



Tools to help lecturers mark assignments

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About the project

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University Wellington
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Maurice Moore, UCOL



Tertiary Education Commission eCDF scheme

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Aims of the project

- Help lecturers to deal with assignments using e-tools
- Focus on feedback to facilitate student learning
- Find out what e-tools are available, how these are used
- Make recommendations

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Direction from the literature

- A lot of work on assessment
- 580 journals and conference proceedings searched
- Not much on using computers to help with essay-type assignments

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What is the most important factor that influences student learning?

Student motivation

Time on task

Prerequisite experience

The presence and quality of feedback

Hattie, 1999

Tasks students do

Lecturer's enthusiasm

Effective use of technology

High expectations

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'could try harder'

The Times August 24, 2006

“ England’s university teachers are pretty poor at meeting deadlines or explaining difficult concepts.”

“ Only 51 per cent provided prompt feedback to their students last year, and the same percentage were able to clarify things their students did not understand, according to the second National Student Satisfaction Survey, published yesterday.”

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/education/student/news/article617872.ece

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The student view

- Subject specific feedback comes too late
- Problems with feedback: too general, too impersonal, too little information, 40% say handwriting is a problem
- Often assessment criteria are not clear to students (refers especially to 'qualitative' areas where there is no absolute right or wrong?)

Higgins, R., Hartley, P. & Skelton, A. (2002). The conscientious consumer: Reconsidering the role of assessment feedback in student learning. *Studies in Higher Education*, 27, 53-64.

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The student view continued

Students want feedback and want to learn from it

- 97% of students read the feedback
- 82% of students say they pay close attention to feedback (but the question is what that means and if they need better reflective skills)
- Feedback needs to be given asap
- Needs to explain things in a language students understand
- Discussion with students on assessment criteria might help as might peer-feedback

Higgins, R., Hartley, P. & Skelton, A. (2002). The conscientious consumer: Reconsidering the role of assessment feedback in student learning. *Studies in Higher Education*, 27, 53-64.

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Seven principles of good feedback practice

1. Helps clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria)
2. Facilitates the development of self-assessment and reflection in learning
3. Delivers high quality information to students about their learning
4. Encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning
5. Encourages positive motivational beliefs and self esteem
6. Provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance
7. Provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape teaching

Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006)

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Ideal computer marking and management tool

- Electronic student submission of various file types
- A way of providing feedback that is easy to use
- Centralised pre-testing for plagiarism
- A comments bank that is easy to edit and develops during marking
- The support of marking schemes, from simple to sophisticated
- Automatic grade and report computation
- Electronic storage of marked work, feedback, marks
- Easy links to university central systems

Stephens, Sargent, & Brew (2001)

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Survey

90 semi-structured interviews with questions around assignment practise and tool use

