



In October 2009, Pam Thomas was selected to be a Large Class Faculty Fellow by the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning at UCF. The Fellows were tasked with providing support to teachers of classes with 100 or more students through workshops, consultations and the discovery of new tools. As part of her research, Pam found SAGrader in the summer of 2010.

SAGrader fits right in

“We had looked into multiple other systems,” Pam said about discovering SAGrader, “but this we determined was our best opportunity to assist students to learn and simulate activities that can go on in smaller class sizes. It was also easy to use and cost effective.”

Pam fully integrated SAGrader with her Introductory Biology class in the spring. After the first assignment, the results were intriguing. Asked to construct a response rather than choose from a list of choices, students couldn’t hide what they did and did not understand.

Getting a window into student learning

“When confronted with a blank space,” says Pam, “you can actually see the process that the student goes through and identify exactly where the help is needed.”

For the first time, Pam could see exactly where each student misunderstood: “I have been able to rapidly identify areas in which my students need help prior to testing or the next lecture.”

Pam went on to assign six more SAGrader assignments, covering topics like hypotheses, genetics and chemistry. By manually grading in conjunction with the program, Pam was able to show that SAGrader was over 98% accurate on most of the assignments, and more consistent than TAs grading the same assignments.

Convinced of its grading fidelity, Pam relished the opportunity to offer a better learning experience for each of her students. “I really like being allowed to provide feedback to my students,” Pam tells us. “Without this type of automation I could never provide feedback to 1,200 students in a timely manner.”

Impressive learning benefits

Perhaps most exciting, students in Pam’s class *increased their final test scores by 12.5%* compared with previous semesters. Quite an impressive improvement!

Pam’s advice to instructors considering SAGrader is simple: “You will be amazed at the ways in which the system will allow you to assist your students. I only wish I had found SAGrader 5 years sooner!”