

Rich, timely feedback on student assignments strengthens learning. Students who are engaged in their studies and succeed in individual courses continue to complete their degrees. Yet the ever increasing, world-wide demand for higher education coupled with the growing lack of availability of qualified faculty makes it ever harder for institutions to provide individualized attention. To meet the needs of higher education, EduMetry's *Virtual-TA*[™] service offers robust feedback to students and faculty on every key assignment.

Our expert staff provides rich feedback and scores assignments, such as term papers, essays, case studies and other higher-order thinking type work. Faculty can focus on teaching and overall learning management to help more students achieve their academic goals.



visit our website		www.Virtual-TA.com
contact us		(800) 984-8465
schedule a webinar		webinar@EduMetry.com
request a free proposal		proposal@EduMetry.com



Feedback to Student

(electronically embedded into assignment)

Virtual Teaching Assistants (*Virtual-TA™*)

Virtual-TA™ is a powerful, new way to improve student learning. It takes the idea of Teaching Assistants in universities (who grade papers and provide feedback, so as to free up professors to teach large classes or conduct research) and adds a web-mediated dimension. The result is a Virtual Teaching Assistant, or a *Virtual-TA™*. Like an on-campus TA, our Virtual-TAs take their instructions from your faculty, familiarize themselves with the course, the textbook, and supplementary readings and assignments.

We carefully select Masters- or PhD-qualified professionals in a wide array of academic disciplines, train them in the art of providing rich feedback and the use of rubrics and assign them to work with your teaching faculty. Of course, there is a lot more to the service, such as standardized processes to ensure we meet academic standard, pedagogical integrity and instructor preferences. We've developed a tech platform that uniquely allows our TAs to electronically embed rich commentary directly into student assignments – and much more! Be sure to check out the section on Benefits that highlights the many benefits that flow from using the *Virtual-TA™* service.

So if your institution is struggling with finding qualified faculty to keep up with the demand for higher education, then the *Virtual-TA™* service is ideal for you. We have the TAs: only you can decide if your institution's most prized and expensive resources are being utilized in line with what they were trained for: to create and disseminate knowledge.

Running the mouse over the colored push-pins shows the detailed feedback as well as specific and actionable references to section/ pages in textbook/ readings.

Every piece of feedback embedded in student assignments is color-coded (student learning outcome). SLOs are specified by the instructor at the beginning of the assignment.

At-a-glance

- Knowledge of Course Content
- Innovative use of Concepts/Theories
- Analytical Development & Clarity
- Deductive Reasoning
- Miscellaneous

- Application of Concepts/Theories
- Logical Development of Arguments
- Inductive Reasoning
- Insightful Conclusions

The SLOs are color-coded and color-coded.

Organization Theory

analyze the market potential of the Audubon Zoo.

The market potential for Audubon Zoo is wide open and being taken advantage of. From the early '70's until the early '90's, Audubon's current market share rose dramatically, do to the turning point in the zoo's structure. Now that the demand for the zoo has supported the renovation-expansion, and Audubon has been successful in fundraising, employment, profits and creating their own membership group "Friends of the Zoo", their potential for market share has no limits. [1] More currently, after plans for Riverfront 2000 were proposed, ideas to further expand or create minizoo's around the city will most likely increase the number of visitors and repeat visitors, thus increasing market share. [2]

2. Based on your financial analysis, what recommendations would you make to improve their Finances?

One recommendation I would make for Audubon is to decrease the amount of expense allocated towards visitor services. It has a higher expense than income. Perhaps there are better ways to still satisfy guests without spending a lot. One way could be to offer booths throughout the zoo that have water fountains, paper towels, bandages and maps showing guests where they are. Also, since Audubon has had great success with fundraising, they could set up several more black-tie dinner/banquets, or do the most successful fundraisers one to two more times a year. Finally, if Audubon expands to have mini-zoo's around the city, they could offer regular visitors a pass to purchase allowing them entrance into all locations. They could also offer a weekend pass for tourists, to increase the number of visitors and awareness the new locations. [3]

3. As mentioned in Chapter 2 of the text, a SWOT analysis is a helpful basis for planning. Prepare analysis of internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats.

