**Ben Jewell**

**Introduction**

I finished my interviews this week. And this report is designed to summarize what I found out. I couldn't think of many people to ask right away so I started out with a post on Reddit here: <https://www.reddit.com/r/Teachers/comments/t5ybkt/gradebook_system_development_questions_feedback/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=web2x&context=3>

it's on a subreddit that I found for teachers. I didn't get to interview anyone but someone did give me feedback. They said they used four different systems and they all had everything they needed both in. they said the issue is most of the useful components are sold as add ONS in many schools don't want to pay for addons that would make life so much easier, such as the feature that emails parents whenever a teacher marks an assignment as missing. this person made it sound like they would manually be marking assignments as missing. I hate it when its companies charge for extra features that are simple to implement and basically only require flipping a software switch to enable.

**Interview 1**

Moving on to my actual interviews, I started by interviewing a friend that it's for milyar with this project and has helped me with it a couple times. This person is no longer in school but they were a Penn State student. the gradebook system was proprietary and called eLion or LionPath (they were transitioning). the system did not have a calendar feature but he said he would probably use it if it was available. He mostly kept track of stuff on paper. he said the feature of students being able to flag assignments in the gradebook That may have an issue is useful, but he probably wouldn't use that as much as the calendar.

He had a routine of checking grades almost every day and would read teacher comments. The only paper grades ever received were on tests and assignments that were handed back during class. this system had a phone app but he doesn't remember getting notifications from it. He said tax, emails, and push notifications are all useful options. when I mentioned an option to filter based on only bad grades, etc., he said that would be nice to have, but not entirely necessary. sending alerts for poor grades makes more sense than sending alerts for big assignments like exams. I asked whether assignments recently created or upcoming assignments would be better on the dashboard and he would prefer upcoming assignments, but a recently graded would be nice to have as well.

He said LMS integration is really important so quizzes can be taken through the system and graded automatically. He said categories is also very important. Bolton quiz grading and a messaging system and other things like go beyond just grades would be nice. He said navigation was easy overall but Clinton ID numbers in the table was not intuitive. Visual appeal looks fine but some parts have inconsistencies.

**Interview 2**

My second interview was with my music appreciation professor Alexandra Yargeau. As far as gradebook experience goes, she uses Google Sheets in addition to Schoology. She said the issue with Schoology is that it requires everything to be put in as an assignment. It's time consuming and gets cluttered pudding in assignment and for attendance and participation every day so she keeps track on the spreadsheet and updates Schoology with that great a couple times per semester. She does not use a paper gradebook. She said Schoology shows the student roster on the left column and all of the assignments by column. so I think we should have a table view to input all the student grades at once instead of having to click the pencil icon for each student. maybe the pencil icon could just be for the whole page and “unlock” everything into text boxes?

She said having a test feature word grade are automatically input is helpful. Schoology grades multiple choice and short answer on its own but anything open ended his graded manually. When I asked if she puts in comments for students, she said she used to do it always, but now she just does it if they miss points or something particularly good or she wants them to think about IT more. About a third get comments total. She said she would prefer assignments to be marked missing automatically.

When I asked about the calendar, she said she might utilize it if it was available. She usually plans for the week of class and not just that day on the calendar, so probably not needed.

When I talked about LMS intergration, she said in addition to having hey great poisons it would also be nice to have students turn in assignments there. Maybe we could have a file upload option where students can submit small files such as papers. She said getting assignments turned in by email is overwhelming with many students.

She said having categories for different types of assignments would be great. It helps her balance the workload a little bit. First place they typically navigate to is course materials. Navigates to gradebook 2nd to check for outstanding assignments, like once a week. She said students being able to flag grades would be a nice feature.

An advantage of having the assignments submitted in one place is she can grade the same assignment at different times, as students turn them in, and it will pull together the average class grade.

Features that she doesn't care about and use are the markup feature for papers that allows turn in assignments to be highlighted and annotated. But that's probably because this is not an English class or anything. Used rubric function last semester, which is a nice to have. Only uses it for final typically.

She said on the table that shows student grades for a course for teachers, she would love if we could integrate the letter grade into where it shows the percentage, under total grade. But she says some schools like Point Park don't have a school add system so we would have to give the teachers a setting to adjust for their class specifically what grade is an A, B, C, D, and F. She said this was very important to her.

I asked if it was too colorful in the table and she said I like that. but it might be better to emphasize failing students more so than successful ones. Maybe we can heat the transparency a little for that so the other colors are not as bright. “I like the colors personally”

She likes how it shows how many students have been graded for each assignment. maybe we can do color coding on this page too?

She said Schoology has a thing on the right of the screen that shows the total number of outstanding assignments.

Schoology shows student and the number grade and all the assignments across by column. I asked if having the student IDs was useful and she said she just uses the name but some people like having the IDs. Should be sorted by last name.

She said doing the dot plot might not be necessary but it would be interesting to see it because it makes it easy to see which assignments are too hard and too easy.

Main things is that need added in conclusion: letter grade and turning it in through there.

**Interview 3**

My final interview was with my managerial accounting professor Jayne Olshanski. She asked not to have the interview recorded so I don't have as many notes. She uses Schoology exclusively with no paper gradebook system. She said pre generated emails regarding a student's grades would probably not be very helpful, especially if they couldn't be filtered. She would only show very low grades and stuff.

When I asked if she uses a gradebook to gather statistics, she said definitely. even in McGraw Hill Connect, which is the system provided by the publisher of our textbook, that provides interactive online lessons and quizzes. She said that system shows some statistics. When I asked if she leaves comments for student grades, she said not for this class because most of the assignments go through Connect, but definitely for other classes. the big issue to her is that students can't come back and reply to the comments to ask questions or get further clarification.

She said she would prefer the assignments being marked as missing automatically, but she would need the option to override that for a student. She said there is no calendar feature in Schoology but it would probably be useful. She said when she logs into the gradebook system she starts with advanced classes and people graduating soon and then works her way down. She wants the system to have an easy way for a student to see how far of the way through the course they are in terms of points available so far. students often ask what they can do or how much time they have to recover from a bad grade as the end of the semester approaches. For example, if a 12-week semester had four weeks remaining, it would be 67% complete calendar wise, but if there is a big project at the end maybe only 40% of the points are graded so far so the course would show ask 40% complete. Right now she goes through the gradebook and makes little paper notecards for students showing a table of the points so far.

This professor does not care about LMS integration as much because she does paper quizzes, not online. She said she thinks our site is appealing and easy to navigate because it doesn't have too much fancy stuff that's not needed. she said she would like the teacher dashboard to show on each tile the number of students in the class and how many outstanding grades she needs to put in.

I'm thinking she would want a full communication system. So students can reply to comments on the assignments, and they would use the same system to flag grading errors, and there would maybe be a button to send the student an email as well. She said she may look into monitored proctoring systems as well.