

Gradebook Functional Specifications

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7 April 2002

Abstract

This gradebook software is an open source project initiated on the SchoolForge¹ and SEUL/Edu² mailing lists. The primary goals of this project are to create a gradebook system that (1) is easy to use, (2) provides internationalized interfaces, and (3) runs on a large variety of platforms.

1 Personas (Cast of Characters)

This software is written with the following types of users in mind: teachers, students and parents.³

1.1 Teachers

Teachers are our primary users – they are the main focus of this design.

1.1.1 Marcus Duncan

Marcus has been teaching history for nearly half a century. He dislikes using gradebook software because it never works the way it should. For that matter, computers don't work the way they should. It's much faster to just jot down some numbers on a piece of paper than it is to turn on the computer in the corner, wait for the smiling Mac to disappear, search through all the icons on his desktop to find the one that says "Gradebook", double-click on it three times (never could get that double-click thing down right), try to remember the cryptic password to access the program, select the current period and class, click the Enter New Assignment button, enter more information about the assignment than any computer really needs to know, save the assignment, and finally add the students' scores. Stupid computers!

¹To subscribe or read the list archives, please visit <http://www.schoolforge.net/sfdiscuss.php>.

²For subscription information, see <http://www.seul.org/edu/>.

³These personas are generally in a middle school or high school environment—that is what I'm most familiar with. Similar personas should be developed for elementary schools and colleges. *-kmg*

1.1.2 Lyle Batton

Lyle is a high school business teacher. He thinks of computer as a big calculator. They're great at calculating grades and working out all those averages and weighted grades. He works with computers every day and is very adept at getting them to function, but he doesn't really understand how they work. He survives through his reservoir of superstition and lore, his capacity for rote learning, and his endless patience.

1.2 Students and Parents

1.2.1 Mary Johnson

Mary is a high school junior. She doesn't like her classes much, but really enjoys playing volleyball. Unfortunately, her school has a "Good Conduct Code" policy and they won't let her play volleyball until she gets her grades above a D. She loves using her iMac to IM all of her girlfriends and wishes she didn't have that stupid "What I Did Over Summer Vacation" essay due tomorrow.

2 Goals

2.1 Teachers

- They want to please the administration (their bosses)
- They want to enter students' scores quickly and easily
- They want to find the status of a student's grade quickly and easily
- They don't want to manage class rosters

2.2 Students and Parents

- They want to see what their (child's) current grades are
- They want to see what assignments they (their child) have missed
- They want to see what they (their child) scored on the most recent test

3 Scenarios

3.1 Daily Use Scenarios

Daily use scenarios are the most useful and important. These are the primary actions that the user will perform, typically with greatest frequency.

3.1.1 Entering Students' Scores

Marcus has just finished grading a rather large pile of poorly-written essays about how the North won the Civil War. Now he has the daunting task of entering all of these scores into that ridiculous computerized gradebook program that the principal is forcing everyone to use.

3.1.2 Viewing Student Scores

Mary got home from school and her dad just finished griping at her to make sure she's turned in her history essay. Grumbling about the irritability of parents, she tosses her bookbag on her bed and turns on her iMac to check her grades.

3.2 Necessary Use Scenarios

Necessary use scenarios include all actions that *must* be performed, but that are not performed frequently. Managing class rosters, printing grade cards, and printing progress reports fall into this category. No one does these on a daily basis, so the user interface for these doesn't have to be quite as polished as it does for the daily use scenarios.