

FEEDBACK PORTAL

(DBMS Project 2016-17 under Dr. R. Chowdary C)

Motivation:

At the end of the semester students provide a feedback on the learning experiences that they had that semester. This feedback is helpful to the concerned Professors in improving their teaching methodology and pedagogy, thereby enhancing the student's learning experience.

To capture the feedbacks of all the students of the institute about their respective courses would require a large scalable structure. A suitable solution to this problem of gathering feedbacks from such a large number of students and courses could be a feedback portal. This feedback portal would be in the form of a web application for the use by authorized users only. ie. A student would be able to provide feedback only for those courses which they studied. Further a student should be able to provide their feedback only once, so as to give equal weight to each of the student's opinion.

The feedback would provide an in-depth evaluation involving a multi-dimensional student evaluation questionnaire. Such a portal should include questions not only about how the contents of the course were and the way the teacher taught but also on the overall experience of the students undergoing the course.

The portal would consist of primarily two parts. One part concerns getting the feedback from the student via the evaluation questionnaire. The second part is projecting that data to the concerned Professor and the administrators so that they may see what opinion students have about their course and their teaching methods.

One of the major drawback of the current feedback portal is that all the fields are given a rating from excellent to poor. Practically, students find it quite difficult to give a rating based on this and such a big rating doesn't considerably give any more information. So this feedback portal would contain only three ratings: Very Good | Fair | Poor.

Further answer to every question cannot be captured by just these three values, so instead there will be different choices tailored to each individual question when the above three values do not suffice. Further having too many fields can also become tiresome for the students, so the number of areas should be chosen carefully.

Confidentiality:

An important requirement of such a portal is that the privacy of the students should be protected. ie. it should not be possible to trace back the responses back to the student's identity. With this privacy guaranteed the students would be able to give accurate feedback and express what they truly felt during the course.

Requirements of Students:

Following are some requirements, from the students to be included in the feedback questionnaire: things which they give some importance to :

- x Whether the teacher uses power point presentation or chalk and blackboard, and what the students would have preferred
- x In what time teacher does the teacher corrects the exam copies and shows them to the students
- x How was the checking of the question papers
- x Time taken to respond to emails and willingness and availability of the teacher to meet the students after class

- x Quality of the tutorials and the TAs with respect to questions in the tutorial and regularity of holding tutorials
- x Regularity of the teacher in coming to the class
- x How interactive is the teacher in the class
- x Was the class interesting, was the teacher able to capture the attention of the class
- x How much time of the class was actually spent in teaching material relevant to the course
- x How strict and fair is the grading policy
- x Coherence of the course
- x How challenging was the course and what was the take home from the course
- x Was there any lab for courses having practical components and how relevant and well organized were the labs
- x Legibility of teacher's handwriting or quality of the power point presentations used, and audibility
- x Were the students able to appreciate the importance of the course and see the contents of the course in action in at least one real life scenario
- x What kind of questions were asked on the tests, simple plug and chug or questions that required some true application of things learnt earlier
- x How relevant were the questions on the tests to the contents taught in the class
- x Was the class of adequate length
- x Was the prescribed reading material of the course readily available and accessible to the students
- x Students should also be provided with an opportunity to leave personalized comments

These requirements can then be solved by putting up a suitable questionnaire to be filled by the students. Each student would be authorized to give feedback of the courses they undertook. They can be authenticated using a unique ID issued to each student and a password only known to the respective student. This data will then be stored.

Requirements of the Professors:

While reviewing the feedback given to a Professor, they should be able to find out the batch of students and the course about which the feedback was submitted. Further every student is different, what a certain group of students find easy might be daunting for another group of students. This thing can be hoped to be captured by providing a mechanism for the Professors to know the responses of the students, grouped by the grades the students later achieve. For example, if the student gave a very good feedback about classes and still achieved poor grades, that would be a matter of concern, and this should be highlighted to the Professor.

So a feature should be added to group the feedback by the grades obtained by students later. Grades are obtained after feedback is filled. So feedback should not become explicitly a function of the grades a student achieves.

The Professors should also be able to group the results according to the different areas of the questionnaire, for eg.: grouping should be possible by questions pertaining to courses, questions related to presentation skills of the teacher, etc.

Summary:

The feedback portal would record students' feedback via an online questionnaire, store it and then display it at a later stage in an aggregated form grouped by different sections and courses.

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