

Tools for enabling developmental feedback and teamwork grading by peer assessment

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Overview of the project

The aim of the project is to develop a streamlined tool for teachers, Peer Assess Pro Version 2.0, that helps students provide both developmental feedback to their peers, and a quantitative rating providing fair grades based on their relative contribution to team work.

The importance of peer assessment and peer feedback in tertiary teaching and learning cannot be overstated. Peer assessment is an essential component of team-based learning (TBL) with students performing peer assessments ideally twice in a semester, once at the mid-point and once at the end of the semester (Michaelson et al., 2011). Peer assessment is not unique to TBL.

According to Levine (2012) "Educators and health professionals have used peer evaluations in a variety of setting to assess interpersonal skills, foster insight, and promote professional behaviour." Research also indicates that peer assessment data can be used effectively in assigning individual grades from a team project (Kaufman et al., 2000). Unfortunately, there are few standardised tools available to educators that provide students with a mechanism to provide structured feedback, then quantify this feedback to determine individual marks from a team based assessment. As such, there is an unmet demand.

This unmet demand became visible when Peer Assess Pro formally launched its website, which provided free access to the Peer Assess Pro Version 1.0 tools that enable the teacher to organise the peer assessment. Since the launch,

there have been over 65 teachers worldwide who have used the Peer Assess Pro system, which was accomplished with minimal promotion. The feedback received has been positive. However, many users have found it difficult to use. Furthermore, most users have suggested practical priorities for improving usability. These 'user interface' limitations are inherent in the Google tools that are used as the basis for its design and implementation.

To ensure widespread adoption, it is imperative that the Peer Assess Pro solution is as user-friendly as possible, which can only occur if the functionality found in the Google tools is improved and replicated within a web application.

Progress to date

Progress to date has been slower than expected primarily due to a delay (~30 days) in the commencement of the web development. We are currently mid-way through the web development process and have been working with a design student and lecturer from Unitec to develop the user interface (UI). The student facing UI is complete and we are 2 weeks away from finalizing the lecturer facing UI. We have also partnered with XorroQ, a LIVE ("real-time") audience response solution designed to make presentations, lectures, conferences and lessons more involving. The partnership will allow for a much more robust solution for Peer Assess Pro as well as access to all of the lecturers who currently use XorroQ in their class rooms.

Next steps

Next steps include completing the web development and then beta testing the new web application with Unitec staff.

Emerging issues, highlights and challenges

No outstanding issues have arisen in the web application development stage