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Survey participants

- 40 % campus courses
- 40% distance courses
- 20% campus and distance

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Survey participants

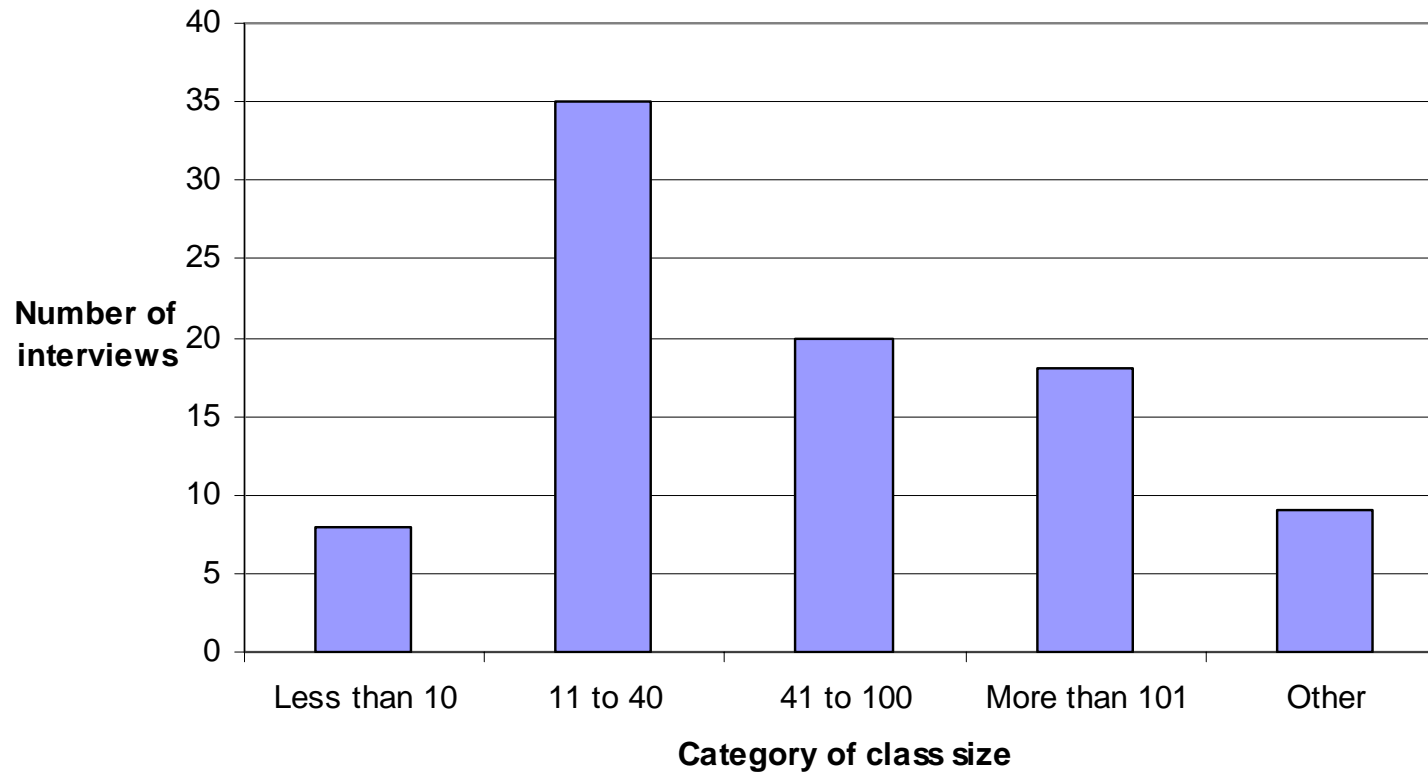
Subject area	Percentage of staff interviewed
Management / Business	29
Information technology	26
Education	11
Humanities, Social Sciences, Arts	10
Health Sciences	9
Sciences	8
Creative Arts	4
Engineering, Food, MFP	0

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Survey participants

Distribution of class size



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Survey results

- Submission of assignments

LMS (Moodle, Blackboard etc) 33%

Specialised Systems 10%

Email 17%

Paper 5%

Paper & Electronic 35%

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Clarify good performance

Yes	51
No	3
Unassigned	34

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Return feedback then marks?

Yes	5
No	69
Unassigned	14

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Return feedback then marks?

- Return individual feedback first, then when all marking complete make general feedback available with marks via the LMS
- General feedback first, then individual feedback and marks

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Opportunities to close the gap

- Draft submission and provide feedback then final submission and marking
- Resubmissions
- Assignments build upon each other, early feedback directly relevant to later assignments

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Survey findings in one sentence

Lecturers who have moved to using e-tools do not want to go back to a paper-based system

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Recommendations in short

- Use your LMS for assignment submission
- Make a marking scheme/rubric available before submission via the LMS
- Facilitate discussion on the assignment via the LMS
- Provide feedback based around marking scheme/rubric personalised for each student and return this via the LMS
- If appropriate write comments directly into the students work (e.g. via Word) and return annotated assignments via LMS
- Make general feedback available via LMS

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Key advantages

- Single access point for you and students
- Less time spent on administration
- Typed feedback
- You retain copies of marked assignments
- Opportunities for closer monitoring of markers and for extracting value for future teaching

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What tools to use?

