Questions for Professors

Thanks so much for agreeing to chat with us.

We'll first start off with some general questions and then begin to dive deeper into our topic of feedback. All of what we discuss today will not be shared with anyone but internally in our four-person team. If at anytime you'd like to pass on a question or come back later to it, we're happy to do so. Before we start, do you have any questions?

Great let's begin!

First we'll ask some questions about your background in teaching.

- Name
  - David Steier
- Date
  - 2/19
- Would you mind telling me how long you've been teaching?
  - In person - taught for a little while when at faculty at CMU 30 years ago. Taught AI and software engineering. Algorfirthms and stuff, but only for a couple of semesters.
  - Spent a lot of time consulting in professional services firms.
  - Some teaching in employment training classes.
  - Started teaching in person again 6 years ago @ CMU - evneing course. 3 hour long class.
  - Teaching 10 semesters fully online of 210
  - Other teaching of classes at CMU since two years ago has been combo of online and offline, through CMU.
- Do you now consider teaching your primary profession?
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- How many different institutions and/or departments have you taught at?
  - CMU & Cal
- What topics have you taught and do you currently teach?
  - Capstone, AI/Algorithms, etc.
- What is your typical size of class you teach?
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Cewrtain things go better online - but it is very different. You don't have the energy of an inperson class (remnded of this the last couple of days).

Some of the opennness and feedback might be whether you're online or in person.

Easeier to give honest open feedback if you've been in the same room.

Difference in volume in person/vnot?

Yes, more in-person - after class, can come over and hang out, and more people come and spend time. Versus in office hours at Cal, people just sign off.

Could be a function of the time of day.

I offer office hours for Online through Zoom, and just send me a note from 10-6 on friday. Many more peopel will take the chance in person than online. Which makes the bond easier to offer open feedback.

Most of current teaching is graduate, at CMU is teaching with undergrads, taught intor programming, aglorithmic design, and not a huge difference, teaching sytsle wise, but the bigger difference was people faced more crises in the undergraduate level. I don't know what I'm doing, am I cut out for CS. Don't have nearly as much with people who are paying for their graduate degree.

Mostly want help with prep for interview with job interivews. How do I get a DS job. What does your careeer look like? Undergrads don't ask that as much.

Get questions always in person. Whereas I hardly get any questions how did you get a job at PwC delloitte, vitrtually. Veruss those peopel who are in the bay area and meet me in person.

Feedback has to be specific (not just assignments are too hard, or you never call on me in class. I dont' want to be called on in class). It has to be specific. It can't be unique - if 99% of stuff that people are happy with, won't change hte entire class if it meets most needs, but will tyr to customize things. Need to identify how **common** this issue. Not how intesne it is.

I like to have raw feedback - want to see everyone's comments, particularly the touchy stuff and the distribution. If I'm getting numerical feedback, I want to see the histogram. I don't want to see summary statistics, I want to see verything.

The texutal comments, the nuances are very improtant to me. There's not so much to read, if I only get it twice a seemstesr that I can't come with the information overload. It's not like an overlaod of comments. If we have to say,70% response rate, and 15 or 16 people in the class, it's not much to read. You can see if people have an agenda, or don't have properly set expectations. Need to read the comments to figure things out. Hard to figure out how to summarize.

If we could giv eyou your perfect feedback dashboard: what would it be on it?
It would be feedback, but what I need it is over time. So I've taught 10 semeters, are there thesme that are appearing over and over, or are they appering less over time.

In Beginning, the lack of feedback or late feedback, now that we've provided earlier feedback, I want to se somehwere in my dashboard, that the complaint or lack of feedback has gone down.

Theme stream - looks like a stream. Proportion of comments/news articles that are in htis stream that are going lareger and smaller ove rtime. You can see toipcs over time. It's a stacked line chart for textual data.

The honesty of people's feedback - there was a point where it was asserted that people weren't as honest in their feedback because they're too shy or too sensitive for potential for retailiation.

Not a consideration for retailation for feedback that we don't see until after the class is over. But even in the interim feedback (midterm) I don't get the sense that people are holding back. Maybe they are, but would validate your point, but I don't see it. People are not afraid to share some pretty severe critcisms. They are still anynomous. People say I don't understand why we're beign assinged Async because we don't discuss it in class. We respoinsd to it in different ways, but they're pretty explicit. I've never been tempted to retailate. And we say up front that if people put int he good effort, they're going to get a-, the class participation that' thte difrerent from An A- and a B+. To get a B or lower, you need pretty objective measures to trace back.

