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**The Changing and Evolving Role of Educators**

**Applying Student Job Enlargement Derived from Workplace Theory.  
Recommendations for Educators.**

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**Abstract:**

This paper considers the application of organisational human resource management theories in a student context and its implication for educators. While applying business in practice theories in an educational environment this paper proposes the concept of 'job enlargement' as an underpinning philosophy in a business school context. It is proposed that by embracing the job enlargement construct educators can hope to see development of student skill, responsibility and variety in their work. Through the use of student job enlargement as a way to engage students this paper continues to recommend the use of a 'contract of study' as a basis for assessment and course design.

**Keywords**

Job Enlargement, Pedagogy, Assessment Design, Course Design

## 1. Introduction

Authorities on employee motivation (Herzberg 1968, Vroom 1964, and Maslow 1948) identify motivation as the level of energy, commitment, and creativity that a company's workers apply to their jobs. Developing new and innovative means by which to motivate employees has become an ever-present concern for many managers. As managers experiment with a variety of methods of employee motivation, from monetary incentives to increased empowerment and involvement, so too should educational institutes research and trial diverse motivational techniques for students. Engaging students in the learning process is fundamental to cultivating improved business education.

Business pedagogy should strive to apply the same principles to the learning process. Student passion and enthusiasm should be nurtured in order to enhance the educational experience. By considering widely accepted best-practice employment principles against the common business pedagogy practices it is possible to identify opportunities for increasing student involvement and motivation in their studies. The proposition herein is that of the student in educational employment. The learning job requires students to be equal stakeholders and contributors to their scholarship. There may exist a reluctance to change and diversify conventional teaching practices, similar to an owner/managers being reluctant to delegate meaningful tasks and responsibilities. Equally, a teacher or lecturer may be reluctant to engage in uncertain practices, preferring instead to work within known, comfortable working structures. Were current learning practices be sustained simply because they are safe learning environments will stagnate. As an entrepreneur would be encouraged to avoid the pitfalls of an unmotivated staff, likewise low student motivation can have a devastating effect on the learning experience, both to the student and the institution. It is of paramount importance than any academic establishment know their interpretation of the ideal student, much like a corporation will set out guidelines for an ideal employee. By defining the key traits of a student, as a business would outline desired characteristics of an employee, an institution can be held to a higher standard, ensuring a superior reputation for the future. Human resource management is dynamic and must shift significantly with the varying demands of the corporate world. However, the nature of a business student has failed to develop with the same dynamism and will benefit from engaging with best practice modern business theory. As such, this paper recommends the use of a contract of study and will be discussed later.

Some of the problems associated with unmotivated workers include complacency, declining morale, and widespread discouragement. If allowed to continue, these problems can reduce productivity, earnings, and competitiveness in a business. Equally, an unmotivated student can become disinterested with consequences resulting in poor grades and diminished learning outcomes. The consequences for the educational institution are poor morale amongst students and faculty, an absence of a thought-provoking work environment and ultimately a negative impact on the reputation of the institution. As Katz (1964) states “an organisation that depends solely upon its blueprints of prescribed behaviour is a very fragile social system”. By exploring both course and assessment design with a mind to the enlarged job of the student, colleges and universities can sculpt the engaging educational forums of tomorrow.

By analysing conventional employee development literature, important lessons can be learned for pedagogical purposes. For example, student motivational theory can be derived from existing employee motivational job design. Here, we address how the contract of scholarship informs the student enlargement process. Conclusions and recommendations may

be drawn from an investigation into student job enlargement to promote a new educational horizon. As such, the concept of job enlargement within the role of a studentship allows for an investigation into the actions of institutions to foster a more engaged, active and dynamic student.