Internal strengths for Audubon include the new direction the zoo has taken on. This includes the membership groups that have incorporated, the success in fundraising, education programs, concessions, and the services they offer, such as health care and rehabilitation. Weaknesses include difficulty in spreading the word through advertising to capture the attention of non-Guides to New Orleans mentioned the zoo very little, and studies found only 36% of visitors to be tourists. This leaves room for improvement for attracting non-native and making them repeat customers. External opportunities are the potential for market and city-wide expansion. Riverfront 2000 is giving Audubon a new obstacle to turn its attention towards, once again expanding in an attempt to increase attraction and the number of visitors. Threats are that the city of New Orleans is suffering from high unemployment rates and a depressed economy resulting in a slump in the oil industry. One other factor is that Audubon has seen a decline in attractions, including the French Quarter and Mardi Gras. [4]

successful turnaround of the Zoo?

As a bond that expanded the run down zoo from 14-58 acres, featuring and differentiating their variety of animals, the group Friends of the Zoo also offered edZOO fundraising

Bookmark ID	Focus	Feedback	Section
1	Analysis of Relevant Environmental Competition and Opportunities	You needed to take into consideration the various relevant environmental factors and opportunities and threats into this analysis. For example: What competition market can be leveraged by the zoo better with the target audience? What segments of the market can be leveraged by the zoo better with the target audience?	Sections domain uncertain 136-151.
2	Logical development of argument to support successful completion of project	You should present arguments to support your conclusion that the project Riverfront 2000 will be successfully implemented and that the target audience will be attracted in large numbers. Does it have to do with a correct understanding of the market potential or the zoo authorities' implementation success?	Section of direction and Exhibit 52-55.
	Application of concepts to improve financial status of the zoo	Some innovative suggestions have been put forward. Do also look at the figures in the exhibits to identify trends, such as falling admissions after opening of the Aquarium, and then relate them to your recommendations to improve the financial status. Think of ways to counter possible downturns.	Case data exhibits
	Application of SWOT framework	You have brought out relevant factors and put the analysis together well. These should be discussed so as to open up possible recommendations to the reader.	Section of selecting Chapter 2

How the *Virtual-TA*[™] service works.

Free Up Faculty Time!

Our *Virtual-TA*[™] service provides on-demand teaching-assistant services. We have assembled a large pool of Masters- or PhD-qualified experts in a wide array of academic disciplines. We also developed a technology platform that allows our TAs to electronically insert detailed, actionable feedback directly into student assignments.

The Preliminaries for a Responsive Service

Once your institution signs up for the service, we work with your department chairs or faculty members directly, often weeks ahead of a semester. Knowledge Managers, who supervise our TAs, start liaising directly with your faculty, familiarizing themselves with textbooks, supplementary readings and assignments.

Clockwork Schedule to Ensure Timely Feedback

Your instructors give us the schedule of assignments, when student assignments are due, when we might expect to receive them electronically, when the scored assignments will be returned, the learning outcomes on which to score the assignments, the rubrics to be used and the weights to be applied to different learning outcomes. We can use your rubrics to score assignments or design rubrics for sign-off by your faculty members.

Instructors Have Anytime, Anywhere Access

Next, we will guide your faculty through a few simple steps on how to upload raw assignments and download graded assignments. Student assignments can be in MS-Word, Excel or PowerPoint.

Feedback Tied to Learning Outcomes

Next, our *Virtual-TAs* access the assignments, review and embed feedback using color-coded pushpins directly into the electronic assignments. Color-coded pushpins provide a powerful visual diagnostic.

Comments that Engage, Motivate

The feedback is specific, detailed, constructive and actionable. It points out strengths and weaknesses in the student's work, all the while choosing supportive language that keeps students engaged and wanting to learn more about how they did.

Instructor Controls the Whole Process

Know that we do not have any contact with your students. Instructors retain full control of the process, designing the assignments in the first place, specifying learning outcomes and attaching weights to each outcome. Instructors also review the work of our TAs through a step called the Interim Check, which happens after 10% of the assignments have been completed. Faculty provide feedback, offer any further instructions and eventually sign-off on the work done, before our TAs continue with the remainder of the assignments.

Double-Blind Process Ensures Confidentiality

Our *Virtual-TA*[™] process fully ensures student confidentiality. The instructor logs into our system, uploads the assignments and then scrambles the files before leaving the system. This ensures that our work takes place in a double-blind process, so ensuring the confidentiality of student work. Likewise, once the assignments are embedded with feedback, an e-mail to the instructor signals that he/she can log back into the system to unscramble the files, download the scored assignments.

