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## THE PROBLEMS OF MOTIVATING STUDENTS AND CLIENTS IN LIVE-CASE PROJECTS

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### ABSTRACT

The live-case method offers great potential for both a teaching tool for instructors and a learning tool for students. However, the method itself, does not guarantee that students will be motivated to learn or that outside organizations will be willing to participate. Incentives must be provided to both parties to obtain and maintain their interest in the live-case program. Students can be motivated by group selection of the area of study, achievement of recognized steps in their projects and the use of peer evaluation instruments to ensure an equitable distribution of the work load amongst group participants. Clients can be involved and motivated by the use of client briefs, student proposals, project status reports and charging clients a fee for participation.

### INTRODUCTION

The live-case method is a very strong tool for teaching college courses. Students recall 10% of what they read, 40% of what they write down, 70% of what they do and 80% of what they do in real-life application situations. However, the translation of live-case theory into practice is frequently burdened with difficulties. Many of these problems exist because of the instructors failure to provide motivating incentives to both the students and the participating clients. This paper outlines some methods for motivating both of these parties in live marketing projects.

### MOTIVATING STUDENTS AND CLIENTS

Student work groups are known for their tendency to have a few students doing a majority of the work. The task then is to create an environment conducive to higher levels of individual motivation, a continuing sense of involvement and intermediate successes along the path to the live-case completion. There is also a need to provide distribution of grades to individual group members so as to reflect the variations in the students abilities and project contributions.

An environment that is conducive to high levels of motivation is achieved through the use of live cases, dealing with student selected topics. (The process of having a topic of interest establishes a foundation for involvement.) A continuing sense of involvement is achieved by using intermediate achievement points. The instructors task is to establish dates by which certain project tasks should have been accomplished. Ample opportunities exist at these points for the instructor to provide encouraging comments or to use other psychological "stroking" techniques.

The evaluation problem is handled through a peer evaluation instrument. Such an instrument should use multiple criteria relating to various aspects of the particular type class and evaluating the "quality" of each student's contribution. This instrument should be presented to the students at the first of the term so that they will know the criteria upon which they

are being evaluated.<sup>1</sup> A percentage of the students final grade should be based on the results of their peer evaluation.

Clients frequently are not motivated to be involved in live-case projects because they perceive it as a time consuming task in which they are the givers and not the receivers. This can be overcome by demonstrating the instructor's and students' commitment to the project's success from its inception.

Clients should be educated from their first involvement that a written brief outlining the project problem is required. In particular all background information to the problem and a clear statement of the client's problem and project objectives should be included. This forces clients to provide an adequate statement of their problems, objectives and project expectations.

Utilizing their client brief, each student group should prepare a project proposal. This should interpret the clients problems and project objectives into a program that is actionable within the students knowledge, manpower and time constraints. This provides a written document which forms the agreed project scope for all three parties, I.e., the client, students, and instructor. The document ensures that the objectives and expectations of all parties are in agreement.

Project status reports should be used to ensure that the students maintain their project timetable and to inform clients about the project's progress. The reports act as a source of feedback on the client's satisfaction with the project and a control on his desire for any mid-stream project inputs or changes. They also demonstrate the professionalism with which the project is being undertaken and they provide ongoing feedback to the instructor.

Clients should be asked to pay for the project's costs. This acts to increase the client's involvement in the project, upgrades the project status in the client's mind and provides an incentive for client participation.

### CONCLUSION

The individual elements of a live-case project will vary with the particular application. However, in all situations the motivation of both students and project clients is a key consideration which the live-case method does not directly provide. Specific incentives are required to motivate the project participants.

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<sup>1</sup> Summey, John H. and Clayton S. Long. "Evaluation of the Efficiency of a Multiple Criteria Group Member Peer Evaluation Instrument," College Student Journal (to be published in 1980).