## **2. Using Job Enlargement to Underpin Pedagogy.**

The term 'job enlargement' is predominantly used in industry to describe the trend toward putting back into industrial work some of the skill, responsibility and variety that have been eliminated by the excessive division of labour (Kilbridge, 1960). By embracing the job enlargement construct educators can hope to see development of student skill, responsibility and variety. Kilbridge (1960) continues that successful job enlargement is stated in greater work satisfaction, and management-labour rapport; both being goals that academic institutions would be keen to attain. Furthermore, Elliot (1953) concludes job enlargement to be the expansion of job content to include a wider variety of tasks and to increase worker's freedom of pace, responsibility for checking quality, and discretion of method. Indeed, educators should be keen to engage in the student job enlargement process, citing the above mentioned ideals of student freedom in their work, greater student accountability and flexibility in their assessment methodology. For example, allowing a student the creative freedom to discover and attain undefined, even unknown, learning outcomes such as students wishing to present their work on innovative presentation software may develop new skills.

Turner and Lawrence (1965) promote the idea of 'job enlargement' initiatives to augment the motivational process. Their ideals outlined below provide an intriguing insight into key motivational factors in industry environments. Business academia could benefit significantly from embracing such points in order to advance enthusiastic student participation. Indeed, it is proposed that 'student job enlargement' serves a multitude of factors, from student motivation to institutional pride.

1. It must allow a worker to feel personally responsible for a meaningful portion of the work accomplished. An employee must feel ownership of and connection with the work he or she performs. Even in team situations, a successful effort will foster awareness in an individual that his or her contributions were important in accomplishing the group's tasks.
2. It must provide outcomes which have intrinsic meaning to the individual. Effective work that does not lead a worker to feel that his or her efforts matter will not be maintained. The outcome of an employee's work must have value to himself or herself and to others in the organization.
3. It must provide the employee with feedback about his or her accomplishments. A constructive, believable critique of the work performed is crucial to a worker's motivation to improve.

The propositions discussed by Turner and Lawrence (1965) are ideals that many of the most forward thinking business enterprises have adopted, to the extent that job enlargement theory is now common place for such corporations. Educators of tomorrow could enjoy the same benefits in the coming years as many businesses have over the preceding few decades by nurturing a motivated student base.

Both business and public institutions constantly avow their commitment to expanding their knowledge base, argues Furedi (2006). So to must a student commit to the development of their knowledge base, they should be both dedicated and motivated to the process of learning. Indeed, the motivation an employee feels toward his or her job has to do with the design of

the job itself. Likewise, as argued above, a student's job should be carefully designed and communicated. Highly segmented and simplified jobs result in lower employee morale and output. Other consequences of low employee motivation include absenteeism and high turnover, both of which are very costly for any company. These are truths that are evidenced in the modern classroom. If the tasks set for a student display limited diversity during their academic career it is likely that a student's interest will depreciate; while a student may be enthusiastic to produce a formal academic essay during their first semester in college, by the end of a three to four year degree cycle, producing academic essays of a similar style no longer hold the same challenge and intrigue for the student. Student job enlargement serves as an opportunity for educators to maintain an exciting challenge for students throughout their studies.

In order to ensure a student remains consistent and enthusiastic in their approach to their studies, lecturers should be encouraged to experiment with diverse assessment methods and in class teaching techniques. Staff development should extend beyond a familiarity with their chosen topic to an in-depth knowledge of contemporary teaching methodology. For example, lecturers might encourage students to present their work in the Pecha Kucha format (six minute presentations, twenty slides for twenty seconds each). Similarly, with regard consequences of diminished student enthusiasm, absenteeism is likely to increase where subject delivery methodology fails to deviate from a standard process and submission deadlines are often missed when an assessment is considered a chore rather than an opportunity.

The notion of 'ownership' and pride in work is essential to student drive and enthusiasm. A student should feel compelled, excited by the work they are undertaking. Assessment design should dictate the learning outcomes, while promoting expressive freedom in the medium through which a student may choose to complete an assessment task. Ownership of work and varying levels of autonomy over the study techniques employed provides the student with the opportunity to grow academically and develop a broad skill set throughout their academic career.

