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COMP4601 lab 10

Labs were generally straightforward, with a guaranteed 5/5 if the rubric was followed diligently. So far I have no A1 grade so I can't speak to assignment marks. The workload was heavier in the first half of the course, whereas the latter half focused solely on algorithms, making it comparatively easier without the bulk of full website implementations. Having correct answers to compare against was very helpful.

One of my group members was a proficient web developer who managed the technical setup, allowing me to concentrate on modifying existing code to implement and enhance functionalities. However my other partner failed to make a significant contribution since he consistently struggled to complete labs (i had to fix his issues for him many times) and he wouldn't even start them punctually so my intervention would have to be last-minute to let him do anything at all. Although group members receive the same grade, individual contributions could be incentivized by adjusting difficulty based on group size to incentivize kicking out partners who don't pull their weight.

Having all course material available from the start would be beneficial, enabling students to work ahead and potentially complete the entire course in a shorter time frame. I never bothered to watch lecture videos since everything I needed was placed conveniently in the slides. While supplemental content was appreciated, I never used it since I had to prioritize other courses.

Regarding content, the separation of labs 1 and 2 from 3/4/5/A1 necessitated setting up a second website. Although this approach allowed for a more refined second attempt, integrating these labs could provide additional time for other topics. The web crawling component presented challenges due to the library's limitations in handling asynchronous database operations, so in the future it may be beneficial to recommend an asynchronous-friendly crawler. Recommender systems labs were relatively easy, so I suggest merging lab 6 and 7, as well as 8 and 9, to allow for additional content in the last 3 labs.

As an aside, COMP2406 encompasses an extensive range of content, including HTML, CSS, JS, PUG, HTTP/REST, MONGO, and MONGOOSE within a single course. I suggest extending the course duration to a full year or splitting it into two separate courses, one focusing on frontend and the other on backend development. I felt overwhelmed during that course, and others I spoke to had similar feelings. I think people would enjoy web dev a lot more if they had time to really learn it fully, and given how large the web dev job market is I think allowing for more than a single course to learn it would make sense.

In general I very much enjoyed the course, so thank you for teaching it!

-Alexander Breeze