Composite Scores

Finally, upon the request of the instructor, the weights he/she specified to the learning outcomes will be rubric-based scores which are used to generate a composite score for each student assignment.

Summative Report to the Instructor

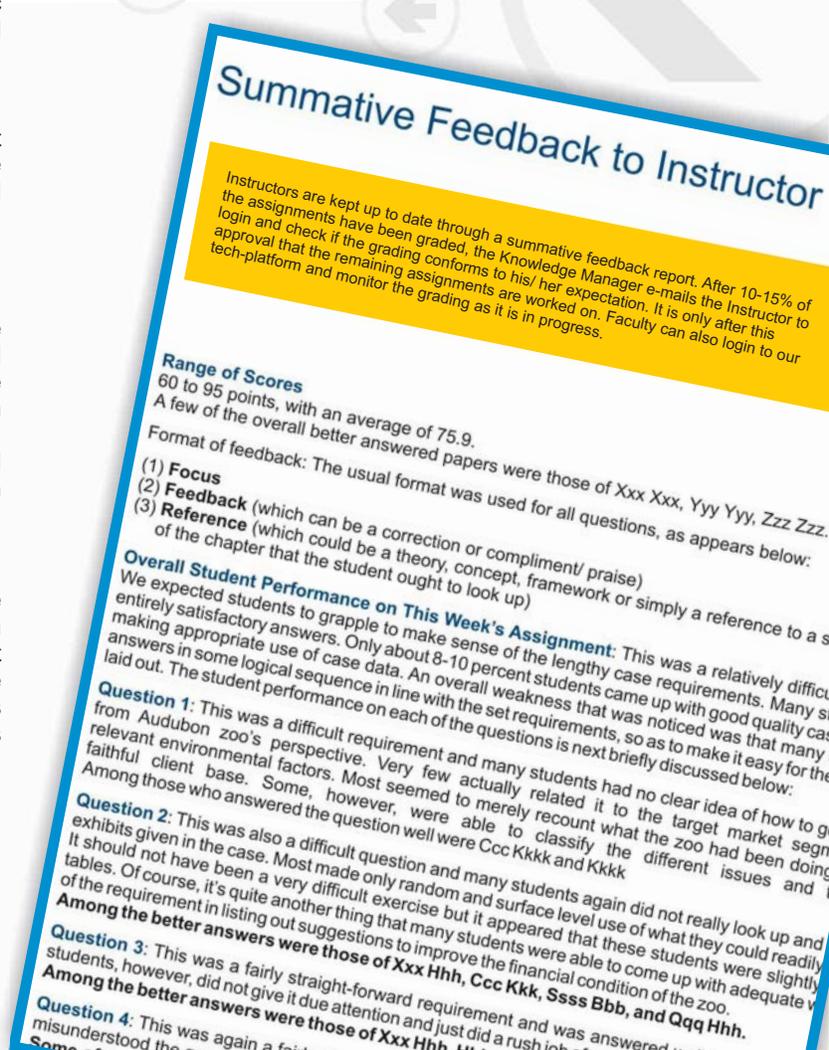
As an added bonus, our *Virtual-TAs* provide a detailed, summative report for the instructor on the overall class performance on the given assignment, which includes a look at how the class fared on each outcome, where the students "got it," where they stumbled and what concepts, if any, need reinforcing in class the following week. We can also, upon request, generate reports by Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). This report can be used by the instructor to immediately address gaps in learning at the individual or classroom level.

Immediate Closing-of-the-Loop

Think of this as a micro closing-of-the-loop that happens each week. Contrast this with the broader, macro closing-of-the-loop that accompanies program-level assessment of learning, at the end of a whole academic year or later!

Longitudinal Learning-Outcomes Data

Continue using our *Virtual-TA*[™] for all core (and electives, if you wish) and receive cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses as well as reports by learning-outcome, cohort, program, campus, demographics, etc. Administrators will find such data and reports a compelling empirical foundation on which to make improvements.



