

Contracting for Instructional Development

A Follow-Up

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Abstract. Leitzman, Walter, Earle, and Myers (1979-80) suggest that contracting is a viable process for instructional developers. After looking more closely at their model, we reaffirm the value of contracts in instructional development consulting. Given our experiences and review of consultation literature, we conclude that the original rationale, process, and model do indeed have merit. However, we also find areas that need clarification. We review the contract elements and propose a new element, tasks. We make a distinction between project goals/objectives and instructional goals/objectives. Also, we explore when to contract and how to introduce the client to the contracting process. Recent experiences identify some benefits of using contracts. We have found that they provide a framework for building team relationships, handling project transitions, and providing for project documentation and evaluation.

What makes instructional developers effective consultants? Few researchers have studied the application of effective consulting techniques in development projects (Bratton, 1979-80; Durzo, Diamond & Doughty, 1979). Leitzman, Walter, Earle, and Myers (1979-80) found that contracting, as one consulting technique, reduces threats to client-consultant

relationships and improves the chances of successful development projects. They called for inquiry into the methods by which contracts can be negotiated. This led us to take a close look at our use of contracting in an instructional development (ID) setting at the university level.

This article reports our findings. We reaffirm many aspects of the model proposed by Leitzman et al. (1979-80). However, our experience suggests that some aspects need clarifying. Also, in light of our experiences we would like to share additional insights.

Clarifications

Contract Elements

A review of the literature on consultation identified two major groups of elements commonly found in consulting models (Bell, 1979; Bell & Nadler, 1979; Brokes, 1975; Davies, 1975; Kolb & Frohman, 1979). One group includes goals,

Blocher, 1975; Brokes, 1975). We prefer the more direct term "tasks."

Our experiences have shown that including "tasks" in a contract provides a means of listing specific activities required to attain project goals and objectives. In this way both client and developer can more easily recognize the relationship between tasks and goals. Figure 1 contains an example of how tasks relate to project goals and objectives. Thus we propose expanding the original model to include "tasks" (see Figure 2.)

Goal confusion. Clients often have difficulty distinguishing between project goals/objectives and instructional goals/objectives. In reviewing the sample contract used by Leitzman et al. (1979-80), we found the authors did not distinguish between these two types of goals. An understanding of this difference makes it possible to write a more useful contract.

The goals and objectives in the con-

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objectives, methods, resources, timelines, products and/or outcomes. These elements define project tasks. The other group includes roles, responsibilities, obligations, personnel, and expectations. These elements clarify relationships among project personnel.

Tasks: A new element. The literature supports the nine contract elements presented by Leitzman et al. (1979-80). However, we discover another element that describes the specific tasks involved in a project. Writers use a variety of terms for this element: methods, procedures, strategies, plans (Bell & Nadler, 1979;

tracting model refer to the project itself, not to instructional content. They state what the client and developer seek to accomplish through the project. If one of the project goals is to develop instructional goals, then those instructional goals are part of the intended product(s) or outcome(s) of the project. Whether they appear in the contract depends on the client and developer. Figure 3 illustrates the two types of goals and objectives. Figure 4 illustrates a sample contract incorporating the new elements.

When to Contract

Leitzman et al. (1979-80) suggest that

contracting should occur soon after the initial meeting, but not until there is an understanding of the client's environment, the perceived problem(s), the proposed solutions, and any general information relevant to the client's style and concerns. Davies (1975) also indicates that developers negotiate contracts at the beginning of a project or during the entering stage of the relationship. Brokes (1975) divides this entry stage into three subphases—contact, negotiation, contract.

We have found that the length of the entry stage varies from client to client and situation to situation. Hence, we reaffirm that developers proceed with the contracting process only when they feel that there is sufficient understanding of the project and its environment.

How to Introduce

Some clients are unsure of how an instructional developer can help them. Others are concerned about observations of their teaching—a sensitive issue. As a result, these clients could feel threatened by the development process. Using the term "contract" can also lead to some misconceptions. Most people associate a legal meaning with this term.

