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Supplemental Teaching Resources

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Example Syllabus Language

PURPOSE: Use syllabus language like this to explain the PM/PC approach to students. This example language assumes that the class has a series of three class projects, one individual project and two group projects. This is a modification of the basic PM/PC approach (see “Modifications” section of article).

Class Projects: Students are required to complete three class projects. These projects are collectively designed with four objectives in mind:

- 1) Challenge students with analytical problems in the area of agricultural economics;
- 2) Mirror business setting expectations where critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration are highly valued skills;
- 3) Provide students with maximum flexibility and responsibility for their own work; and
- 4) Provide me, the instructor, with detailed information about each student’s work ethic and potential as an employee or graduate student.

At the conclusion of each project, the instructor will not simply assign each student a grade. Instead, students will have an opportunity to evaluate the other members of their own group. This evaluation will help determine the composition of the groups for the successive projects. Those that have worked full-time jobs know that salaries, promotions, and success in the “real world” typically depend on the right mixture of self-promotion, strategic thinking, initiative, creativity, and of course hard work. Those students that appreciate and understand this reality will do best in the group project portion of this class.

First Class Project (50 points): Your first project is to provide your fellow classmates with information that will help them judge two factors: 1) your leadership and human resource management skills, and 2) your ability to solve complex agricultural economics problems of an analytical nature. Each student will have two public opportunities to share information with other members of the class:

- 1) Students should submit a one-page (8½” x 11”) resume or other one-page document that the instructor will reproduce (in black and white) for distribution to the other students; and
- 2) Students will have one minute (no more) to introduce themselves to the rest of the class and to emphasize key points of their one-page resume or similar document.

Student resumes or other similar documents are due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, September 4, 2019. Student introductions will take place the following class day on Friday, September 6, 2019.

Students will be evaluated by their instructor and by their fellow classmates. The instructor will assign each student a grade based on the student’s ability to perform the assigned task.

Apart from this grade, each student will also receive a score based on how suitable the other students in the class think that student would be as a project manager (supervisor) for the remaining two projects.

Those students earning scores within the top 33 percent of all students (the top 10 or so) will be identified as “project managers” for the second class project (ties will be broken based on instructor grades for project one). All other students will be “contractors” for second and third class projects.

Project managers have a number of important responsibilities that, if done well, will likely earn a higher project grade for that student and the other members of that student’s group. Three important responsibilities for project managers are:

- 1) Project managers must recruit from among the remaining students in the class the requisite number of “contractors” (1 or 2 contractors for the second class project, and 4 or 5 contractors for the third class project).

- 2) Project managers must assign grades to each contractor. (Contractor grades will be subject to final review and, if necessary modification, by the instructor). The average contractor grade cannot be greater than (but may be lower than) the overall group project grade assigned by the instructor.
- 3) Project managers are awarded a “bonus” equal to 10% of the points possible for the project due to the greater responsibility that they have. Project managers must decide—based on fairness and distribution of effort—whether any of their bonus should be shared with any of their contractors.

Second Class Project (150 points): The second class project will be announced during class on Wednesday, September 25, 2019. This project will be an analysis and explanation of the demand for a particular agricultural commodity over a given period of time.

The second project will culminate in a written executive report (2 or 3 pages) with a technical appendix that includes data sources and calculations executed using Microsoft Excel.

The second class project will be due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, October 16, 2019.

Grades for Project Two

Project Managers: The instructor will grade each group project based solely on the quality of the final product. The grade for each project manager will be the grade on the final product. Project managers will also receive a bonus equal to 10% of the points possible for the project (i.e., +15 points).

Contractors: Contractors grades will be assigned by the instructor, but will be heavily informed by the evaluation and recommendation provided by the project managers. Project managers may elect to assign any portion of their bonus for project two to any, all, or none of the individual contractors in their group.

