

Intervision of a lecture in the course “Geometry and Topology” by Alvaro Pino Gomez

Date: March 3, 13:15 – 15:00.

Observations

This was a lecture in the level 3 bachelor course mentioned above. I attended the entire lecture, sitting on row 4. The lecture was given on a blackboard, with chalk.

Alvaro used the blackboards (in a configuration of 2) efficiently and in an orderly fashion, creating blocks to separate the text units. The lecture was about the universal covering of a “sufficiently nice” topological space constructed in terms of the fundamental groupoid, which has the advantage of incorporating all possible choices of basepoints. I was not too familiar with this subject, and decided to take notes. The pace of the lecture was just right for this. The writing was clear, and legible for all 30 students in the lecture room.

Alvaro carefully avoided to block the area of writing, allowing the students to follow the writing without delay. His attitude was open and enthusiastic. This was clearly appreciated by the students, who were engaged, and asked questions when they had difficulties comprehending what was being said or written. The amount of writing was precisely right, adequately supporting the oral part of the presentation.

Alvaro invited questions, and frequently checked if there were any. He answered the questions adequately.

The material was well organized, with a few references to clips (made by Alvaro) with examples. The presentation was clear, stating the results clearly, providing a well-chosen selection of proofs, with sufficient amount of motivation. The timing was right, resulting in a pleasant pace.

Opinion and suggestions for improvement.

Altogether, this was a very nice lecture, which was clearly helpful for the students and well received by them. The quality of Alvaro's lecturing has substantially improved in comparison with a lecture I attended two years ago. Personally, I enjoyed the lecture very much, and I learned something from it. As always, there is some room for (slight) improvement.

It is better not to interrupt the student before the question is finished – even if you think to understand the question already -- and to repeat the question to make sure you and the other students understand it. Then answer it, and make sure everyone understands, and not just the student who asked.

After an interruption it may sometimes be difficult to keep track of the ‘story’. If this happens, make sure to share this explicitly with the students so that they are not lost. Towards the end the writing on the blackboard stayed neat, but became less legible because of decreased pressure on the piece of chalk, which diminished the contrast of the white chalk relative to the blackboard. Be aware to keep the pressure.

Using colored chalk can be useful, but make sure the colored pictures or text are visible from a distance. E.g., the use of blue chalk is problematic on a green blackboard, due to lack of contrast.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Erik van den Ban".

Erik van den Ban
Utrecht, March 11, 2022