Therefore, developers must introduce the concept of contracting carefully. Developers should clarify, at the outset, their definitions of contracting, consulting, and development. There is no set method by which to approach a client. The developer needs to ascertain how the client might react to the contracting process.

If the client appears open and confident in working with us, we establish the contract early in the relationship. However, if the client appears closed and hesitant, we begin with activities that clarify and define some of the elements before presenting the concept of contracting. For example, we generate goals, establish objectives, or discuss who will be responsible for the various tasks. We document these meetings for later inclusion in the contract.

Developers can use several variations of these approaches when introducing the concept of contracts. The dynamics of the situation determine the appropriate approach.

Insights

Team Relationships

The process of creating a contract serves to build relationships between the client and developer. Relationships are also established with others who work on the project. We have identified two types of relationships (see Figure 5).

Goal	Objective	Task(s)
To develop and improve as a teacher.	To examine own performance as a teacher through feedback on teaching skills.	Video-taping of teaching, student feedback, peer observation.

Figure 1. Relationship of tasks to project goals and objectives.

1. *Overview:* What characterizes the project? What is the project about?
2. *Personnel:* Who will participate in the project? What roles will they take? What do they expect?
3. *Goals:* What do client and consultant seek to accomplish through this project?
4. *Objectives:* What specific outcomes do the project goals dictate?
5. *Tasks:* What specific activities will attain project goals and objectives?
6. *Resources:* What do the participants need to attain project goals?
7. *Management:* Who will administer the project? How will participants coordinate project tasks?
8. *Products:* What tangible outcomes will result? Who will "own" them?
9. *Evaluation:* How will the participants assess the project? How will they review the products and the consulting relationship?
10. *Renegotiation:* How can participants change the contract? What is the plan to incorporate changes that occur?

Figure 2. Contract elements.

	Goal	Objective
Project	To learn about course development.	To engage in course development activities.
Course	To help the students understand the role of a camp counselor.	After viewing the slide/tape, the student will be able to state four different tasks of a camp counselor.

Figure 3. Types of goals and objectives.

PROJECT AGREEMENT: Dr. Alan Banks* Teaching Fellowship Project

One-team relationship. This first type of relationship is based on establishing one project team. Members of this team include the primary client, the primary developer, and others working on the project from the client system and/or the development system. (Our emphasis will be on the developer system. We mention the client system so you will be aware that it does exist, and that there may be more than one client involved in project activities.)

The primary developer (PD) is the person who makes the initial contact with the client. This person manages the project and performs consulting and development tasks. The development system (DS) includes the resources of the agency in which the PD functions. These resources include scriptwriters, message designers, production personnel, evaluators, and other developers. Include in the team only those people necessary for completing project tasks.

Contracting explores the relationships between client and PD, client and DS, and PD and DS. The written contract specifies the roles of each member of the team. In this relationship, once the team establishes the contract, the PD does not need to be involved each time people from the DS contact the client.

For example, a recent product development project illustrates the one-team relationship. The PD met with the client to identify project goals. One goal was to develop a slide/tape presentation. The PD contacted a scriptwriter and a production supervisor. The PD, client, scriptwriter, and production supervisor met to determine roles and expectations. A contract was the outcome of that meeting. This contract listed specific tasks each was to be responsible for, and how the team would manage the tasks, and evaluate progress. Throughout the project the scriptwriter and production supervisor contacted the client directly. At times all members of the team would meet to review progress and make decisions.

Two-team relationship. This second relationship is based on establishing two teams. One team consists of the primary client and the primary developer. The other team includes the primary developer and those from the development system working on the project. We use these two teams when there is no need for the DS to contact the client directly. The PD plans and coordinates project activities performed by people in the development system.

Two contracts are written for the two-team relationship. The client and PD negotiate a project contract. This contract

1. Overview

This project is concerned with continued development of the courses E974, E975, E604, taught by Dr. Alan Banks in the Department of Engineering. Dr. Banks will also develop a seminar on teaching engineering, as well as refine his own teaching skills.

