

**Meeting:** 1003, Atlanta, Georgia, MAA CP A1, MAA Session on Getting Students To Discuss and To Write About Mathematics, I

1003-A1-906      **Charlotte Knotts-Zides\*** (knottszideca@wofford.edu), Wofford College, 429 North Church St., Spartanburg, SC 29303. *Understanding Mathematical Proof in a Course for Liberal Arts Majors: Students write about teaching other students a geometric proof of the Pythagorean Theorem.*

In this mathematics course for liberal arts majors, students learn two geometric proofs of the Pythagorean Theorem and are asked to teach the theorem and one of its proofs to two individuals not in the class. Students then write a response paper explaining their understanding of the proof, their reactions to teaching it, the reactions of the individuals to whom it was taught, and how this activity helped them to understand the mathematical concept of proving a theorem. Most students enjoy the exercise and many report an increase in self-confidence as a result of successfully explaining a mathematical idea to another person. One surprising benefit is that the students write about a new-found admiration for mathematicians and others that teach; many of them become aware of the preparation it takes to explain a mathematical idea clearly. (Received September 30, 2004)