was on smaller lecture-based settings, moderately-sized college algebra classes of 30 to 40 students.

The importance of homework, especially for the advanced cognitive development expected in high school and college mathematics, has already been established by many individual and meta-analytic studies (Cooper, 1989; Cooper, Lindsay, Nye, & Greathouse, 1998; Keith & Cool, 1992; Warton, 2001). Key factors in learning include ability, motivation towards mastery, quality of instruction, and amount of academic instructional time – including time spent on homework (Keith & Benson, 1992). However, it is clear from the research that homework is necessary, but not sufficient, for achievement on exams (Peters, Kethley, & Bullington, 2002; Porter & Riley, 1996). To examine the potential for shifting from traditional written homework assignments for skill-building to web-based homework, this study compared college algebra achievement gains, measured by common exams, in two randomly assigned groups: web-based homework (WBH) and paper and pencil homework (PPH). The WBH tool used was WeBWork.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The educational perspective underpinning the development of WeBWork and the instruments in this study is constructivist: understandings are conceptual structures built mentally by a learner.

Such construction is generated by personal and social interaction with information, ideas, and processes. The “constructing” involves acquiring tacit and implicit knowledge of conventions (facts) in addition to the goal-based, cumulative and reflective self-regulation for structuring of conceptual understanding (von Glasersfeld, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978). Web-based homework may facilitate both factual and conceptual knowledge building for individual learners. However, we explicitly acknowledge that WBH is only a support tool for an individual’s efforts to structure knowledge, and is by no means a replacement for dialogic interactions between teacher and student or the social generation of collective understanding of peer and near-peer group work. What WeBWorK does do is replace the unevenly implemented pedagogical interaction of homework grading with a rapid and clearly structured method of feedback.

Within the liberal arts tradition at U.S. colleges, the primary purpose of homework in college algebra is to foster development of a robust collection of algebra skills and concepts. The method for achieving this goal has customarily been through separate practice with facts and concepts. Exercise sets in most college algebra textbooks offer drill practice with facts followed by practice with application and synthesis of concepts.

In many texts an exercise set ends with mildly non-routine problems aimed at generating cognitive disequilibrium and encouraging deeper reflection on concepts and their relationships. For a variety of reasons, from pressure to “cover” certain chapters in textbooks to the personal epistemologies of students and instructors, the practice in college algebra teaching in the U.S. is to assign problems mostly from the first two categories (drill and application). Though there are efforts to rewrite college algebra textbooks along the lines of the reform of calculus in the U.S. (e.g., Kime, Clark, & Michael, 2005), this study was situated in a traditional setting and investigated a web-based perturbation to that traditional setting.

Moreover, given the research on achievement differences related to ethnic, gender, and class status in the U.S. (Berry, 2003; Brown, 2005; Secada, 2000; Tate, 1997), it may be that students from family cultures or socio-economic situations where computers were less common might be at a disadvantage if WBH were substituted for PPH. Our analysis made use of the available proxy variables in registrar data to explore this idea. Similarly, educational research on student affective issues, particularly mathematics anxiety, suggested that attention be directed towards these concerns in designing, collecting, and analyzing data. Finally, the role of the instructor in achievement differences was an important consideration (Acherman-Chor, Aladro, & Gupta, 2003; Warton, 2001).

The results reported here are from the quantitative analysis of categorical variables: homework group, ethnicity, and gender. A phenomenological report on instructional style and student perceptions and reactions to the use of WBH has been published elsewhere (Hauk & Segalla, 2005). A limitation of the study was that no socio-economic classification data were collected, though the phenomenological study did investigate a proxy measure: student access to and comfort with computers, the internet, and web-based software.

### *Research Questions*

A thorough investigation of the relationship between homework and achievement should control for preparedness (Cooper, 1989). In this quantitative-focused part of the investigation of the impact of the web-based homework interface WeBWorK on college algebra learning, the following questions were addressed:

- (1) Did students in both the WBH and PPH groups have a statistically significant gain from pre- to post-test score? That is, did the WBH and PPH groups learn college algebra in ways effectively measured by the instrument?

