

# ADMINISTERING A MARKETING SIMULATION - COMMON AND VARIED PRACTICES AMONG INSTRUCTORS

Annette L. Halpin, Beaver College  
halpin@beaver.edu

Aspy P. Palia, University of Hawaii at Manoa  
ASPY@cba.hawaii.edu

T. Rick Whiteley, Calabash Educational Software  
drtrw@hotmail.com

Thomas R. Keen, Caldwell College  
Tkeen@CALDWELL.edu

## ABSTRACT

*This paper describes a panel discussion focusing on those variables over which administrators have some control during a simulation experience. The goal of this exchange is to identify how our individual behavior may influence the learning that is taking place in our classrooms.*

## BACKGROUND

In 1990, Fritzsche and Cotter described in detail those activities that they considered the responsibility of the instructor administering a simulation. It has been suggested that student learning in a simulation environment occurs in part because of the teaching style and behavior of the game administrator (Gosen & Washbush, 1999). While teaching methods are likely to vary across instructor, course, and simulation the need exists to identify which factors under the control of the administrator are associated with learning. A workshop presented at the ABSEL 2000 conference offered a list of fifteen independent variables that may impact participant learning during a simulation experience (Washbush & Gosen, 2000). The proposed panel will focus on detailed components of these fifteen variables as handled by four administrators of three marketing simulations. The simulations include Compete (Faria, Nulsen, & Roussos, 1994), Marketer (Smith & Golden, 1998), and The Marketing Game (Mason & Perreault, 1997).

## INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

The four categories below summarize the variables suggested in previous research. Detailed items within each category, developed by the panelists, will be provided at the session. The responses of each presenter will be the starting point of the panel's discussion at this session. Panelists will focus on items for which their responses are unique as well as those behaviors or activities that are particularly challenging to them as administrators of a marketing simulation.

- 1) *Role of Instructor.* These items address the ways in which instructors are actively involved in the simulation process. Included here are the selection of the simulation, the amount and type of guidance provided, and the integration of the simulation with course material.
- 2) *Student Preparation.* Students bring to the simulation experience a set of skills developed over years of academic and personal experiences. These characteristics, along with team dimensions such as size, group assignment, practice periods, etc. are likely to have an effect on the level of learning taking place during a simulation experience.
- 3) *Student Assessment.* Measuring learning and assigning grades to student work is covered in this group of items. Types of measures and choice of comparative data are addressed here in two broad categories – the internal and external environments.

## Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 28, 2001

- 4) *Administration Issues*. Administrators face a labor-intensive effort in introducing and managing a simulation exercise. Concerns regarding the length of the simulation, output from the simulation program, and the mechanics of administering the exercise are covered here.

The tables provided at the session are expected to identify ways in which the panelists are similar to and different from one another in administering their respective simulations. Each participant will offer some introductory comments after which the audience will participate in a discussion about the information offered in the tables.

### REFERENCES

- COMPETE: A DYNAMIC MARKETING SIMULATION (1994). Faria, A.J., Nulsen, R.O., & Roussos, D.S. Burr Ridge, IL: Richard D. Irwin.
- Fritzsche, D.J. & Cotter, R.V. (1990). Guidelines for administering business games. In W. Gentry (Ed.), *Guide to business gaming and experiential learning* (pp. 74-89). London: Nichols/GP Publishing.
- Gosen, J. & Washbush, J. (1999). As teachers and researchers, where do we go from here? *Simulation and Gaming*, 30, 292-303.
- MARKETER: A SIMULATION (1998). Smith, G. & Golden, P. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- THE MARKETING GAME (1997). Mason, C. & Perreault, W.D. Chicago: McGraw-Hill.
- Washbush, J.B. & Gosen, J. (2000). Simulations and learning: Dialog and directions. *Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning*, 27, 3-4.