- Start with the assignment tool of your LMS
- Use general purpose tools creatively to help with assignments
- Check out specialist tools

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How to move forward?

- Start talking to colleagues, exchange ideas and experiences
 - Approach your learning and teaching or e-learning support unit for help
 - Take some old assignments/course data to explore and build confidence
- (... demand better tools for assignment support from institutions, developers and vendors)

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What do lecturers do?

- A wide variety of approaches
 - Discussion around assignments
 - Opportunities to respond to feedback
 - Peer assessment
 - ...
- Use of standard tools
 - LMS, email, Word, Excel, PDF, ...
- Use of specialist tools
 - Assessi, Turnitin/GradeMark, MarkTool, ...

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Assistance available

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Guiding the individual lecturer

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Profiles

- Profile 1: Getting there faster
Working towards Efficiency Improvements
- Profile 2: Getting there better
Working towards Quality Improvements
- Profile 3: Stepping outside the conventional
Moving beyond standard tool use

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Action Plan

Start of Course Planning

Release of Official Course Documentation

Announcement of Assignment Task

Assignment Submission Deadline

Release of Marking Results

End of Course

End of Course Review

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Conclusion

- Assessment by assignments is of highest educational value
- Strong opportunities exist for using e-learning technologies, tools and approaches to facilitate essay-type assessment
- E-learning technologies, used for the appropriate pedagogical reasons, show a high potential for improvements in the assessment area

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The following slides address lecturers at Massey University

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Tools available at Massey

Centrally supported

WebCT with its assignment tool

Turnitin (Contact Malcolm Rees)

Not officially supported but available to anyone at Massey

WebCTConnect and MarkTool

<http://www-ist.massey.ac.nz/marktool>

<http://etools.massey.ac.nz>



Recommendation for Massey

Start with the WebCT assignment tool

Define assignment

Make students submit assignment to WebCT

Return results and feedback via WebCT

- + All assignments in one place, automated 'bookkeeping', central backup
- + Convenient for students
- The tool does not help you with marking
- Returning assignment documents is work intensive

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Recommendation for Massey

Add WebCTConnect

Install on your computer, download assignments

Define marking rubric/schemes and fill out for each student

Manage your markers and group assignments

- + Increases in efficiency for you
- + Easier for you to follow good marking practise
- + Students get their results still in WebCT
- The tool is not officially supported by Massey

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WebCTConnect

Welcome Jun Zhang

File Course Assignment Configuration Help

All Courses

- 159201 Algorithms and Data Structures (159201_0401_PNTH_I)
- 159201 Algorithms and Data Structures (159201_0501_PNTH_E)
- 159201 Algorithms and Data Structures (159201_0501_PNTH_I)
- 159202 Declarative Programming (159202_0402_PNTH_E)
- 159202 Declarative Programming (159202_0502_PNTH_E)
- 159254 Software Engineering A (159254_0402_PNTH_I)
- 159351 Software Engineering B (159351_0501_PNTH_I)
- Eva Heinrich's course (eheinric)**
 - trytest
 - AssignMay
 - Jia assignment
 - AssignmentJune

Eva Heinrich's course (eheinric)

Mr Role: Teacher

Tutor: [Jian He \(Set Email\)](#) [Jia Lu \(Set Email\)](#) [Jun Zhang \(Set Email\)](#)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Student ID ▲	First Name	Last Name
<input type="checkbox"/>	ds_alice	Alice	Baker
<input type="checkbox"/>	ds_allan	Allan	Adams
<input type="checkbox"/>	ds_daniel	Daniel	Weir
<input type="checkbox"/>	ds_david	David	Crick
<input type="checkbox"/>	ds_jason	Jason	Norton
<input type="checkbox"/>	ds_joy	Joy	Lu
<input type="checkbox"/>	ds_judy	Judy	Pike
<input type="checkbox"/>	ds_nola	Nola	Quin
<input type="checkbox"/>	ds_owen	Owen	Perters
<input type="checkbox"/>	ds_will	Will	York

