Pearson

Spotlight on: Mastering Implementation

How can cheating on Mastering homework be addressed?

When students leave their homework to the last minute, it can be tempting to use shortcuts to earn the points they need for the grade they want. Pearson is committed to promoting learning and mitigating cheating by addressing these temptations with research-based strategies designed to provide guidance when needed. Mastering™ resources, such as interactive worked examples and tutorial hints designed to scaffold learners to mastery, optimize the learning experience and encourage students to use the resources rather than seek answers elsewhere.

What best practices should be implemented to address cheating?

At Texas Tech University, the Mechanics of Solids instructor felt that in the first semester Mastering was in use, a number of students were cheating rather than working the homework problems. She decided to address the issue with students and ensure she effectively implemented Mastering homework to minimize the opportunity for students to cheat. The instructor implemented the best practices below and saw an improvement in exam scores (figure 1). https://bit.ly/2GGyExi

- Early in the term, talk to students about cheating and emphasize how it can hurt them on exams.
- Assign Mastering tutorial homework problems, designed to developed problem-solving skills.
- Use the recommended Mastering settings to minimize cheating.
- Focus on Mastering as a tool for learning and preparing for exams rather than as a primary way to earn course credit.
- Analyze course results to understand any trends or issues.

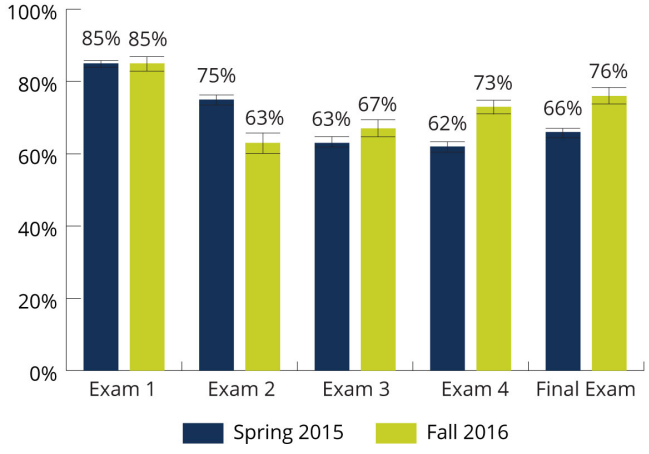

Figure 1. Average Exam Scores, Spring 2015 (*n*=50) and Fall 2016 (*n*=43)

How can you implement homework to motivate students to work the problems themselves?

At University of North Georgia, Mastering was implemented in a flipped, calculus-based Physics course to provide diverse learning resources, develop problem-solving skills, and motivate students to work the problems without looking up solutions. Students using Mastering had higher normalized gains on the Forced Concept Inventory (figure 2). To learn more about how the instructor implemented Mastering, read the full study. https://bit.ly/2MNkdJP

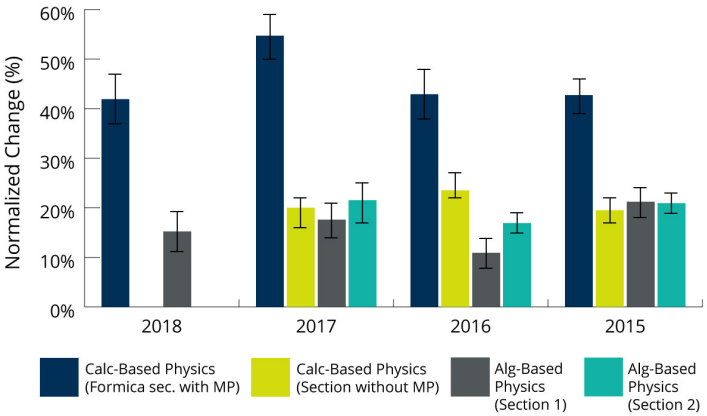

Figure 2. Normalized change on Forced Concept Inventory

What do students have to say about Mastering as a learning tool?

"I would stress doing the homework early and not looking up the solutions online, to do all the work."
—Student, Georgia Southern University

"Do it [Mastering] yourself before you Google answers; the practice really does help!"
—Student, University of Hawaii at Hilo

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