Project Manager Evaluations for Project Two

After the project managers assign grades (and any bonus) to the individual contractors in their groups, contractors will review their individual evaluation and give their project manager a score with a written explanation. This score (0 to 100) will indicate how well individual contractors believe their project manager did (good or bad leader, fair or unfair, motivating or unmotivating, organized or unorganized, etc.). Low scores indicate poor performance and high scores indicate excellent performance.

Those project managers earning scores within the top 60 percent of all project managers (the top 6 or so) will be identified as “project managers” for the third and final class project (ties will be broken based on project grades for project II). All other students will be “contractors” for the third class project.

Third Class Project (250 points): The third class project will be announced in class on Wednesday, October 30, 2019. The project will include a definition and analysis of a specific agricultural market selected by each group with the approval of the instructor.

The third class project will culminate in a 20-minute group presentation to the rest of the class. Project presentations will take place on December 9, 11, and 13.

Grades for Project Three

Grading for the third project follows the same procedures as for the second project.

Project Manager Evaluations for Project Three

Evaluations of project managers by contractors will follow the same scoring procedure as outlined for the second project. In addition, all students will assign the project managers from other groups a score based on the quality of their presentations. Finally, the instructor will assign each group a score based on the same criteria. The project manager that has the highest average score [group contractors’ scores + other groups’ scores + instructor’s score) / 3] will be identified as **the top project manager**.

Summary Description, Rules, and Boundaries

Table 1. How Are Groups Formed?

- (1) The instructor is the CEO, and the CEO has final say about all compensation (grades).
 - (2) For this group project, students will be either a project manager (PM) or a private contractor (PC).
 - (3) PMs are group leaders. They have group management skills.
 - (4) PCs are technical experts that have specialized skills.
 - (5) You and your peers together will determine whether you are a PM or a PC. All students will share a one-page resume with and give a one-minute speech in front of their peers during the first week of the term. All students will use this information to rank the top students they want to be PMs.
 - (6) The CEO will sum each student's rankings. The students who receive the highest overall ranks will be PMs for this project. All other students will be PCs.
 - (7) The CEO will announce which students are PMs. At that time, PMs must each find and recruit an assigned number of PCs from the remaining students. Every PC must join a group.
-

Table 2. How Are Individuals Graded

- (1) As groups form, the CEO will assign each a group project to complete by a specific due date.
 - (2) After the due date, the CEO will assign each group an overall project grade (up to 100%) which is the grade for the PM. For leading a group, the CEO will also give each PM bonus credit equal to 10% of the points possible for the project to keep or distribute to their PCs.
 - (3) PMs must then recommend individual grades (up to 100%) for each PC in their group with the constraint that, exclusive of any bonus credit, the average grade for all PCs in a group must equal the overall group project grade (and PM grade) assigned to by the CEO.
 - (4) Next, the PM must provide written justification to the CEO for each grade assigned and indicate how much bonus credit, if any, the PM wishes to share with each PC.
 - (5) The CEO will then tabulate a final project grade (up to 100%) for each student based on grade recommendations from the group's PMs.
 - (6) Finally, all PCs must rate their PM (up to 100%) and provide written justification to the CEO for their rating. PM ratings do not affect the PM's grade, but the CEO may use the PM's ratings to determine if that student is eligible to serve as a PM for future projects.
-

Table 3. How Are Meetings Scheduled?

- (1) The CEO recognizes that PMs and PCs have other job duties (school work) and that PMs and PCs do some of their work at the main office (in class) and some of their work remotely from their home offices (e.g., library).
 - (2) The CEO usually conducts trainings (lectures) and assessments at the main office (in class) when most employees (students) are gathered together. However, as noted in the employee handbook (syllabus), the CEO has moved some trainings online to allow PMs and PCs to work on their group projects occasionally at the main office (in class). This accommodation requires PMs and PCs to access some of their main office trainings (lectures) online from their home offices (e.g., library) instead.
 - (3) PMs and PCs should expect to spend significant additional time working at their home offices (e.g., library) preparing for their group meetings.
-

Student Frequently Asked Questions

How do project manager and private contractor roles differ?