Benefits of *Virtual-TA*[™]

Whether you head a large university, a college, campus or an online program, student learning, retention and success mean a lot to you. EduMetry's Virtual Teaching Assistants can help your faculty provide students with rich, timely feedback on their assignments. Called *Virtual-TA*[™], the service can free faculty up for more mission-critical duties. Your faculty members retain complete control over the grading process because they design the assignment and the learning outcomes, approve our rubrics, sign-off on an interim check of a sample of scored papers and ultimately assign a letter grade.

Students get...

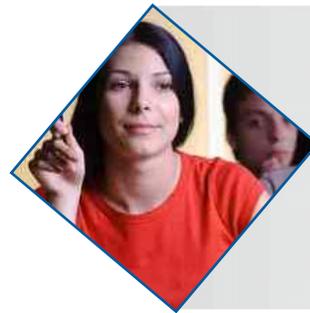
- detailed feedback on assignments within 2-5 days
- to learn the strengths & weaknesses of their work
- actionable pointers, suggestions and references
- to improve their higher-order thinking skills

Faculty get

- to do what they do best research, teach, mentor!
- to assume more of the role of Learning Architect!
- to assign more written work, improving writing skills
- to focus on fostering higher-order thinking skills
- to easily provide individual attention to students
- Reports on learning gaps and areas to reinforce

Administrators get

- to make high-quality TAs available to faculty
- to improve student learning, retention, persistence
- consistency of grading; reverse grade inflation
- to reduce instructional costs for the institution
- to attract external experts to teach (deterred by grading)
- to differentiate their institution to future students
- data on learning outcomes as part of the service



A New Paradigm for Higher Education

It's time to rethink our traditional notions of how teaching and learning are structured, who should do what. Let faculty do what they do best: create and impart knowledge. Improve the quality of teaching, and lower your instructional costs!

Feedback to Student

(electronically embedded into assignment)

Organization Theory

Running the mouse over the colored push-pins shows the detailed feedback as well as specific and actionable references to sections/ pages in textbook/ readings.

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4. What were the key factors in bringing a successful turnaround of the Zoo?

The first key factor for turning around the zoo's success was a bond that expanded the run down zoo from 14-58 acres. With all the new room, the zoo could be properly divided into geographic sections, featuring and differentiating their variety of animals. The next key factor was the institution of admission charges, to generate revenue and help fight vandalism. Next, the group Friends of the Zoo was created, which managed guidelines for many different topics concerning the zoo. This group also offered edZOOcators that helped conduct educational programs. The next key factor was the implementation of different forms of fundraising, that proved to be successful. Finally, the potential for continuous expansion, has helped keep the zoo in an ever-changing position. By changing, updating and expanding, there is reason for tourists to make an effort to visit, and for natives to return regularly. [📌] [5] [📌] [6]

Feedback to Student (at-a-glance view)

Every piece of feedback embedded in student assignments is color-coded by type of SLO (student learning outcome). SLOs are specified by the instructor at the beginning of the term.

Legend

- Knowledge of Course Content	- Application of Concepts/Theories
- Innovative use of Concepts/Theories	- Logical Development of Arguments
- Analytical Development & Clarity	- Inductive Reasoning
- Deductive Reasoning	- Insightful Conclusions
- Miscellaneous	

The SLOs are tailored to the discipline (subject) and course objectives as defined by the instructor.

Criterion	Bookmark ID	Focus	Feedback	References
	1	Analysis of Relevant Environmental Competition and Opportunities	You needed to take into consideration the various relevant environmental factors and opportunities and threats into this analysis. For example: What competition does Audubon zoo face? What segments of market can be leveraged by the zoo authorities? What offerings will go down better with the target audience?	Sections on Environmental domain and Environmental uncertainty, chapter 4, pp. 136-151.
<p>Our technology platform automatically collates all of the feedback into a convenient table, so that the student and instructor can view all of the feedback at a glance.</p>				
	2	Logical development of argument to support successful completion of project	You should present arguments to support your conclusion that the project Riverfront 2000 will be successfully implemented and that the target audience will be attracted in large numbers. Does it have to do with a correct understanding of the market potential or the zoo authorities' implementation success?	Section on Role of strategic direction in organization design and Exhibit 2.1, chapter 2, pp. 52-55.

