

Computer Simulation and Learning Theory, Volume 3, 1976

RAISE II: FIRST YEAR

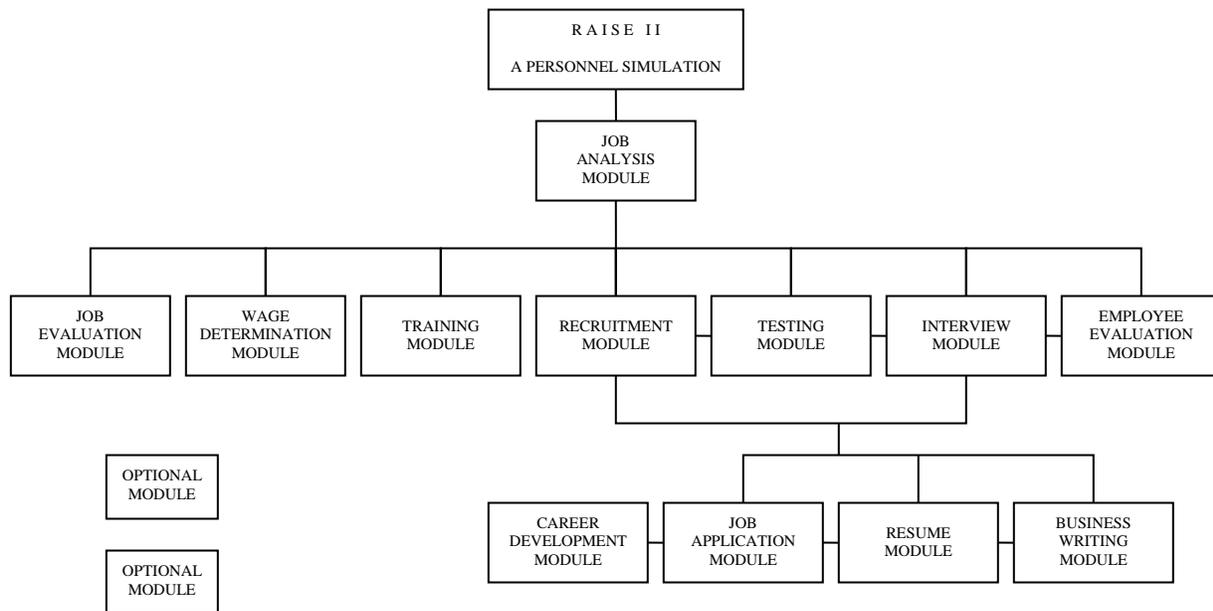
EXPERIENCES WITH A PERSONNEL SIMULATION

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RAISE II, A Personnel Simulation is a simulation designed for use in management, personnel, general business, and small business classes. It was designed from a series of short individual lectures and assignments in personnel. From this series of short individual projects and assignments, and input from students and businessmen, the twelve basic modules of RAISE II were created.

RAISE II, an acronym for Recruitment, Analysis, Interview, Selection, and Employee Evaluation, is a personnel simulation in which participants assume the role of Personnel Assistants for a company which specializes in the performance of personnel activities on a consulting basis. The manual explains that the founders of RAISE II have developed expertise in all areas of personnel, enabling them to accept contracts ranging from the performance of a large part of a company's personnel work, including job analysis, testing, recruitment, interviewing, selection, wage determination, training, and employee evaluation.

(See Figure 1.)



During the simulation, the participant also assumes the role of Job Applicant, applying for one or more of the positions made available through the efforts of other Personnel Assistants

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employed by RAISE II. The Job Applicant may also be involved in the preparation of resumes, a career development process, and correspondence important to the application task.

GOALS OF RAISE II

RAISE II is a simulation which allows the participant to practically apply classroom and textbook material on management and personnel administration to a unified, realistic situation. Constructed in modular form which the overall framework of a Personnel Consulting Firm, RAISE II allows the instructor or training director to select the most relevant modules and use them in a variety of classroom situations and time periods.

The primary goal of RAISE II is to involve the participant in the application of personnel principles. Individual involvement has proven to be a worthwhile learning technique. RAISE II goes beyond the world of definitions, outlines, and examples. It gives the participant the framework to actually work out major aspects of a personnel program for a job with which the participant is actually familiar or one in which the participant has worked.

RAISE II also provides the participant with experience in preparation for and involvement in the job application process. This realistic experience gives the participant confidence in his or her own efforts to secure a satisfying career position.

AN EMPHASIS ON FLEXIBILITY

RAISE II is constructed in a manner which maximizes the flexibility of its material. This is most evident in the actual applications of RAISE II. In a simple application of the simulation, using only five of the twelve modules, RAISE II serves as a supplement in a class titled Organizational Management. The textbook being used is an introductory text on management and organization. The only material presented in the book on personnel practices is one half of a chapter. This is the only contact these students will have with personnel and management in their business program.

