***Abstract:***

# Introduction

This project will be a continuation of earlier rateMyLab work by the School of Computing: it would allow for further development of an app for Android tablets that would be placed in student labs/lecture theatres to gather from students: (1) end-of-class ratings; (2) text comments; (3) (possibly) attendance information.

The project will also provide a system which will allow for analysis of the feedback data (e.g. for particular lecturers, modules, etc.), which will be stored in a server-side database. The system will be accessible to all lecturers for their relevant classes and modules.

Throughout this project, the end user is to be the focal point. Various user-centred design techniques and strategies will be used, including rapid prototyping and user profiling. User testing will be thorough, with the app being tested in the end user environment (i.e. in a lab/lecture) in order to ensure that feedback is as relevant as possible.

# Background

Student feedback is an important tool that benefits all contributors to a lecture or lab class: (i) giving students a mechanism to report their assessment of the class in question and thereby influence related classes and (ii) helping lecturers to identify and tackle issues experienced by their students and thereby subsequently develop the curriculum accordingly (Johnson, 2009).

There is an already existing app (rateMyLab), developed by the School of Computing, which aimed to provide a mechanism for obtaining such feedback, but it needed improvement – although it was simple and quick to use, the feedback it obtained was seriously lacking in detail (it allowed users to specify whether a lab was good, bad or average – without specifying *why*). This problem is what we aim to solve with this new phase of development. The aim is to provide a mechanism which allows for richer feedback, whilst maintaining the simplicity and accessibility of the original rateMyLab app.

### Previous Work

On a more global scale, there has been similar work done in the form of Classroom Communication Systems (CCS). These systems have evolved, from being based on multiple-choice remote controls and then PDAs, to the more modern medium of Tablet PCs with wireless connectivity, the idea being that every student in a lab/lecture has one of these devices, and they are all connected through the medium of the CCS. These systems are very useful for bringing classes together in a collaborative effort, giving the mechanism for feedback and allowing for live in-class polling, and demonstration of both good and bad examples and scenarios. Group work is also made much easier as student do not have to physically move around to work together. (Theys, Lawless, & George, 2005)

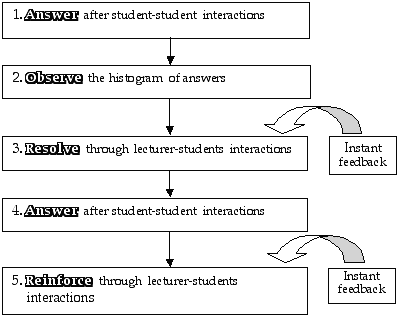


Figure 1: CCS learning cycle (Sharma, Khachan, Chan, & O'Byrne, 2005)

The main difference between rateMyClass and the traditional CCS is that, while CCS’s are more geared towards live feedback and dynamic lecture content (with increased student engagement the priority) (Dufresne, Gerace, Leonard, Mestre, & Wenk, 1996, p. 2), rateMyClass is a more static, narrowly-focused mechanism, with feedback being given only after the conclusion of classes; the main rationale being that lecturers can gain valuable insight which allows them to make improvements to these classes. The rateMyClass app is primarily for the benefit of lecturers, unlike the CCS.

Another similar piece of work involves the use of augmented reality (AR) systems (e.g. Google Glass) to provide lecturers with live feedback from students in a seamless fashion, through the use of various visualisations.

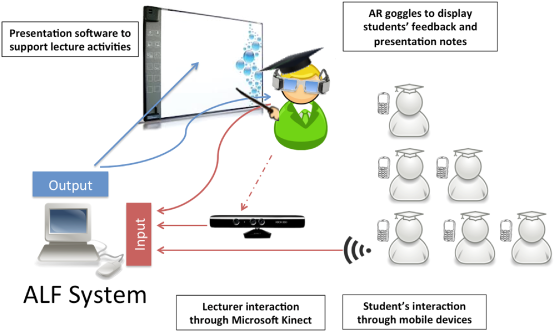


Figure 2: Architecture of the proposed ALF system (Zarraonandia, Aedo, Díaz, & Montero, 2013)

The proposed benefits of such a system would include the fact that such a system would avoid breaking the ‘flow’ of lectures, which often occurs when lecturers have to directly communicate with and ask questions of students, and that it encourages more students to give feedback by keeping their anonymity, removing the need for them to speak up in class (Zarraonandia, Aedo, Díaz, & Montero, 2013).

Additionally, there has been development of a smart phone app (see *Figure 3*) which allows student to check in to class and leave feedback (Foth, Fitz-Walter, Ti, Russell-Bennett, & Kuhn, 2012).

