Online peer assessed marking of team projects

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Group project work plays an increasingly important part in today's university courses as it enhances employability through developing team-working skills. It also solves some of the supervision problems encountered when coping with large student numbers. When assessing such projects, however, there is a common difficulty: how to determine the appropriate mark for each individual. Much of the recent work in this field has focussed on various forms of self and peer assessment as the fundamental mechanism by which an individual mark may be generated.

In this paper, we review a number of existing peer marking systems employed by staff at UK Universities. Research shows that there are almost as many variations upon the basic method as there are projects. However, we identify three generic types in common use and describe how we compared the outcomes of applying the different peer assessment systems to the same project and conclude that the final numerical outcome depends heavily upon type of peer assessment used.

We compare the results from the three models and speculate which is most effective. The paper then describes how a flexible web based version of this particular system was developed at Loughborough University and has been put to good use across a wide variety of disciplines and project types. The prime considerations in the development of the software were that students should perceive the process to be fair and that the resource should be very flexible and easy to use by both staff and students. We use real examples of student's peer marking data to demonstrate the system's effectiveness.