- (2) When statistically controlling for pre-test scores, were there significant main effect differences in post-test scores depending on homework group (WBH or PPH), ethnicity, or gender?
- (3) Were there any interaction effects between or among homework group, ethnicity, and gender on scores (pre, post, and gain)?

### *WeBWorK*

The WBH system called WeBWorK is an open-source, non-proprietary web-based homework interface developed and refined at the University of Rochester (Gage, Pizer, & Roth, 2001; Roth, Ivanchenko, & Record, 2008). It uses problem libraries to generate similar but individualized problems for each student. The libraries, written in PERL, can include calls to GIF and PNG illustrations, animated GIFs, HTML hyperlinks, JavaScript code and Java applets. WeBWorK has the potential to provide individualized graphical questions and interactive mathematical experiments for students to manipulate. Moreover, course management capabilities of the program include: (a) detailed statistical information on individual student and whole-class progress, (b) adjustable due dates for individuals and groups, (c) group email lists for a class, and (d) exporting of grade data to spreadsheet programs. In the semester of this study, instructors incorporating WeBWorK into their courses rarely used (a) – (c) but did make use of grade exporting. None of the instructors modified items or added WeBWorK activities beyond the assigned homework (e.g., none used authoring features in WeBWorK to import or create items).

For students, WeBWorK provides immediate “correct” or “incorrect” feedback. The WeBWorK interface as used in this study did not correct a student’s errors or give hints. It only let users know whether or not they had submitted a correct answer. WeBWorK program defaults for the study allowed users to try again, if they wished to, and provided a slightly different

problem to be worked. Students were encouraged by instructors and the information on the WeBWorK site to seek help from a fellow student, a tutor, or the instructor when stuck on a problem. They could do this in person or by email (there was a feedback button to generate email built into the WebWorK interface – see Figure 1). It is possible to program into WeBWorK the capacity to give hints based on the type of wrong answer. However, for the college algebra classes discussed here, the question of interest was whether or not “correct”/“incorrect” feedback accompanied by the retry option were sufficient to achieve the goal of reducing instructor homework grading load while still encouraging student homework efforts and maintaining course achievement.

To do WBH, students signed on to the WeBWorK server from any internet-connected computer. Students could download and print out the full assignment problem set. Students entered their solutions into WeBWorK through a text window using standard computer algebra software syntax (see Figure 1). After the due date, students could go back and review their submitted homework and view correct answers. Students could also re-work old assignments as a form of review for exams.

[Figure 1]

### **Methods**

Every semester the college algebra course at the site of the study, we’ll call it Big Public University (BPU), enrolls between 600 and 800 students in moderately sized class sections of fewer than 40 students each. An additional 200 to 300 students enroll in large lecture sections of 100 or more students each (not included in this study). The moderately sized class sections are

taught by lecturers with advanced degrees (Ph.D. or master's) or by Graduate Teaching Assistants who are working towards master's degrees in mathematics.

One of BPU's primary missions is the preparation of schoolteachers. Overall, the university student body is 64% women and 36% men though the first-year class in the year of the study was 70% women and 30% men. Made up mostly of first-year students, the college algebra enrollments in this study were close to this balance at 69% women and 31% men.

In the semester of this study, 644 students enrolled in 19 moderately sized college algebra sections. Of these students, 532 (84%) completed the course while the other 112 (16%) dropped or withdrew. Of the 532 who finished the course, 378 passed it with A (19%), B (28%), or C (24%). Another 59 students (11%) had D grades. That is, of the 644 who originally enrolled, 378 had a grade of C or better, a 59% pass-rate. Though slightly higher than the national average pass-rate in college algebra of 57%, this pass-rate was typical of the institution (Mathematical Association of America, 2004). Due to late additions, absences, and drops, complete data were available for a sample of 439 students, 83% of those who finished the course. By homework group, students' scores were available for 302 (84%) of the WBH and 137 (81%) of the PPH students who completed the course. Although the sample contained more women (72%) than men (28%), this may be attributed to the institution's entering class averages.

