Winter Colloquium Series

To Get the Right Answer

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Abstract:

Students often dive straight into performing calculations or following algorithms when presented with mathematical tasks. For calculus students, this can cause difficulty with differentiation and integration tasks. A possible source of this difficulty is weak structure sense; namely, students rarely attend to the structure of given functions to decide which rules to apply and the order in which to use them. Because Order of Operations determine the structure of a function's rule, I began my investigations with students' meanings for Order of Operations.

In this talk, I share data collected from a semester of undergraduate, introductory calculus to characterize students' meanings for Order of Operations. I discuss possible consequences for those meanings, particularly as they relate to students' performance on differentiation tasks.

Thursday, February 5, 12:05 - 12:50pm in 3-1616