As with conventional employee motivational theory, feedback and review provides a keystone element of the academic process. Often for administrative purposes educators are required to provide formal feedback that is consistent and measurable from student to student. This creates an impersonal atmosphere between student and educator. Both parties should be encouraged to engage in the feedback and analysis of their work in an open, informal atmosphere. As with 'job enlargement' the idea of 'student job enlargement' promotes empowerment and involvement in the education process. A student should feel actively engaged in the educational process and develop a broad range of skills during their time in education.

With the incorporation of the 'job enlargement' construct into assessment and course design the implications for educators becomes clear. This might alter the way business education is delivered as it reflects a professionalism and 'business like' approach to delivery and assessment. This was addressed by Huff in her Academy of Management address in 1999 where a greater focus on research in practice and engagement with industry was called for (Huff 1999). Her subsequent paper on the agenda of business schools addressed a number of points which would support our position on using 'job enlargement' (Huff 2001). Engaging with the student job enlargement would be to go beyond current business school operation, difficult and expensive though the process may be. Educators can ill afford to be regarded as

distributors of material, rather as partners in learning. Both students and staff must engage in the diversification process. Indeed, many of the key ideas that will inform the implementation of the student job enlargement process will come from close consultation with the student body.

### **3. Course/Assessment Design**

Assessment design should stipulate an appreciation of personal relevance. Throughout the assessment process the student must be aware of the merit of the task. While an assessment strategy may be clear to the academic who set it, it may not be immediately obvious to the student. It is likely a student may interpret a piece of academic work as an arbitrary undertaking required purely for the successful completion of a module. In this situation a student would likely engage only a limited commitment of effort and creativity, both fundamental objectives of any academic undertaking. There is a challenge facing educators to illustrate the tangible benefits for a student from a given piece of work. Educators should be keen to allow the student the freedom to embrace their own individual interests to against the subject matter.

Furedi (2006) condemns many modern educational institutions, arguing that they engage in the transformation of knowledge into a product, and as a result deprive knowledge of any intrinsic value or meaning. It is argued here that intrinsic value should, in truth, be the heartbeat of academia. Indeed, Vroom (1964) maintained in his expectation theory that everyone works in expectation of some rewards, both extrinsic and intrinsic. The degree of reward influences the quality and quantity of work, and in turn productivity. While an academic career punctuated by high grades can, indeed, lead to extrinsic rewards such as a job offer with high remuneration the college experience should be a more enriching experience. Common extrinsic motivations like money and grades and fear of consequences (such as missing an assignment deadline) exist to varying degrees across institutions. However, it is the pursuit of improved intrinsic rewards in student motivation that may serve as the foundation for a more prosperous future in business pedagogy. As such it is important to explore how to give the stimulus in the student body in order to promote work motivation and productivity, and ultimately a more gratifying educational experience.

Intrinsic motivations are effective instruments to improve creativity and innovative performance (Deci and Ryan, 1985). The implementation of intrinsic motivators facilitates employee self-motivation as well as being beneficial for innovative behaviour (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Based on this belief in the power of intrinsic motivations, the education process can benefit from embracing tested motivation techniques in a learning environment.

### **4. Contract of Study**

Institutionally, engaging in a contracting process improves the quality of services, and develops new methods for service productions (Tikkanen 2011). The pursuit of an improved standard of service should be a prerequisite for all higher level academic organizations. As the establishment of a contract between an employer and employee assists in clarification of roles and objectives, so to a contract of study would define responsibilities and expectations of a student from a university. A contract serves as a point of reference between both parties.

Belew (2011) outlines four direct benefits of an established contract. These are: 1) defining the scope of work, 2) expression of additional services, 3) identify expectations and

responsibilities of the employer (or college), 4) establishes the context of the relationship. Applying these parameters to an educational contract of study allows the investigation of implied benefits.