### *Student Participants*

The population of students at U. S. public universities is diverse. The light bars in Figure 2 show the distribution of students in this study at BPU by U.S. government identification category (these percentages are also representative of university-wide enrollment trends at BPU). For comparison, the dark bars give U.S. national enrollment percentages (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000). Though the student population at BPU was more diverse than the

national average, the BPU distribution was representative of the projected U.S. post-secondary demographics for 2060 (Delpit, 1996).

[Figure 2]

### *Instructor Participants*

Two years after WeBWorK was first introduced at BPU, and one year after a pilot study, the current study began. Assignments among the 19 moderate-sized sections of college algebra (taught by 15 different instructors) were initially random with 10 WBH and 9 PPH classes. However, within the first two weeks of the term two instructors switched to WBH. Nonetheless, each of the three instructors who taught multiple sections of the course had at least one PPH section and one WBH section (see Table 1). In the end, 12 WBH sections were taught by 11 instructors and enrolled 408 students. For PPH, 7 sections were taught by 7 instructors and enrolled 236 students. Four of the 15 college algebra instructors were Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) working on their master's degrees in mathematics (1 man, 3 women) and had little to no college teaching experience. Nine were instructors with master's degrees who already had some experience teaching college algebra (7 men, 2 women), and two were male Ph.D. lecturers in mathematics. Table 1 summarizes the preparation and experience of the instructors in the study (all names are pseudonyms).

[Table 1]

### *Data gathered*

The primary data forming the basis of this report were pre- and post-test scores, and registrar-supplied student preparedness information (SAT-Math and SAT-Verbal scores), demographic information, and course completion information. Data were for all moderate enrollment college algebra classes at BPU in the Fall of 2002.

A 25 item multiple-choice paper and pencil test over college algebra content was administered in the first and last weeks of the term in all 19 classes. The same test was used both times. Students recorded their choices on digitally scanable answer sheets. The BPU course coordinator for college algebra and the WeBWorK implementation supervisor developed the test. A panel of five expert college mathematics instructors established its face and content validity and the test was piloted in Fall 2001 before being used for this study in Fall 2002.

For the WBH group, WeBWorK itself stored an impressive collection of data on the homework done within the program. These included which problems were attempted, how often, with what level of success, over what time span. Analysis of the try-retry data for web-based homework sessions is the topic of another study.

### *Procedure*

The college algebra problem library programmed into WeBWorK for the study was made up of exercises selected from the textbook used by all sections of the course (Stewart, Redlin, & Watson, 2000; permission was obtained from the author and publisher). Advanced WeBWorK functionalities like animations and multiple graphs were not programmed into the BPU College Algebra Problem Library. The college algebra course coordinator determined a list of suggested homework exercises, organized by textbook section, and provided it to the PPH and WBH instructors and to the WeBWorK problem library programming team.

Each WBH and PPH instructor used at least 80% of these problems in assignments that were due weekly on a day and at a time determined individually by each instructor. Though no data was collected from PPH students on their homework practices, we did gather from PPH instructors information about homework completion and that the majority of homework was done outside of class time. Students in WBH courses completed their WeBWork outside of class on a home computer or at one over 500 computers available on-campus in labs and in the library. According to the WeBWork audit-trail, 78% of students regularly did their WeBWork assignments.