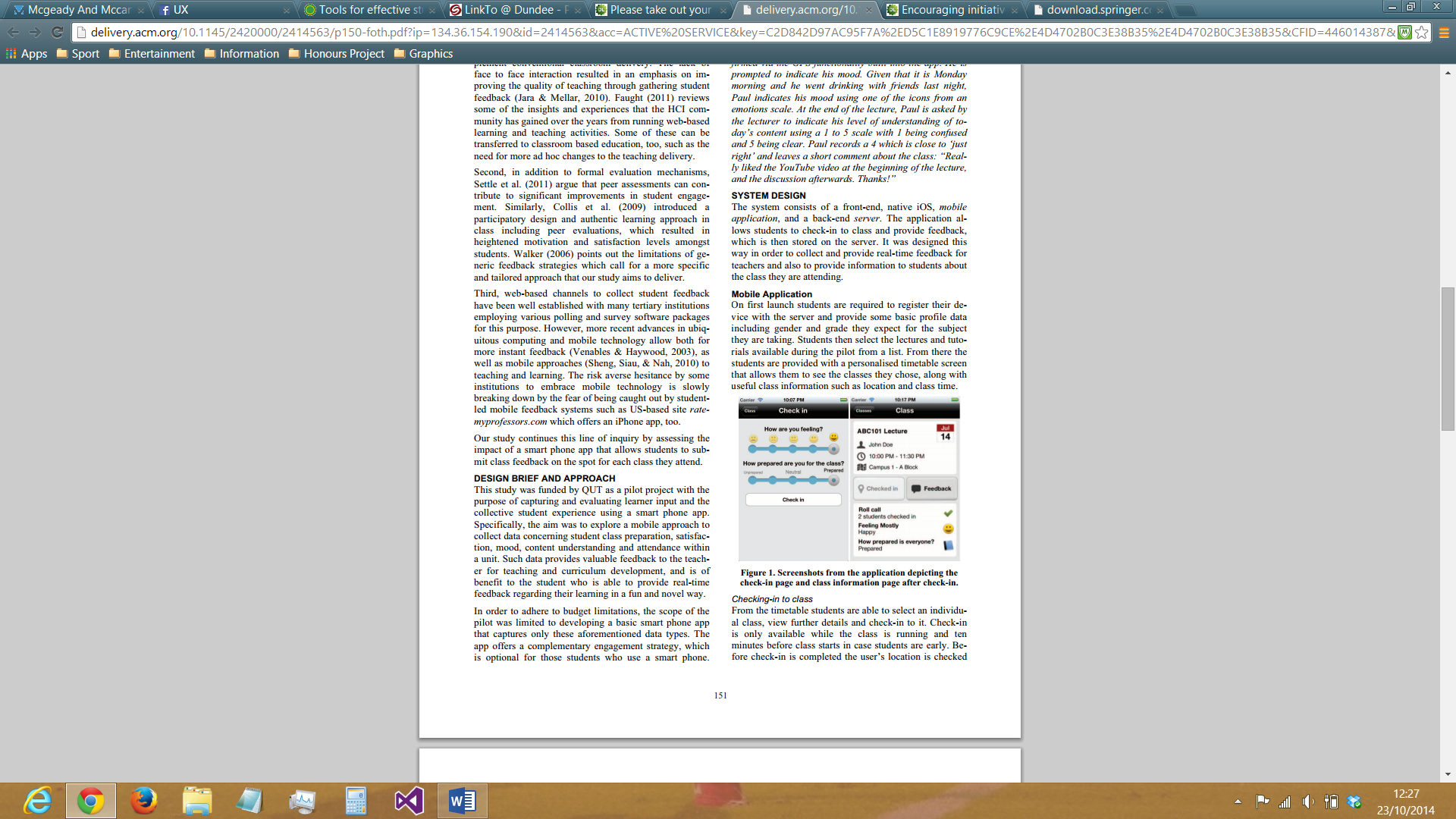


Figure 3: Screenshots from the app (Foth, Fitz-Walter, Ti, Russell-Bennett, & Kuhn, 2012)

This app provides the following functionality:

* Checking-in to class
  + Students are able to select a class from a list of classes and ‘check-in’ to it. This can only be done during the class (and 10 minutes before it starts). GPS is used to check that students are actually physically present at the class. Students can provide initial feedback as to ‘how they are feeling’ (ranging from bad to very unhappy (smiley) to very happy (smiley)) and ‘how prepared they are for class’ (ranging from ‘Unprepared’ to ‘Prepared’)
* Revealing feedback from other students
  + As soon as students ‘check-in’, they can view certain collective items of information about the other students who have also done so. For example, the total number of students who are checked in, and the average levels of happiness and preparedness of the class.
* Providing class feedback
  + Final class feedback can be given by student in the form of two 5-point Likert scales, one rating the class in general and the other rating how well they understood the information given in the class. Students are sent reminders 10 minutes before the class ends in order to make sure none of them forgets to give feedback