*Defining the Scope of Work:*

When entering into a contract of work it is likely that a number of tasks *could* be tackled. Indeed, the requirement of employees often escalates at an alarming rate. Having a clearly defined set of goals, and work load expectation benefits both parties. In an educational context, the benefit of such a contract of study would be for both parties to know, and agree to study commitments, extracurricular activities, part-time work limitations and much more. These criteria would crystallize the demands placed upon the student at the beginning of their education in a new environment where they ought to be masters of their own scholastic destiny.

*Expression of Additional Services:*

At this juncture, both parties have the opportunity to address additional desires. For example, a gifted athlete may choose to represent a college sports team rather than take a prescribed elective module. This would allow a student to engage with the college in more than just academic terms, benefitting both parties as the student identifies with the college he represents. In addition to student pride in the above example, the institution could identify a particular student's language skills, and encourage the student to put these skills to use, either by taking an additional language course, or offering tutoring to beginners.

Further to this, additional services should be considered at the expiration of the contract (Belew, 2011). It would be prudent from both an academic and commercial point of view, if both parties were obligated to timetable a discussion on future options upon course completion. A college could use this opportunity sell post-graduate courses to undergraduate students, and students may crave additional support upon the completion of their studies.

*Identify (Student) Expectations and (College) Responsibilities:*

Establishing a written contract would allow students to address concerns regarding diversity in assessment, and variety in course instruction. Additionally, a student may, at this point, enquire about opportunities for additional course credit. Likewise, it follows that the college commit to a set of obligations. This should not be limited to standardised commitments (for example: 'This college will provide library facilities'), rather there should be an opportunity to establish course or student specific minimum standards (for example: 'The college might commit to providing guest lecturers from industry to support and maintain the philosophy behind the concept of job enlargement.').

*Establish the Context of the Relationship*

Characterizing the context of the student/college relationship presents higher level institutions with an opportunity to clearly state the expectations of a student and, importantly, the consequences of failing to meet these expectations. The attainment of an accredited qualification should not be taken for granted. Merely paying admission fees and completing course work should not be sufficient to gain such a qualification. A contract of study will allow a college to outline how the student is a representative

of the college and at all times should act in such a manner – establishing that a student should be proud of their affiliation with the institution.

These four benefits are by no means an exhaustive list; however, they do highlight the strength and validity of the contract of study as part of student job enlargement. Educators can facilitate and encourage students to educate themselves through independent reading and scholarship, entrusting them with the autonomy of the enlarged role of the student.

The establishment of a detailed contract of study should not be a mere formality shoe-horned into a first year student induction. Rather, it should be a meaningful process that both the college pride themselves upon and inspire their student body with an innovative confidence. While consequences of such a contract can be argued, such as the additional work load and lack of formalisation across courses, it is argued here that these problems are, in fact, the very reason such a contract would be an impressively positive step forward. Job enlargement would allow modern education to escape the shackles of conformity. By engaging with the student job enlargement idea education can become dynamic, flexible and innovative. As such, a contract of study would afford the student a sense of identity and relationship with their college.

## **5. Sample Recommendations for Course/Assessment Design**

Zhou (2011) proposed numerous intrinsic reward criteria from literature on employee motivation. A selection from these criteria is proposed as actionable motivation theory that may lead to enhanced student engagement and a richer pursuit of knowledge. Zhou's (2011) proposal is thus:

“Intrinsic motivations (including setting innovation objectives, assessing and recognising innovation, performance improvement feedback, providing extensive learning opportunities, job rotation, work flexibility, and maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationships) have a positive impact on the innovative behaviour of employees.”

*Setting Innovation Objectives:* Educators need to design their courses to allow students the freedom to experiment with the learning process. Whereas once a written essay was required, students should now be free to choose the medium through which they submit assessment, be it an essay, a poster, a video, a presentation, etc.

*Assessing and Recognising Innovation:* Educators should grade both for content and, importantly, originality. Educators must encourage students new to third level education to experiment and faculty should recognise such exploration in their assessment design by incorporating a percentage of the assessment grade to innovation and invention.