### *Analysis*

To answer the research questions, data analyses were conducted using SPSS, a common statistical software package. A paired *t*-test was conducted for each homework group (WBH and PPH) and for the combined sample to answer the first research question about whether the test indicated college algebra learning had occurred. The hypothesis was that the students in each group (WBH and PPH) would have significantly higher scores on the post-test compared to their pre-test scores. A three-way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to answer the second research question about differential learning gains between WBH and PPH groups when controlling for a variety of demographic variables. We generated several null hypotheses for the analysis related to the three research questions, these are presented on the next page – numbering indicates the related research question. The mathematics education and homework literature offers justification for each of these hypotheses. For  $H_1$  and  $H_{2a}$  the driving reason was Cooper's (1989) call for ensuring relative comparability of treatment and control groups. Concern about the influence of societal factors – particularly those aspects encoded in data as ethnicity and gender – prompted the choice and wording of hypotheses  $H_{2b}$ ,  $H_{2c}$ , and  $H_3$  (Secada, 2000).

$H_1$ : The WBH and PPH groups, separately and collectively, had no statistically significant score gains from pre- to post-test.

$H_{2a}$ : Statistically controlling for pre-test scores, student achievement as measured by post-test scores was no different for WBH and PPH groups.

$H_{2b}$ : Statistically controlling for pre-test scores, there were no statistically significant differences in achievement among students of different ethnicities.

$H_{2c}$ : Statistically controlling for pre-test scores, there were no statistically significant differences in achievement between students of different genders.

$H_3$ : Statistically controlling for pre-test scores, there were no significant interactions among homework group, ethnicity, and/or gender.

## Results

Before conducting the primary analyses to answer the research questions, we examined the attrition between the two homework groups. Due to late additions, absences, and drops, out of the 532 students completing the course there were 464 (87%) pre- and post-test pairs composed of 291 (86%) of the WBH and 173 (89%) of the PPH students' work. Though the drop-rate in the WBH courses (13%) was slightly lower than in the PPH courses (18%), the difference was not statistically significant ( $z = -0.39, p = .348$ ).

### *Paired $t$ -Test Results*

We used paired  $t$ -tests to answer the first research question, regarding the increase in student achievement after instruction in college algebra. Analysis consisted of the paired  $t$ -tests for the WBH and PPH groups as well as the combined sample, the results are presented in Table 2. There were significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores for each analysis:

$t(302) = 17.41, p < .0005$  for the WBH group,  $t(137) = 11.86, p < .0005$  for the PPH group, and  $t(439) = 21.09, p < .0005$  for the combined group. Therefore,  $H_1$  was rejected. That is, each group scored significantly higher on the post-test than on the pre-test. These results indicate that achievement in college algebra was significantly higher after the course than as students entered the course, which was expected.

[Table 2]

### *ANCOVA Results*

Three-way ANCOVAs were conducted to answer the second research question regarding differences in student achievement based on demographic information. The variables in the analyses were: the three independent variables: (a) homework group (PPH or WBH), (b) ethnicity, and (c) gender; the covariate (pre-test scores), and the dependent variable (post-test scores).

The results of the three-way ANOVA are presented in Table 3. The statistically significant result for the pre-test,  $F(1, 415) = 70.92, p < .0005$ , indicates that the pre-test is a viable covariate of the post-test in the analysis. However, there were no significant main effect differences on post-test scores after statistically controlling for pre-test scores for homework group, ethnicity, and gender. Thus, analysis resulted in failing to reject  $H_{2a}$ ,  $H_{2b}$ , and  $H_{2c}$ . It should be noted, for  $H_{2b}$ , results approached significance ( $p < .10$ ); for the most part this was due to a large mean difference between students identified in school records as belonging to “Asian/Pacific Islander” ethnicity categories (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Hawaiian, Filipino, Somoan, Vietnamese) and those identified as Latino (e.g., Chilean, Mexican, Puerto Rican). Additionally, there were no significant interactions among the three independent

variables on post-test scores when controlling for pre-test scores, see Table 3. Consequently, we failed to reject  $H_3$ . These results indicate that achievement in college algebra was statistically significantly higher post-course than pre-course, regardless of demographic or homework group variables.