2. Personnel

a. Identification

The client is Dr. Alan Banks of the Department of Engineering in the School of Sciences. He has been awarded a Fellowship Grant, a postdoctoral teaching fellowship.

Other members of the client system who will be involved in this project are Gene Davis and Linda Childs. Both Gene and Linda are Associate Instructors in the Department of Engineering. Mark Laws, a work study student, will also be working on project activities.

The project's instructional development consultant is Suella Walter of the Division of Development and Special Projects (DDSP), Audio-Visual Center (AVC), Indiana University. Other DDSP staff will be involved as necessary for additional support or specialty areas.

The project's teaching consultant is the Assistant Director of the Fellowship Grant.

Other university agencies will be involved in the project as needed. Some of these agencies include: Teaching Resource Center (TRC), the Bureau for Evaluative Studies and Testing (BEST), Library Services (CARS), an Audio-Visual Subcenter, and Administrative Computing Services.

b. Expectations

The client expects the consultants will:

1. provide expertise in instructional development and faculty development
2. manage and direct the project, and facilitate the process of completing the Fellowship goals
3. give concrete suggestions concerning the client's teaching approaches, methods, materials, and techniques
4. identify resources as needed and obtain them

The consultants expect that the client(s) will:

1. provide content expertise to the project
2. work collaboratively with the consultants on project activities
3. take responsibility for locating resources suggested (both human and material resources)
4. provide the consultants with the opportunity to observe and videotape lectures and discussion sessions
5. use suggestions made concerning his (their) teaching
6. share problems and concerns about the project

Suella Walter expects that the teaching consultant will:

1. manage the teaching consultation process (TCP)
2. inform of project related activities
3. participate fully in the consulting relationship
4. interact and advise with respect to project activities
5. share problems and concerns about the project
6. provide and share her teaching expertise
7. manage the Grant related activities (e.g., round table, library resources)

The teaching consultant expects that Suella Walter will:

1. be responsible for project management
2. inform of project related activities
3. interact and advise with respect to the TCP
4. provide and share her instructional development expertise

3. Goals

- a. to assess and improve teaching
- b. to review alternative approaches to teaching engineering
- c. to review and revise courses (E974, E975, E604)
- d. to implement revised courses, and determine the effectiveness of those changes
- e. to report the results of project activities

Figure 4. Sample contract incorporating the new elements.

4. Objectives

- a. to identify course objectives and strategies for E974
- b. to identify teaching strengths and areas for improvement
- c. to review course evaluation forms
- d. to understand the advantages and disadvantages of teaching choices
- e. to design and coordinate a weekly teaching seminar
- f. to incorporate supplementary material in E974
- g. to make additional revisions to E974
- h. to review and revise E975
- i. to revise E604
- j. to prepare final reports
- k. to communicate the results of the project activities to a wide audience

5. Tasks

- a. Course development
 1. identify E974 objectives by using a modified goal sort activity
 2. analyze objectives and restructure
 3. generate alternative teaching strategies
- b. Use Perry's structured approach
 1. have students complete Perry Essays (Protocols)
- c. Engage in the teaching consultation process
 1. observe lecture and discussion class
 2. videotape lecture and discussion class
 3. give TABS questionnaire to students
 4. review sessions after each procedure
 5. analyze data to suggest changes for improvement
 6. implement teaching improvement activities
 7. assess impact of teaching improvement activities
- d. Review course evaluation forms
 1. determine important elements of a form
 2. develop an individualized course evaluation form
- e. Prepare for and design a weekly seminar on teaching in engineering
 1. obtain relevant material on general teaching, on how to teach students new ways to think, on teaching engineering
 2. order materials that could be possible texts for the seminar
 3. read relevant materials
 4. brainstorm possible seminar topics
 5. design seminar, develop syllabus
 6. implement the seminar
- f. Revise courses
 1. develop slide presentation for E974
 2. select appropriate films to use in E974
 3. modify 2 packaged interactive computer programs for use in E974
 4. reformulate objectives and intended audience for E604
 5. redesign laboratory and field experience part of E604
 6. select music to introduce each lecture in E974
- g. Report activities
 1. write a report to Teaching Fellowship
 2. write a final project report (from DDSP)
 3. make presentation to faculty and students
 4. prepare article for a journal
 5. prepare article for a university newsletter and/or
 6. prepare presentation for the university community