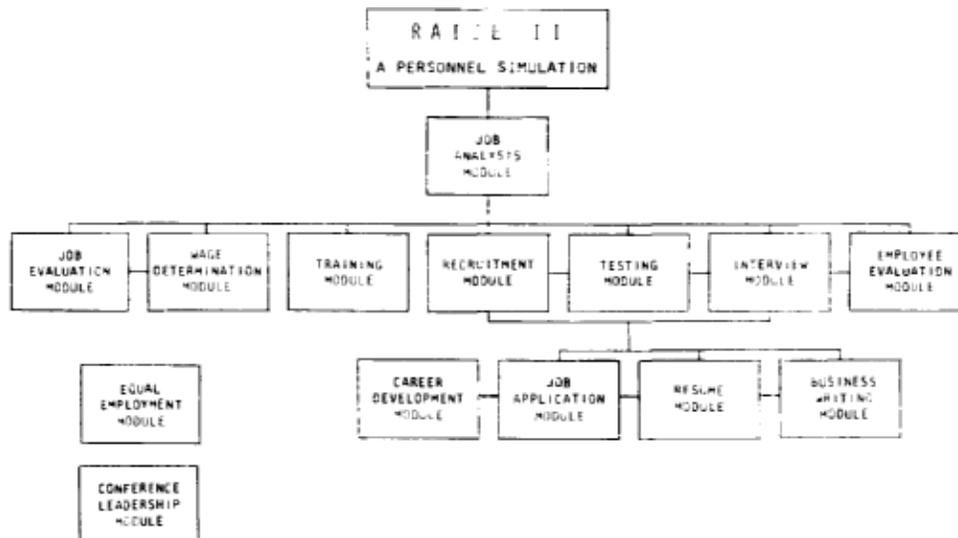
The activities of RAISE II are spread out over a four to six week period. During the first four weeks, students are exposed to the fundamentals of personnel theory. They also complete several assignments in personnel: the evaluation of a printed interview, the preparation of a short employee evaluation form, and participation in an "in-basket" training exercise. Material is presented to supplement the summaries contained in the simulation. The final two weeks are devoted to other management topics while the students have an opportunity to complete the various modules of RAISE II. The modules used in this application are: JOB ANALYSIS, RECRUITMENT, INTERVIEW, EMPLOYEE EVALUATION, and JOB APPLICATION.

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In a longer application of RAISE II, this one in a basic personnel course titled Management of Human Resources, the simulation is the main focus of the course, accounting for more than 50% of the time, effort, and student grade for the course. In this situation a textbook on personnel is used and the material contained in the RAISE II summaries complements the extensive materials in the text. RAISE II is extended throughout the course, using all twelve of the modules, with the RESUME MODULE, BUSINESS WRITING MODULE, and CAREER DEVELOPMENT MODULE as optional student projects. Most students choose to do at least two of these three optional modules. This application has been used in both summer and full semester situations with results satisfying to both the instructor and the students.

OPTIONAL MODULES - INCREASED FLEXIBILITY

In another application of RAISE II, two new modules, prepared by the author, create a brand new setting for the simulation. In a class concentrating on the employment function of personnel, an advanced course for students who have already taken the basic course, eight of the basic RAISE II modules plus two new optional modules, form almost 90% of the course content. The modules used in this course, their relationships, and the two new modules are shown in Figure 2.



The work in this application of RAISE II focuses on the employment function of personnel and its role in society today. Because it is an advanced course in personnel where all students have taken a course in personnel theory and many students

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have actual personnel experience or have completed RAISE II, the class time does not have to be used in explaining the basic material that the students are working with. The two optional modules provide the real framework for this application of RAISE II.

The first of these optional modules is the CONFERENCE MODULE which gives the student information and experience in participating and running a management conference. It is this module which sets the entire framework for the course. As explained earlier, RAISE II is constructed as a personnel consulting firm. In the CONFERENCE MODULE, students are provided with information on how to conduct a staff conference around their work for RAISE II. Most of the course time is then spent exploring the issues involved in completing the work of RAISE II. The "Personnel Assistants" of RAISE II discuss the current issues involved in employment, for example, the preparation of effective recruiting campaigns or the impact of Equal Employment Opportunity Legislation, and also have the opportunity to participate and lead a staff conference. Individual students, or small groups of students, are assigned a particular class time in which to prepare the conference, including the selection of materials and the complete organization of the evening's class. When the instructor, the Regional Director of RAISE II, wants to present certain materials, for example, a related structured experience, he or she works this out with the students responsible for planning that particular staff conference. This approach to RAISE II provides a complete atmosphere for the simulation throughout the course.

The second module is the EQUAL EMPLOYMENT MODULE which focuses on the role of Equal Employment Opportunity Legislation and its impact on every phase of the company's recruitment and employment operations. The overwhelming impact of Equal Opportunity Legislation is so great that it affects all of the work which the participants in the simulation complete for this application.