	3	Application of concepts to improve financial status of the zoo	Some innovative suggestions have been put forward. Do also look at the figures in the exhibits to identify trends, such as falling admissions after opening of the Aquarium, and then relate them to your recommendations to improve the financial status. Think of ways to counter possible downturns.	Case data and exhibits
	4	Application of SWOT framework	You have brought out relevant factors and put the analysis together well. These should be discussed so as to open up possible recommendations to the reader.	Section on A framework for selecting strategy and design, Chapter 2, pp. 59-65.
	5	Presentation of analysis	You have brought out important factors in the turnaround of the zoo, but your effort seems to be disjointed and does not come across as very convincing. You could work to improve development of logical arguments and the analysis.	Case data and exhibits
	6	Application of suitable strategic framework to the case	You could have seen which of Porter's competitive strategies or Miles-and-Snow's strategy typology, or a combination of these, might be applied to this case.	Section on A framework for selecting strategy and design and Exhibit 2.4, chapter 2, pp. 59-65.

Learning Outcome	Weight	Rubric Score (upon 5)	Weighted Score (upon 5)
Case analysis	0.5	4	2.0
Application of concepts	0.3	3	0.9
Inferences and recommendations	0.2	3	0.6
Overall score	1.0		70%

Student assignments are scored using RUBRICS based on SLOs and the overall score computed based on the weights assigned by the faculty member. So, students know how they fared overall, but ALSO how they performed on EACH SLO.



The scores shown here can be aggregated to derive class-, cohort- or campus-wide assessment of student learning. This is the basis of *EduMetri's Learning Dashboard*.

Summative Feedback to Instructor

Instructors are kept up to date through a summative feedback report. Faculty can also login to our tech-platform and monitor the grading as it is in progress. After 10-15% of the assignments have been graded, the Knowledge Manager e-mails the Instructor to login and check if the grading conforms to his/ her expectation. It is only after this approval that the remaining assignments are worked on.

Range of Scores

60 to 95 points, with an average of 75.9.

A few of the overall better answered papers were those of Xxx Xxx, Yyy Yyy, Zzz Zzz.

Format of feedback: The usual format was used for all questions, as appears below:

- (1) **Focus**
- (2) **Feedback** (which can be a correction or compliment/ praise)
- (3) **Reference** (which could be a theory, concept, framework or simply a reference to a section of the chapter that the student ought to look up)

Overall Student Performance on This Week's Assignment: This was a relatively difficult case, as compared to the earlier ones and it was quite expected that students would possibly grapple to make a sense of the lengthy case requirements. Many students did find it difficult to come up with entirely satisfactory answers. Only about 8-10 percent students came up with good quality case submission, with in-depth analysis and making appropriate use of case data. An overall weakness that was noticed was that many students were not able to structure their answers in some logical sequence in line with the set requirements, so as to make it easy for the reader to make sense of the arguments laid out. The student performance on each of the questions is next briefly discussed below:

Question 1: This was a difficult requirement and many students had no clear idea of how to go about analyzing the market potential from Audubon zoo's perspective. Very few actually related it to the target market segments, the likely clientele and other relevant environmental factors. Most seemed to merely recount what the zoo had been doing in the past to attract and build up a faithful client base. Some, however, were able to classify the different issues and take them into account as such. Among those who answered the question well were Ccc Kkkk and Kkkk

Question 2: This was also a difficult question and many students again did not really look up and make use of the financial data in the exhibits given in the case. Most made only random and surface level use of what they could readily interpret of the zoo's balance sheet. It should not have been a very difficult exercise but it appeared that these students were slightly wary of taking on the figures in the tables. Of course, it's quite another thing that many students were able to come up with adequate workable solutions to the second part of the requirement in listing out suggestions to improve the financial condition of the zoo.

Among the better answers were those of Xxx Hhh, Ccc Kkk, Ssss Bbb, and Qqq Hhh.

Question 3: This was a fairly straight-forward requirement and was answered well or at least adequately by most students. Some students, however, did not give it due attention and just did a rush job of answering it, barely adequately.

Among the better answers were those of Xxx Hhh, Hhh Ccc, Kkk Hhh, and Qqq Hhh.

Question 4: This was again a fairly straight-forward question and most students answered it well. The exceptions were those who misunderstood the question to mean what needed to be done at this stage to bring about a turnaround in the fortunes of the zoo.

Some of the better answers were those of Xxx Hhh, Dddd Www and Hhh Cccc.