6. Resources

The client will provide content expertise and secretarial assistance for typing course related print material (syllabus, etc.) and any major xeroxing of those materials.

Two AI's are available to assist the client. A work study student is available to assist the client in retrieving identified resources (materials). Financial support for any outcomes will be obtained through the Fellowship Grant. If necessary, the client will contact other relevant campus resources for financial support.

The consultants will provide instructional and faculty development expertise needed to attain project goals and objectives. The consultant system will also provide staff assistance where required for specialty areas. Limited xeroxing will be handled by the consultants for development materials and project documents.

University agencies such as the Audio-Visual Center (AVC), Bureau of Evaluative Studies and Testing (BEST), Teaching Resource Center (TRC), etc., are able to provide services to the client. The client can contact these agencies directly.

Figure 4 continued on next page.

specifies the expectations of each. Both PD and client agree that the client does not need to work with the development system. The PD takes responsibility for work that will be performed by others in the DS. The PD then negotiates a contract with DS members needed to complete project tasks. The contract specifies the roles and expectations of each person involved.

For example, a course development project illustrates the two-team relationship. The client and PD meet to revise a particular course. They write a contract to establish a working relationship. The developed course includes mediated self-instructional modules. At this point, the PD contacts production services within the development system. The PD and production supervisor write a contract to make explicit what each expects from the other. The PD continues to contact the client to obtain approval and content advice at various stages in the process. The production supervisor works with the developer, not the client.

Transitions

Instructional development projects often go through several phases before attaining project goals. These phases often require a different method of consultation, a different set of tasks, and/or different personnel. We call the moving from one phase to another a project transition. The project's success often depends on how well transitions occur.

Contracting allows for smooth transitions. Because consultation is a continuous process, the contract needs to reflect project changes. New information, new tasks, and environmental influences alter the original contract. The contract element, renegotiation, provides a mechanism for changing the contract. By including this element in the contract, both client and developer recognize and accept the possibility of changes to their initial agreement.

A recent ID project illustrates the problem of failing to renegotiate the contract during project transitions. The first phase of the project concentrated on course development. The developer's role was that of a process consultant. The client expected to take part in the process as well as make all final decisions. As the first phase neared completion, work began on the design of a series of filmstrips to use in the course. However, neither client nor developer recognized this as a second phase in the project. As a result, no effort was made to renegotiate roles and expectations.

The new tasks required the developer to

7. Management

Planning and feedback meetings are scheduled on a weekly basis. The Fall Semester meetings will be held on Thursdays from 8:30 to 9:15. Wednesday mornings may be used occasionally for special sessions.

Memoranda will be used to review decisions, assignments, and any project agreement changes.

A budget is available through the Fellowship Grant. This budget will be used for the purchase of relevant books and other resources. Additional monies have been provided for purchasing the Perry Essays (Protocols). If any additional funds are needed, the client will explore any options that may be available to each system. The client will be informed of the budget status as the project progresses.

A timeline has been established (see project chart) for project activities. Adjustments will be made as required.

8. Products

a. Reports

1. the client will write a report for the Teaching Fellowship Grant
2. a final report of this project detailing the process and its outcomes will be written by the consultants

b. Presentations

1. demonstration of small group discussion
2. Perry's Structured Approach—article and/or verbal presentations

c. Other

1. slide sets, ordered and developed
2. revised syllabi for E604, E974, E975
3. new syllabus for seminar on teaching engineering

9. Evaluation

The client's report and the consultant's final report will serve to formally evaluate the project. Two meetings will be scheduled for the client(s) and consultants to evaluate the project's process and outcomes. The first meeting will be held soon after Thanksgiving. The second meeting will be held towards the end of the Spring Semester.