*Performance Improvement Feedback:* While feedback and review is present at almost all institutions for continuous assessment work, very often term exams are returned with solely a grade, often absent of helpful academic commentary. This could be achieved with reasonable ease by requiring lecturers to give an exam feedback seminar to students at the beginning of the following semester or term. This seminar would highlight the key strengths and weaknesses of exam papers, and acknowledge excellent answers and contributions from particular students.

*Provide Extensive Learning Opportunities:* The development of a reward structure for extracurricular activities would enrich the learning process. For example, a student joining a college club or society will naturally develop skills such as networking and teamwork. Involvement in such activities will enhance the college experience and should be actively encouraged. While this would represent a considerable challenge to incorporate this into course design it would be remiss to ignore such an idea on account of its complexity. On courses that require the completion of ‘One Elective per Semester’ could read ‘Academic Credit for Extracurricular Activity’.

*Job Rotation:* Students of business disciplines should be required to undertake elective course from a non-business discipline. For example, a management student may choose to attend a film studies course; a marketing student may attend a history course. Where possible, students undertaking elective courses should be encouraged to submit cross-disciplinary assessments.

*Work Flexibility:* Non-examination student assessment tends to be evaluated for correctness of methodology rather than in terms of originality, power, and worth of ideas developed and tested. Naturally this assessment mentality indirectly encourages conformity amongst students, a learning style cultivated at second level and continued through college education. Where possible course and assessment design should encourage flexibility. This can be done by giving the assessor license to award marks for innovative approaches to learning in the assessment grading metric.

*Maintaining Harmonious Interpersonal Relationships:* The relationship between student and the educational institute should extend beyond the classroom. For example, loyalty to a college can be created if a student represents the college at sporting events or on a debate team. Faculty should be aware of, and promote campus activities and student successes away from the classroom. Teachers and lecturers should be considered an ally in the education process.

## **6. Conclusion and Future Work**

Development is the product of great debate. The notions of both the contract of study and student job enlargement carries with them many contentious issues. This is both beneficial and desired. These conceptual ideas represent innovation and imagination. Both principles merit further investigation and consideration. These propositions champion the idea of a student engaging with their education as an employee might their work.

The concept of student job enlargement celebrates the spirit of education. It celebrates the quest for learning and the quest for knowledge. An enlarged student model would embrace the voyage of discovery. Great lessons can be learned by engaging with this journey. The student job enlargement construct is provided as an alternative to the mass production of structured knowledge, rather it is the embodiment of intrinsic reward and personal growth.

Both course and assessment design can be utilized to embrace the job enlargement construct. Indeed, by engaging the student with the contract of study academic institutions would be afforded a new avenue of exploration in course and assessment design. The principles outlined in the contract of study would provide an opportunity for institutions from the outset to establish the value and worth of innovation and creativity.

It would be remiss to suggest either ideal would not benefit from further exploration. The contract of study would benefit from further research into its design, implementation and control. Naturally, it would be faced with numerous obstacles, for which only dedicated review would help overcome.

Likewise, the concept of student job enlargement and its impact on intrinsic reward via course design would benefit from further consideration. One limitation is issues surrounding the practical implementation of the intrinsic reward criteria. An implied benefit of the student as an educational worker proposition, intrinsic reward development would require considerable commitment by academic staff to process such changes.

Finally, education institutes should be enthusiastically exploring alternative methods of engaging students. There are as many different methods of motivating employees today as there are for empowering students during their journey of learning. Such trial and experimentation is the heartbeat of innovative pedagogy. Still, some strategies for employee development are prevalent across all organizations striving to improve staff morale and productivity. The best employee stimulus efforts will focus on what the employees deem to be important. It is with this in mind that educational institutions should actively research the desires and recommendations from their cohort of students.

The challenge for educators and designers is to understand and explore how best they might use the recommendations proposed by the student body. The application of conventional employee theory to student engagement, as set out above, is but one proposition in what should be an endless pursuit of excellence in learning.

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