Project managers have additional managerial responsibilities (e.g., to recruit private contractors and assess their individual contributions). In exchange, project managers receive additional control over their individual grades. They not only recommend to the instructor the grade each group member should receive; they also receive bonus points and get to decide whether to keep them or share them with their group members. Any student that works well with others in either role can expect to receive a strong letter of recommendation from the instructor.

How do I become a project manager or private contractor?

At the beginning of the term, all students will send a one-page resume to the instructor who will arrange these alphabetically by last name in a packet and give every student a copy. All students will then give a one-minute speech to the class, explaining why they should be a project manager. Class members will then vote on who they want to be the project managers. The students who receive the most votes will become project managers. All other students will become private contractors.

If I am a project manager, how do I form the rest of my group?

Project managers can contact private contractors before, during, or after class if time permits or using the phone and email information given in the resume packet distributed by the instructor. Project managers should act as early as possible to recruit the best available private contractors before they are recruited by other project managers. Project managers should consider how they will persuade highly competent private contractors to join their group.

How are individual project grades determined?

Project managers assess the individual contributions of each private contractor. Project managers then recommend to the instructor an individual grade for each private contractor in their group subject to the constraint that the average individual grade of all private contractors in the group cannot be higher than the project grade assigned to the group by the instructor. The instructor typically accepts the project manager's recommendations. The project manager's grade is the grade on the project assigned by the instructor. Project managers are given bonus points equal to 10% of maximum points possible for the project to keep or share with their private contractors.

What if I don't like my project manager?

Project managers are not perfect. They have a hard job, but they are still responsible for their decisions. All private contractors are given an opportunity to evaluate their project manager (e.g., on fairness, organization, leadership, attitude, etc.). If you think that your project manager has acted poorly, you may want to address your concerns first with your project manager. If you are still dissatisfied with your project manager, you should communicate your concerns to the CEO (i.e., instructor) in your evaluation. As a private contractor, you can also contact and interview project managers during the group formation process to identify project managers that you like.

You call yourself the CEO. Why?

This course simulates the managerial structure of a small business. The CEO is the top decision-maker in a business, and the instructor is the top decision-maker in this class. Students are encouraged to adopt and experiment with the roles of either a project manager or a private contractor. Project managers must learn to create and manage a high-performing group. Private contractors must learn to contribute to their groups in meaningful ways. These are not easy roles to play, but the instructor believes that it is better for students to learn successful techniques now in class when the stakes are relatively low rather than wait until these challenges arise in an actual professional business setting.

Example Score Sheet Students Use to Rank Order Project Manager Candidates

PURPOSE: *After students submit their one-page resumes and give their one-minute speeches, each student ranks a set number (depends on the size of the class and the size of each group) their peers.*

COURSE: _____ NAME: _____

Previously, I distributed via email a packet with all of the one-page resumes that I received by the due date arranged in alphabetical order by last name. If you submitted your resume after the due date, your resume is not in the packet. If your resume was more than one page, I only included the first page.

Today, students will have exactly one minute to introduce themselves and their qualifications. You must rank which six of your fellow students you prefer to project managers. **Rank the top six** from 1 to 6, where **lower numbers** indicate **better project manager candidates**. Please feel free to rank yourself.

First Name	Last Name	Notes	Rank Top Six (1 = Best)
[Student 1]	[Student 1]		
[Student 2]	[Student 2]		
[Student 3]	[Student 3]		
[Student 4]	[Student 4]		
[Student 5]	[Student 5]		
[Student 6]	[Student 6]		
[Student 7]	[Student 7]		
[Student 8]	[Student 8]		
[Student 9]	[Student 9]		
[Student 10]	[Student 10]		
[Student 11]	[Student 11]		
[Student 12]	[Student 12]		
[Student 13]	[Student 13]		
[Student 14]	[Student 14]		
[Student 15]	[Student 15]		
[Student 16]	[Student 16]		
[Student 17]	[Student 17]		
[Student 18]	[Student 18]		
[Student 19]	[Student 19]		
[Student 20]	[Student 20]		
[Student 21]	[Student 11]		
[Student 22]	[Student 22]		
[Student 23]	[Student 23]		
[Student 24]	[Student 24]		
[Student 25]	[Student 25]		
[Student 26]	[Student 26]		
[Student 27]	[Student 27]		
[Student 28]	[Student 28]		
[Student 29]	[Student 29]		
[Student 30]	[Student 30]		
[Student 31]	[Student 31]		
[Student 32]	[Student 32]		
-- Resume Not Submitted --			
[Student 33]	[Student 33]		
[Student 34]	[Student 34]		