Informal evaluations will occur throughout the project. Client and consultants will use the project goals and objectives as criteria by which to evaluate progress with respect to project content as well as the process of the consultation.

10. Renegotiation

Any part of this agreement may be revised at any time by mutual consent.

*Client(s) name(s) and department have been changed for professional reasons.

Figure 4 (concluded).

take a product design role and the client a subject matter expert role. Both client and developer soon became frustrated by trying to perform new tasks while remaining in old roles. As a result, the project dragged on, an inappropriate instructional medium was selected, and inefficient management procedures were used. To complicate matters, personnel changes occurred during the second phase. Renegotiating the contract at the start of the second phase and at the time of the personnel change would have avoided these problems.

As each phase of a project ends, we suggest the client and developer renegotiate the contract to clarify the new roles, responsibilities, tasks, and expectations. In this way, smooth transitions between phases avoid potential threats to a project's success.

Other Uses of Contract Elements

Project documentation. Documentation is a collection of decisions, materials,

products, and insights gathered throughout a project. It records the events and character of a project. Developers refer to this record when reviewing decisions, planning future meetings, and evaluating progress. Lowe and Schwen (1975) present components of documentation which are similar to our contract elements. However, there are important differences between a contract and documentation.

The contract plans for and outlines project tasks, personnel roles, and management procedures. Documentation details what happens in the project as it progresses. We have found that the contract provides a framework for subsequent documentation and project reports. Each contract element suggests an area to document.

Project evaluation. We use contracts to evaluate a project with respect to both outcomes (products) and the consulting process itself. Basically, the elements of a

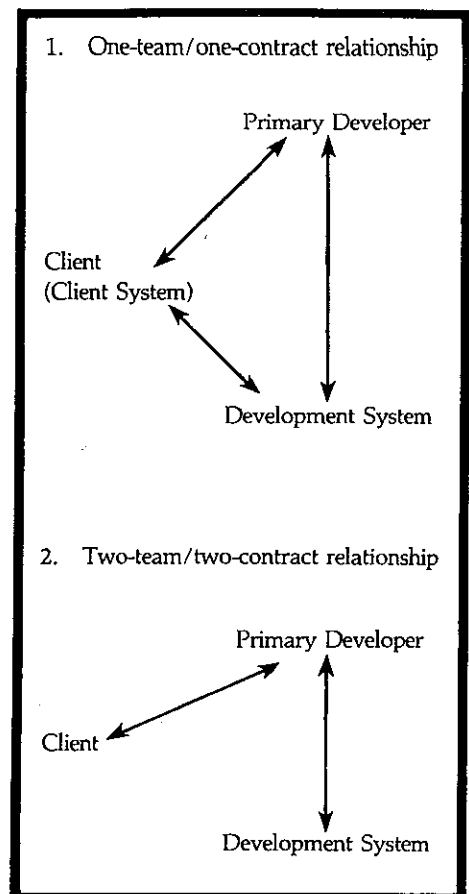


Figure 5. Team relationships.

contract become criteria to judge project success (Swartz & Lippitt, 1979; Ulschak, 1978). The information contained in each element provides a basis for determining whether objectives were attained. By reviewing the contract together, both client and developer can evaluate the success of the consulting relationship as well as project outcomes.

Conclusion

Although use of a contract does not necessarily guarantee project success, a contract can help instructional developers to be more effective consultants. Many variables affect the success of a project and the effectiveness of an instructional developer. Contracting is one of these. Although we did not systematically attempt to study the effects of contracts on project success, we found that contracts improved not only our relationships with clients but also our management of project activities.

However, the matter of consultant effectiveness demands our professional attention as instructional developers. The effects of contracts on the development process continue to merit further inquiry.

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