

Materials for Live-Thru Case Histories

Overdue Book Notice Project

Section B: In-Class Procedures and Questions

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- The class of 40 students was divided randomly into four teams. Each team is working the Overdue Book problem.
- Each team was told that the delivery date was critical to get the software product on the market to meet the Christmas rush. Their company stock has recently fallen significantly and the CEO is counting on them to deliver a system on time with the quality customers have come to expect.
- Lecture on the importance of cooperation and teamwork; let the teams help one another. Do not grade on a curve.
- At week 2 ask each team to email the Professor a weekly, unstructured progress report.
- One team asked how many books there were in the library. This indicated that they might be concerned about performance issues and peak loads. There were 2,000 books in the library.
- All of the teams questioned elements of the system administration problem of having to leave the computer clean after using it.
- One team tumbled onto the need to save the programs and the data on a floppy weekly.
- One team questioned the need to load windows; I said that they did not have to.
- All the teams focused on understanding the requirements. None organized into tasks. There was no evidence of appointment of a project manager.
- Three teams questioned the computer available for their work. I told them that they could use any computer they had.
- There were many questions about how the library worked. One team wanted to build more than required. I pointed out how good that would be and asked for more. They backed off as they saw the trap of ‘creeping featurism.’
- Teams are tried to be democratic, rather than selecting a leader.
- They asked, “Does each student have one teacher?” Each class had one teacher, and each class had many students. This good question gets at the important issue of outputting the reports. At week 4 find the best person and any other person and rotate them to another team. Tell the team that they are leaving that one person was promoted and that the other left the company.

- Each team presents their product at in class during the classes in the sixth and seventh weeks. They hand in whatever written documentation they have and post documents and documentation materials on a web site for all to see.