Example Letter Announcing Student Choice of Project Managers

PURPOSE: After students submit their one-page resumes and give their one-minute speeches, the instructor (CEO) may send a letter like this to announce which students, on the basis of rankings by their peer students, will be project managers and which will be private contractors. In this example, the class has 34 students, and this letter announces the project managers for the second class project.

September 9, 2019

Dear Valued Employees,

As your CEO, I am very impressed overall with the effort you have put into this first assignment (i.e., your one-page resumes and your one-minute presentations).

I have tallied all the score sheets. You have collectively identified some standout project managers. I would be excited to join a group with any one of these leaders.

Here (in alphabetical order) are the project managers:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. [Student Leader Name] | 6. [Student Leader Name] |
| 2. [Student Leader Name] | 7. [Student Leader Name] |
| 3. [Student Leader Name] | 8. [Student Leader Name] |
| 4. [Student Leader Name] | 9. [Student Leader Name] |
| 5. [Student Leader Name] | 10. [Student Leader Name] |

The remaining students not listed above will be private contractors and include many unrecognized talents, I think. We will have lots of excellent group projects this semester.

Any student not included on the list above is assigned the role of a private contractor. Unless indicated otherwise, each project manager must recruit two (2) private contractors. Four project managers must recruit just three (3) private contractors.

The following four project managers must recruit three (3) private contractors:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. [Student Leader Name] | 3. [Student Leader Name] |
| 2. [Student Leader Name] | 4. [Student Leader Name] |

I will announce the details of the first group project on Friday, September 25, 2019.

Keep up the good work!



John Doe, PhD
CEO, AEC 305 Consulting

Example Project Evaluation Sheet for Instructor and Students

PURPOSE: When groups make class or recorded presentations of their work, instructors and students can use a form like this to evaluate the quality of group presentation.

YOUR NAME: _____

Topic: _____ Project Manager: _____

ECONOMIC CONCEPT	Was the concept taught and applied clearly?										
1. Define the market characteristically	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. Define the market spatially	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3. Estimate current market price and quantity	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. Identify supply and demand shift factors	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5. Predict joint effects on market equilibrium	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

OVERALL:

1. Topic was fascinating and interesting.	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. Organization was flawless, easy to follow.	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3. Handouts, slides were extremely helpful.	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. Level of professionalism was impressive.	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5. Amount of material covered was just right?	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

NOTES / COMMENTS / FEEDBACK (REQUIRED):

SCORING:

After hearing each presentation, please give this group a score ranging from 0 (very bad, a waste of time) to 100 (excellent, loved it).

INITIAL SCORE (without comparing to others): _____

FINAL SCORE (after hearing all six group presentations): _____

Example Contractor Evaluation and Grade Recommendation Form

PURPOSE: After completion of a group project, each project manager completes a form like this for each of his/her private contractors.

CONTRACTOR EVALUATION AND GRADE RECOMMENDATION FORM

Project managers must provide a grade recommendation for each private contractor in their group. Include any bonus points that you want to share. Bonus points equal 10 percent of the maximum points possible for the project. The average private contractor grade must equal the grade for the project assigned by the instructor.

It is true that no one likes to get bad grades or low scores. However, you are the project manager. Honest, fair, and direct feedback is often highly valued. People often like and respect fairness more than they like and respect gratuity.