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WebCTConnect

Owen Perters's assignment marked by Jun Zhang- trytest, Eva Heinrich's course

All Group Members

Student ID	Student Name	Submission Date	Downloaded Files
ds_owen	Owen Perters	28 Jun 2005, Tue, 18:36	View
ds_david	David Crick		

Mark and Comment

Item	Comment	Final Mark
Question one: Item one; Item two.	Some comments	2/5
Question two: Item one; Item two.	Some comments	5/5
Late submission		-1
Total mark	You need to be more careful with the following concepts: 1. ... 2. ...	6/10

Detail of the marking criterion

This assignment will contribute 10% to the final mark of this course.

Context Menu:

- Cut (Ctrl-X)
- Copy (Ctrl-C)
- Paste** (Ctrl-V)
- Delete (Ctrl-D)
- Select All (Ctrl-A)
- Frequent Comments
- Add To Frequent Comments

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Recommendation for Massey

Add MarkTool if you make comments directly in the student assignments

Install on your computer, use in conjunction with WebCTConnect

Add comments associated with marking rubric/scheme directly into student assignments

- + Helps you to give detailed comments directly in the assignments linked to marking rubric/scheme
- The tool is not officially supported by Massey

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MarkTool

Proposal

The GradeKeeper system requested by Knowledge City University is required to meet legal regulations being proposed by the Government. It is desired that it be completed by the December 2005/January 2006 time period. This is possible given a development group that begins in June 2005 with five staff members, assuming the usual two semester trial is not required.

With five staff members, the GradeKeeper system (including testing) will be completed in 2.6 calendar months. At an average salary of \$60,000 per year, this will cost approximately \$129,000. This figure takes into account all other costs involved with the development, management, administration, space, equipment and insurance. In terms of additional requirements, GradeKeeper development should not require anything further.

Given this, the system would in fact be ready by approximately September 2005 (based on the average estimates provided earlier), leaving approximately three months to perform further impact testing on a university-wide scale. This should be more than adequate to ensure the system meets all expectations, remembering that there is also approximately 40% of the development time dedicated to testing. This means around 1 month is dedicated to testing within the development lifecycle.

We have identified five high priority risks, and for each outlined our methods to reactively minimise their impact. It is preferred that these risks be proactively mitigated, as this will help keep the development on schedule. We have also identified nine low priority risks, which will also be actively monitored by members of the development team. Both the high and low priority risks and our methods to minimise them are highlighted in the table on the previous two pages.

10/07/2007 [X]
9:42:22 a.m.

Why wouldn't it require that?

It will be a complex system, integrated with various other systems, used by a diverse user group, that begins in June 2005. A two semester trial is not required.

10/07/2007 [X]

It will once in production; e.g., server/data storage capacity; equipment for digitising

10/07/2007 [X]

Executives haven't necessarily got time to read your full report; you should highlight the major risks here. We have also identified nine low priority risks, which will also be actively monitored by members of the development team. Both the high and low priority risks and our methods to minimise them are highlighted in the table on the previous two pages.



MarkTool

All Comments

Criterion	Comment
Coverage	good coverage
	Need to split these, e.g., documents, grades, paper info, ..
	Any other information that needs to be displayed?
	not enough, not detailed enough; what about, e.g., managing access right, storing assessment information, storing assessment docuemnts, ...
Procedures	This is not detailed enough
	Need to add requesting of reports
	This is about all input users have to make; missing, e.g, user identification data
	These are screens not sets of data/procedures; the system will need many more
	e.g. not just one simple screen:

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Recommendation for Massey

If you think WebCTConnect and/or MarkTool would be useful

Add your voice to requesting support/training courses from Massey

Contact

Gordon Suddaby (Director TDU) and/or

Mark Brown (Director Distance Education)

... or who else you think has influence

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