[Table 3]

## **Discussion**

### *Influence of WeBWork in College Algebra Learning*

The main result of the study in comparing post-test achievement between WBH and PPH groups was that there was no significant difference in performance. The two homework groups began in essentially the same place with no significant differences in scores between PPH and WBH students on the pre-test, and ended, as groups, about the same. As a result WBH appears to be at least as effective as PPH for students in moderately sized lecture-based sections of college algebra. One benefit of the WBH system may be that WBH saves instructor grading time while supporting student achievement at least as well as PPH.

It is important to point out that no statistically significant interaction of ethnicity by group or gender by group was found, indicating that any ethnicity- or gender-correlated differences in performance were independent of the student's being in WBH or PPH groups. That is, it seems that whatever may be culturally biased in the structure or processes of college algebra, the use of WBH does not appear to significantly exacerbate or diminish it.

*Benefits and limits of WeBWorK*

Unlike internet auto-tutorials, discovery learning modules, or electronic communication by instructors about individually graded homework (Hall, et al., 2001; Monson & Judd, 2001; Pascarella, 2002; Yazon, Mayer-Smith, & Redfield, 2002), the web-based homework of WeBWorK investigated here does not openly conflict with traditional direct instruction or lecture methods of classroom teaching nor does it take a large amount of instructor time. This is both good and bad. The simplicity of WeBWorK is good in that the likelihood of its adoption by traditional college instructors is increased. This is particularly so if it is seen as a tool to eliminate the grading of large numbers of undergraduate mathematics homework papers. It may be bad, however, in that WeBWorK does nothing explicitly to challenge the notion widely held by many undergraduates and instructors that learning, particularly in college algebra, is a matter of habituation in skill practice rather than construction of personal knowledge structures rich in conceptual connections to previous learning (Laurillard, 1995; Kirschner, 2002).

It is clear from work to date on human-computer interactions that computers have a mediating effect on learning, particularly in mathematics, different from that of other learning environments (Karasavvidis, Pieters & Plomp, 2003; Liaw, 2002). What is also clear from the results presented here is that substituting WeBWorK for paper and pencil homework in lecture-based college algebra instruction does not appear to hinder student performance (as measured by the common paper and pencil tests). While it would be beneficial if WBH actually improved student performance, the simple use of the interface for this study is unlikely to lead to such a result. Nonetheless, WeBWorK may be used by college instructors to make their grading load more manageable and it appears to be at least as effective as PPH homework for most students.

One shortcoming of WBH is that though student and teacher can know quantitatively how the student is doing from their WeBWorK score, there is no qualitative information for the teacher to use in helping a student construct conceptual understanding. WeBWorK does not have a qualitative feedback mechanism (it just is not designed that way) that gets at what other evaluation methods can.

#### *Learner-centered use of instructor grading time*

While it is true that computer-based learning environments can act as catalysts for change in the perceptions students have of themselves as learners, such change is by no means automatic or persistent after a single semester course (Pascarella, 2002; Yazon et al., 2002). The benefit of delegating the masses of skill practice for which PPH is viewed useful to a web-based interface is that it allows instructors the flexibility to spend what would have been homework grading time on alternative forms of feedback that may be more beneficial to students. An instructor can choose additional formative and summative assessments to support the growth of students' intellectual autonomy in learning mathematics. If understanding is constructed by learners, then such construction can be facilitated through interaction and co-evolution of *both* the skill-practice available through an interface like WeBWorK and through assignments that help students build rich conceptual scaffolding to give context to their skills (Rittle-Johnson, Siegler, & Alibali, 2001). Some possible alternative methods for instructional interaction with students reported in the literature are projects (Gold, 2004), concept-based quizzes (Romagnano, 2001; also noted by instructors in the companion qualitative study to this one, Hauk & Segalla, 2005), and writing exercises (Bolte, 1999; Sterrett, 1992).