Project managers may also evaluate their private contractors (optional). If you elect to provide an evaluation, you should be as objective as possible. Feedback should not sacrifice clarity for the sake of kindness, yet all feedback should be constructive in nature. You should focus most on what each private contractor specifically did or did not do, and focus less on interpreting or trying to define, for example, a private contractor's motives.

This form includes a spot for project managers to list one or more "evaluation criteria" if desired. Such criteria are sometimes helpful when evaluating someone as they identify project components or areas where contributions were expected.

Date: _____

Name of contractor being evaluated: _____

Evaluation Criteria (optional):

Evaluation (optional):

RECOMMENDED GRADE FOR THIS PROJECT: _____ (0 – 100)

BONUS POINTS SHARED FOR THIS PROJECT: _____ (see limits above)

Name of project manager completing this evaluation: _____

Example Project Manager Evaluation Form

PURPOSE: Each private contractor completes a form like this after completing a group project. Private contractors use this form to evaluate how well their project manager did as a project manager.

PROJECT MANAGER EVALUATION FORM

After receiving a grade recommendation from their project manager, each private contractor should complete this project manager evaluation form and indicate how well the project manager performed.

This evaluation is intended to provide feedback both to the instructor and to your project manager.

Evaluations should be as objective as possible. Feedback should not sacrifice clarity for the sake of kindness, yet all feedback should be constructive in nature. Contractors should focus their evaluation most on what the project manager specifically did or did not do well, and focus less on interpreting or trying to define, for example, the project manager's motives.

This form includes a spot for project managers to list one or more "evaluation criteria" if desired. Such criteria are sometimes helpful when evaluating someone as they identify project components or areas where contributions were expected.

Finally, it is true that no one likes to get bad grades or low scores. However, you are the project manager. Honest, fair, and direct feedback is often highly valued. People often like and respect fairness more than they like and respect gratuity.

Date: _____

Name of project manager being evaluated: _____

Evaluation Criteria:

Evaluation:

SCORE FOR THIS PROJECT: _____ (0 – 100)

Name of contractor completing this evaluation: _____

Example Text for Letter of Recommendation

PURPOSE: The draft text below demonstrates how the PM/PC process generates lots of useful information to include in a student letter of recommendation. The selection below assumes that the student participated in a modified version of the PM/PC approach that included a series of two group projects. The draft text should be edited if the basic PM/PC approach is used.

While **[student name]**'s intellectual achievements are remarkable, the aspect of her work that has impressed me (and, indeed, most of her fellow students) most is her ability to lead others successfully in a professional setting. At the beginning of the semester, **[student name]** was selected by her peers as one of only ten "project managers" based on her resume (one page) and short (one minute) introduction to the rest of the class. Based on this introduction, **[student name]**'s peers ranked her highest, identifying her as the most wanted project leader in the class.

In this role, **[student name]** excelled. She (like the other nine project managers) first recruited two "contractors" among the remaining students. Her group was assigned the task of analyzing U.S. demand for pork from 1999 to 2019. Her group's written project (an executive report plus a detailed analytical appendix) was outstanding. Here are some comments from **[student name]**'s written evaluations prepared by her two contractors (fellow students):

- "[**student name**]'s leadership was excellent in that she always had a course of action or plan for each step."
- **[student name]** "showed excellent leadership skills and demonstrated a great understanding of how to delegate work to the contractors."
- **[student name]** "was very professional during the project, never losing her cool under pressure, and gave and received constructive criticism well."
- **[student name]** "never quit until everything was done."

Among the ten project managers for this first project, **[student name]** received the top score from her two contractors (94 out of a possible 100). This score further distinguished **[student name]** as an effective leader and desirable project manager. This score placed **[student name]** among the top six student leaders in the class at midterm and, as such, she remained a project manager role for the final project. In this role, **[student name]** was responsible for recruiting not two, but four other student contractors, and with them she completed her final group project analyzing the local farm-direct market for raw honey. Her peers and I ranked her group's presentation the best, and **[student name]** consequently received the "Top Project Manager" award for her leadership.