People are not afraid to push back on grades so not afraid. Even had people threaten to file a complaint. Co-instricturos help, because you can lelve-check.

Retailation is a pretty major accusation - I just don't see it happening.

Thank you! Now we'll move into our focus of what we're investigating, which is student feedback and satisfaction regarding the courses you have taught and are teaching.

- In your own words, could you tell us what your preferred way of receiving feedback from students is? Whether it's pedagogical, content, style, or otherwise?
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- In your experience, how has student feedback been collected and disseminated to you?
    - Spend a fair ammount of time we dicuss feedback, partgicualrly with co-instructors. If feedback is strong in something like (Should be in campus more), will then bring it up to the Dean or Associate Dean to see what we can do it.
    - Have used it to make very specific changes. You have us a homework assignment, but no idea how will be graded!
      - Not a farmliar comment from when I took or taught classes a few decades ago.
      - Now students want more explciit rubrics.
    - Verbal comments - open ended feedback more seriously than numbers. Numerical feedback versus number
      - Numerical is too subjective and inconsistent to take a lot of action on.

- Rating from a 1-7 or 1-10 scale. What hapepns is that what gets reported is the average, and as Data Sciences are that means can be deceptive.
- Would rather have a distribution/
- Sample bias - people are either really happy or really unhappy.
  - Are you able to see your feedback broken down by:
    - Mid- versus end-of-term?
      - Numerical feedback v. Open ended feedback
        - If there were somethign I'm doing that doesn't rub them the right way, Iw ant to hear it as early as possible but be very specific.
          - Too long to grade homeworks and give us feedback.
          - First few semetsers we were doing it, didn't have feedback until presentation 1.
          - Week 6 or week 7 out of 14 is a long time to go before giving specific feedback to them.
          - Now give feedback on people's proposals if they were selected or not, more early on.
            - And it makes a differenc.e
        - I don't want numbers - I don't want to track am I getting enough votes, polls on a continuous basis, but I do want to know if something is wrong or if something is really right.
          - I really like case studies. Some peopel don't care thorugh.
    - Feedback by type (course content, homework, teaching style, technology)
      - I welcome every feedback is a gift. Whatever it's on.
        - There are very few topics where university policy says you can't analyize that data. But we would prefer to hear all feedback no matter what it is from anyone at any point.
    - Level of aggregation? (Course, section, individual)
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  - How much do you feel the current feedback you receive is informational versus actionable?
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    - If not actionable, how do you make it actionable?
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  - How would you change this process, if you could?
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- Think about your last complete class.
  - Throughout the term, at what frequency do you receive feedback from students (both formal and informal).

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  - Do you feel like you'd have liked more frequent feedback, less frequent feedback, or was it a good pace?
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      - What is the approximate split (50/50? 70/30?) between anonymous feedback and direct feedback?
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  - After that course's midpoint and after the course conclusion, how soon do you get the feedback from the administration?
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- To your best ability, try to recall the specific feedback you received from this past complete term.
  - Generally, what kind of information did you receive?
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      - Positive, negative, both, etc.
  - Was this typical of other end-of-term feedback you've previously received?
    -
- Switching gears, how do you gauge how students are generally feeling about the class?
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  - Do you wish you knew about this more frequently? Less Frequently? I.e. more data points, fewer data points?
    -
- Think about a time when you were able to make a change to the course that resulted from some student feedback. Could you tell me what the feedback was and what you did?
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- If you had a magic wand and could wave it and change the way feedback structure is implemented in MIDS, what would you would you want to be done differently?
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Do you have anything else to add?
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Thank you very much for your time! We really appreciate your help.

How do you get feedback from students today? (surveys, in person)
- What is the approximate split (50/50? 70/30?) between anonymous feedback and direct feedback?
- What is your preferred method to receive feedback?
- What kind of information do you usually get from this kind of feedback?
- Do you get the raw feedback and analyze/pull insights out, or does it come to you already synthesized?
- How do you turn this into feedback actions to take?
- How long does this take you?

If you could change the way you receive feedback, how would you?
- More direct feedback?
- Able to see who said what?
- More often?
- Separate feedback by type (course content, homework, teaching style?)
- Level of feedback? (Course, section, individual)

How do you generally gauge how students are generally feeling about the class?
- Do you care about this as the semester progresses?
- Is this even something that is helpful?

Tell me about a time when you were able to make a change to the course that….