### *Future work*

Several areas of research around WBH implementation hold great promise. First and foremost, replications of the study reported here are necessary. Additionally, qualitative exploration of student and instructor views in the context of WBH is needed. The authors have made a first step in this direction (Hauk & Segalla, 2005). As with any curricular innovation, it is important to discover how the intended curriculum is implemented, received, and activated for students. That is, what happens in classroom and other instructional interactions as the innovation is used? How is student engagement affected? Is student learning, performance, or persistence in mathematics modified? How? Investigation of these questions at other levels (e.g., secondary school) would also be valuable since web-based technology is likely to become ubiquitous in K-12 schools.

### **Acknowledgements**

This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant Nos. DGE9906517, DUE0088835, and DGE0203225. Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

### **References**

- Acherman-Chor, D., Aladro, G., & Gupta, S. D. (2003). Looking at both sides of the equation: Do student background variables explain math performance? *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 2*, 129-135.
- Bolte, L. A., (1999). Using concept maps and interpretive essays for assessment in mathematics. *School Science and Mathematics, 99*(1), 19-30.

- Berry, R. Q. (2003). Mathematics standards, cultural styles, and learning preferences: The plight and promise of African American students. *Clearing House* 76, 244-249.
- Brown, C. L. (2005). Equity of literacy-based math performance assessments for English Language Learners. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 29, 337-364.
- Cooper, H. (1989). *Homework*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Cooper, H., Lindsay, J. J., Nye, B., & Greathouse, S. (1998). Relationships among attitudes about homework, amount of homework assigned and completed, and student achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 90(1), 70-83.
- Delpit, L. (1996). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York: New Press.
- Dufresne, R. J., Mestre, J., Hart, D. M., & Rath, K. A. (2002). The effect of web-based homework on test performance in large enrollment introductory physics courses. *Journal of Computers in Mathematics and Science Teaching*, 21(3), 229-251.
- Gage, M., Pizer, A. & Roth, V. (2001). WeBWork: An internet-based system for generating and delivering homework problems. Presentation and Minicourse at the *Joint Meeting of the American Mathematical Society and the Mathematical Association of America* (New Orleans, LA, January 2001).
- Gold, B. (Ed.). (2004). *Innovative Teaching Exchange*. Published online by the Mathematical Association of America. Retrieved 12 February 2004 from [http://www.maa.org/t\\_and\\_l/exchange/exchange.html](http://www.maa.org/t_and_l/exchange/exchange.html)
- Hall, R. W., Butler, L. G., McGuire, S. Y., McGlynn, S. P., Lyon, G. L., Reese, R. L. & Limback, P. A. (2001). Automated, web-based, second-chance homework. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 78(12), 1704-1708.

- Karasavvidis, I., Pieters, J. M., & Plomp, T. (2003). Exploring the mechanisms through which computers contribute to learning. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning* 19, 115-128.
- Keith, T. Z. & Benson, (1992). Effects of manipulable influences on high school grades across five ethnic groups. *Journal of Educational Research*, 86(2), 85-93.
- Keith, T. Z & Cool, V. A. (1992). Teaching models of school learning: Effects of quality of instruction, motivation, academic coursework, and homework on academic achievement. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 7, 209-226.
- Kime, L. A., Clark, J., & Michael, B. K. (2005). *Explorations in college algebra*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Boston: Wiley.
- Kirshner, D. (2002). Untangling teachers' diverse aspirations for student learning: A crossdisciplinary strategy for relating psychological theory to pedagogical practice. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 33, 46-58.
- Laurillard, D. (1995). Multimedia and the changing experience of the learner, *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 26(3), 179-189.
- Liaw, S.-S. (2002). Understanding user perceptions of world-wide web environments. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning* 18, 137-148.
- Maher, F. A. & Tetreault, M. K. (1994), *The feminist classroom: An inside look at how professors and students are transforming higher education for a diverse society*. New York: Basic Books.
- Mathematical Association of America (2004). *Case studies*. Retrieved July 17, 2005 from MAA, Supporting Assessment in Undergraduate Mathematics website:  
[http://www.maa.org/saum/new\\_case.html](http://www.maa.org/saum/new_case.html)

