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UTA Reflection

Learning is often thought of as a destination, we reach the end of the semester and move on, but the being a UTA for the math department has shown me that this view of learning is incomplete: learning is a process. Usually when we finish a class we feel that we have learned the material, but I found that learning has this telescoping property that one doesn't experience from taking a class once: learning can grow on itself; no matter how much one has previously understood: there is more to learn. I've been a UTA for the math department twice and each time has brought me a deeper understanding of mathematics. In reality, it may be the case that to achieve a deep understanding of mathematics, teaching and sharing the learning experience with others is the best way.

As a UTA I have helped students with difficult mathematical concepts, but students have likewise helped me explain those concepts in a simpler way, and so I learned to see these ideas more clearly. Being a UTA is a unique opportunity, because it allows one to share what one has learned so far in their journey while also continuing their own learning process. We all benefit from discussion. Over the course of my journey as a UTA I have learned to see concepts in vector calculus and linear algebra from many different perspectives by tutoring students and grading assignments. Sometimes a wrong answer or unconventional problem solution can teach one more than a direct and simple answer. Just as well, I have learned many more correct solutions to problems from students than I knew to look for or think of myself.

I strongly recommend anyone who has taken a math class and wants to share that learning with others to consider being a UTA. Not only can one be helpful, the process of tutoring can be helpful for the tutor.