The module is constructed like all of the other modules in RAISE II. It includes the one-page summary of information and the specific bibliographic sources. In addition, this module contains a set of guidelines for interviewing, testing, and recruiting within the framework of Equal Employment Legislation. Given this information, all of the work the Personnel Assistants do for the simulation, their job descriptions, recruitment campaigns, interviewing, and testing procedures are all evaluated against the Equal Employment guidelines. In addition, the module contains a sample of a recommended Equal Employment Opportunity reporting and tracking form to familiarize the participant with the recordkeeping systems associated with the government regulations. As support of this work, participants purchase the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT guidebook and are given a series from a local newspaper which covers equal

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employment problems and experiences. Sessions dealing with equal opportunity are also conducted in the conference fashion as indicated above.

The flexibility of RAISE II has also been useful in other applications. Emphasis can be given to existing modules or new modules can be written to emphasize current topics in personnel. This flexibility has definitely contributed to the initial success of RAISE II.

THE FIRST YEAR

RAISE II is not a "new simulation." It was introduced less than two months after its creation and initial printing to the membership of the Association for Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, at their second annual meeting in 1975. Since that introduction, RAISE II has been presented at the North American Simulation and Gaming Association meeting, and more importantly, adopted by several schools around the country. As a new simulation, the experiences of RAISE II in the last year are important to consider.

The initial printing of RAISE II was small, designed to produce enough copies for two classes of personnel management and sample copies for prospective publishers. It was originally hoped that RAISE II would be commercially published by the end of the year. After the unsuccessful presentation of the book to commercial publishers, a plan was developed to publish the simulation without major printing support. While this decision has resulted in a different simulation than originally planned, it is a decision which has not been regretted.

Commercial publishers were not interested in RAISE II for the general reason that they felt the market was too small. Several publishers related that their evaluation of the material was good but that they did not see the market as large enough to justify a minimum production run of 10,000. Several other publishers saw the product as competing with existing or planned personnel materials.

Disappointed, but not discouraged, by this response, a promotional mailing was prepared for RAISE II. The result of this was six major adoptions of the book in late 1975 and four more in early 1976. Considering that simulations do not exhibit the same adoption pattern as major textbooks, this small adoption rate was considered successful.

Then, after further adoptions were achieved during the NASAGA meeting, a need for more copies was evident. The second printing of RAISE II, done conservatively for obvious financial reasons, was running out. If any publication is going to be a success, whether it is a commercially produced textbook or a series of exercise run off on a university's printing system, it must establish and maintain an image, one which is acceptable

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to the education world.

Most of the efforts expended developing RAISE II have been directed at establishing and maintaining an image of quality and concern for both the student and the instructor using the materials. As a result, the simulation was reprinted using a high quality printing process. A new supplier was located who produced a higher quality binder at a lower price. New materials were developed to create an image of a real consulting firm.

RAISE II, A Personnel Simulation, is not now a profitable enterprise. Any author considering publishing a simulation without the support of a commercial publisher should be prepared to spend several thousand dollars getting started. Within a year or two, the materials, while not profitable, can hopefully be meeting direct costs.

The experience however, produces problems and benefits far beyond the writing of the book itself. First, one runs into the never-ending battle of examination copies. While commercial publishers build several thousand free copies into their production and pricing structure, the small publisher cannot afford to do this. This restriction limits initial sale of a book, because some faculty members are unwilling to pay for a sample copy--even at a reduced rate or with a promise to refund if adopted. Others promise to pay and the bills remain long overdue.

Secondly, there is a continual problem of time. When a commercial publisher prints the book, most of the editing, production, and advertising work is never the concern of the author. In the experiences with RAISE II, all production planning and advertising efforts need to be coordinated with the same intensity as the original writing. The time demanded by correspondence, filling orders, and simply "keeping up" is extensive.

But these problems are outweighed, in the experience of RAISE II, by the benefits. When a book is written and published in the manner of RAISE II, it is possible to continually update materials and keep in touch with the marketplace. One of the biggest advantages of RAISE II in the first year has been the ability to make changes in accordance with student evaluations and the experiences of the different teachers using the materials. The project becomes more than a book, it becomes a very essential part of the writer's existence.

Publishing the book has also created a real experience in "running a business." In the classes where RAISE II is used, this creates excellent reference points for some of the materials covered. In all other classes, it provides realistic examples of all business functions. With a single book, it demands the work of a real business without the time of a full time management position.

CONCLUSION

RAISE II, A Personnel Simulation, has provided students with the experiences of working on an actual personnel project. At the same time, It has provided its author with experience in organizing a business and studying the process of creating experiential materials. The market for these materials is different from the large volume textbook market. For those people interested in simulation, the nature of the market and the experiences one might have in creating new materials are important to consider. The experiences discussed here are not presented as “sure to happen” characteristics, only guidelines, cautions, and encouragements after an educational and enjoyable year spent with RAISE II.