- Monson, R. & Judd, K. (2001). CalMaeth: An interactive learning system focusing on the diagnosis of mathematical misconceptions. *Journal of Computers in Mathematics and Science Teaching, 20*, 19-43.
- National Center for Education Statistics (2000). Profile of undergraduates in U.S. postsecondary institutions: 1999-2000. Statistical analysis report from the *National Postsecondary Student Aid Study*. Published by the U.S. Department of Education; publication number NCES2002-168
- National Science Foundation (1998). *Information technology: Its impact on undergraduate science, mathematics, engineering, and technology*. NSF Report Number NSF98-82.
- Pascarella, A. (2002). CAPA (Computer-Assisted Personalized Assignments) in a large university setting (Doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, Boulder). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 63*, 2872.
- Peters, M., Kethley, B. & Bullington, K. (2002). The relationship between homework and performance in an introductory operations management course. *Journal of Education for Business 77*(6), 340-344.
- Porter, T. S. and Riley, T. M. (1996). The effectiveness of computer exercises in introductory statistics. *The Journal of Economic Education. 27* (4), 291-299.
- Rittle-Johnson, B., Siegler, R. S., & Alibali, M. W. (2001). Developing conceptual understanding and procedural skill in mathematics: An iterative process. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 93*, 346-362.
- Romagnano, L. (2001). Implementing the assessment standards: The myth of objectivity in mathematics assessment, *Mathematics Teacher, 94*, 31-38.

- Roth, V., Ivanchenko, V., & Record, N. (2008). Evaluating student response to WeBWorK, a web-based homework delivery and grading system. *Computers & Education* 50, 1462-1482.
- Secada, W. G. (Ed.). (2000). *Changing the faces of mathematics: Perspectives on multiculturalism and gender equity*. Reston, VA: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.
- Sterrett, A. (Ed.). (1992). *Using writing to teach mathematics*. MAA Notes Number 16. Washington DC: Mathematical Association of America.
- Stewart, J., Redlin, L., & Watson, S. (2000). *College Algebra, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks-Cole.
- Tate, W. F. (1997). Race-ethnic, SES, gender, and language proficiency trends in mathematics achievement: An update. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 28, 652-679.
- von Glasersfeld, E. (2001). Radical constructivism and teaching. Retrieved June 28, 2005 from University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Scientific Reasoning Research Institute web site: <http://srri.nsm.umass.edu/vonGlaserfeld/onlinePapers/html/geneva/>
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher mental processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Warton, P. M. (2001). The forgotten voices in homework: Views of students. *Educational Psychologist*, 36(3), 155-165.
- WebNet (2001). *Proceedings of WebNet 2001: World Conference on the WWW and Internet* (Orlando, Fl, October 23-27, 2001), Fowler, W., & Hasebrook, J., (Eds). Norfolk, VA: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (ERIC #ED466945).
- Yazon, J. M. O., Mayer-Smith, J. A. & Redfield, R. J. (2002). Does the medium change the

message? The impact of a web-based genetics course on university students' perspectives on learning and teaching. *Computers & Education*, 38, 267-285.

## Figure Captions

*Figure 1.* Screen shot of a homework problem on solving a quadratic equation requiring mathematical notation in the second part of the answer.

*Figure 2.* Percentage of enrollments by U.S. government assigned demographic groups.

**Table 1.**

Profile of WBH and PPH Class Instructors.