As regards tablet-based systems which more closely mirror the functionality, architecture and rationale of rateMyClass, there are no doubt many real-world examples, but, in terms of documented commercial solutions, it appears there are no systems which are really comparable.\*

\*Searches were made across Google Scholar, Dundee University Library and ACM Digital Library

# Specification

The following user stories were identified and developed after initial user interactions and discussions (*see Appendix A for full detail*):

As a student I want to…

* Have all the app’s functionality (available to student) on a single page/screen so that I do not have to waste time navigating through multiple pages/screens
* Have the selectable 1-10 rating scale displayed as a sequence of cells, with cell colour moving from red (1) to green (10) so that I can easily and quickly give ratings without too much thinking involved
* Be able to give feedback on how interesting the lab/lecture was (and why) so that lecturers can use this knowledge to make their classes more interesting
* Be able to give feedback on how innovative the lab/lecture was (and why) so that lecturers can use this knowledge to make their classes more innovative
* Be able to give feedback on how informative the lab/lecture was (and why) so that lecturers can use this knowledge to make their classes more informative
* Be able to give feedback on how interactive the lab/lecture was (and why) so that lecturers can use this knowledge to make their classes more interactive
* Be able to give feedback on how intelligible the lab/lecture was (and why) so that lecturers can use this knowledge to make their classes more intelligible

As a lecturer/member of staff I want to…

* Receive feedback on a lab/lecture across 5 different areas/factors so that I can gain more detailed information about the quality of my classes
* Receive a rating out of 10 for each of these areas/factors so that I can get even more detailed information about the specific aspects of my classes
* Give students the option to select why a particular area/factor was bad or good (from a list of predefined statements) so that I can get more rich feedback, while students will not have to spend time writing out comments in their own words (and will thus be more inclined to give feedback using the app)
* Have the feedback stored in a central database so that multiple users can access data at once, and all feedback is stored and accessed in the same place
* Have a front end for the central database that allows for analytics so that I can access the data and make sense of it, seeing the bigger picture, along with any trends, and adjust my labs/lectures accordingly
* To be able to view the feedback(s) for my individual labs/lectures so that I can determine their quality and detect specific causes for why a certain class may have gone wrong on a certain day
* Receive a summary of feedback for each lab/lecture that I conduct by email so that I can ascertain how well I have done

As a dean I want to…

* To be able to view the feedback for all labs/lectures handled by a particular lecturer so that I can determine if individual lecturers are doing a good job or not

# Design

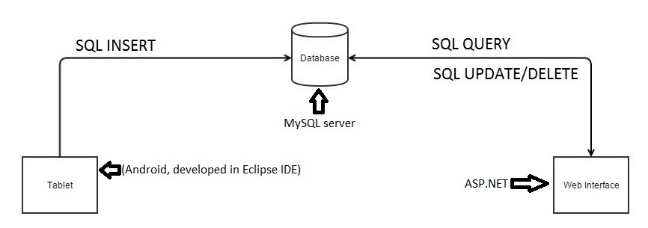


Figure 4: Architecture of the rateMyClass system

Before development of the web interface began, a decision had to made as regards which technology would be used to implement it. After much research and rumination, the dilemma became whether to use traditional ASP.NET or a more challenging, unfamiliar language in Ruby on Rails. On the one hand, ASP.NET would be much easier to implement, with there being much experience of using this previously (unlike Ruby on Rails); but, once the steep learning curve had been overcome, by all accounts Ruby on Rails would actually allow for quicker and more automated generation of a web interface to the database.

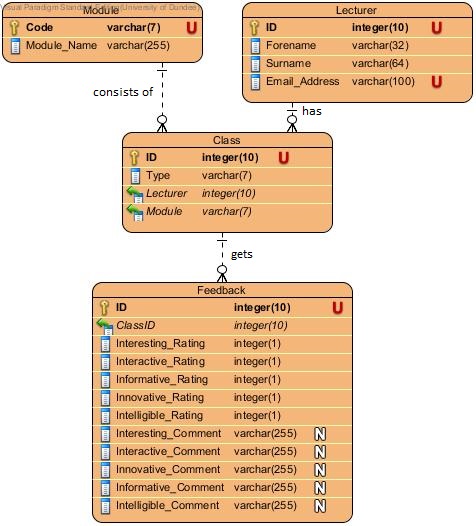


Figure 5: Entity-Relationship Model of the rateMyClass database

# Implementation and Testing

# Evaluation

### 6.1

### 6.2

Etc

# Summary and Conclusions

# Acknowledgements

# References

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# Appendices