	Degree at start of the study	Years Teaching College	Years Teaching Algebra
<b>WBH only</b>			
Ms. Degree	M.S.	>10	>5
Mr. Ellipse	M.S.	>10	>5
Dr. Functional	Ph.D.	>10	3-5
Mr. Graphic	M.S.	>5	3-5
Mr. Helix	M.S.	3-5	3-5
Mr. Inch	GTA	3-5	3-5
Ms. Join	GTA	<1	<1
Ms. Kite	GTA	<1	<1
<b>WBH &amp; PPH (#sections)</b>			
Mr. Angle (1W, 1P)	M.S.	3-5	3-5
Mr. Basis (2W, 1P)	M.S.	3-5	1-3
Ms. Cone (1W, 1P)	GTA	<1	<1
<b>PPH only</b>			
Dr. Radian	PhD	>10	>5
Mr. Saddle	M.S.	>10	>5
Ms. Torus	M.S.	>10	>5
Mr. Undo	M.S.	1-3	1-3

**Table 2.**Paired *t*-test Results for Performance Differences by Group.

Group	<i>N</i>	Pre-test		Post-test		<i>t</i>
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
WBH	291	9.20	3.89	15.11	4.28	20.68*
PPH	173	8.45	4.12	14.57	4.34	15.24*
Combined	464	8.92	3.99	14.91	4.31	25.67*

\*  $p < .0005$

**Table 3.**

Three-way Analysis of Covariance by Group, Ethnicity, and Gender –  
Statistically Controlling for Pre-test Scores.

Source	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Pretest	515.04	1	515.04	30.74	.000
Group	9.87	1	9.87	0.59	.443
Ethnicity	235.80	5	47.16	2.82	.016*
Gender	7.27	1	7.27	0.43	.510
Group×Ethnicity	102.26	5	20.45	1.22	.298
Group×Gender	136.55	1	136.55	8.15	.005*
Ethnicity×Gender	125.69	5	25.14	1.50	.188
Group×Ethnicity×Gender	73.49	5	14.70	0.88	.496
Error	7321.99	437	16.76		

**Table 4.**

Mean Pre-test, Post-test, and Adjusted Post-test Score by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	<i>N</i>	Pre-test		Post-test		Adjusted Post-test
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> <sup>a</sup>
African American	34	7.77	4.49	14.27	3.89	15.92ab
Hispanic	112	8.76	3.54	13.63	4.29	13.35a
Pacific Islander	50	9.48	4.62	15.12	4.53	14.94ab
Asian	60	10.40	4.36	16.12	4.57	15.27b
White	144	8.87	3.79	15.40	4.29	15.30ab
Unknown	62	8.21	3.59	15.08	3.74	15.55ab

<sup>a</sup> Covariates are evaluated at: Pre-test = 8.94.

Note: Adjusted means with the same letter are not significantly different based on a Bonferroni pair-wise comparison.

**Table 5.**

Mean Performance Scores of Group by Gender.

Gender	Group	<i>N</i>	Pre-test		Post-test		Adjusted
			<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Post-test
			<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> <sup>a</sup>
Female	PPH	125	8.20	3.83	14.22	4.14	14.34*
	WBH	207	9.29	3.85	15.45	4.15	15.42*
Male	PPH	48	9.08	4.78	15.48	4.76	16.16
	WBH	84	8.99	4.00	14.27	4.52	14.28

<sup>a</sup> Covariates are evaluated at: Pre-test = 8.94

\* Univariate analysis of group by gender was significant ( $p < .05$ )

◀ Previous   ▲ Prob. List   Next ▶



**Our records show problem 9 of set 5 has not been attempted.**

(1 pt) Find all real solutions of equation  $4x^2 + 3x + 7 = 0$ .

Does the equation have real solutions? Input Yes or No:

If your answer is Yes, input the solutions:  
 $x_1 =$   and  $x_2 =$   with  $x_1 \leq x_2$ .

*Note: You can earn partial credit on this problem.*

Show Correct Answers

*Note: it is after the due date. Answers available.*

Display Mode:  formatted-text  typeset

---

Problem Set Version Number: 91521  
Page produced by script: /var/www/webwork/system/cgi/cgi-scripts/processProblem8.pl

Figure 2

