

Title: *Providing Incentives*

Project Member(s): *Jack Green*

Describe the problem, issue, or area of interest and the context. *Students are doing the least amount of work possible in order to get a C. I write comments and corrections on quizzes and projects, but students ignore them. The amount of effort I put into grading is inversely proportional to the work the student puts into the assignment!*

Students that have a difficult time at the beginning of the course, but improve throughout the term are penalized by averaging the early, low scores with the later, higher scores.

Define your desired goals, or “outcomes.” *I wanted to provide incentives to students so that they would take class more seriously and make substantial the consequences of not trying.*

Grades need to more accurately reflect the knowledge a student has when exiting the course as opposed to the “average” of their knowledge.

Describe your “indicators” of success. *I used exam and project scores from the beginning and the end of the course to see if there was improvement in content and presentation.*

Describe your project. *Assessment in the course is based on quizzes, projects and examinations.*

- **Quizzes (weekly) 4 points total:** *based completely on the homework; it assigned daily. The section number, page number and problem number are provided to the student including the exact problem as stated in the homework. Students can use their homework as a reference during the quiz. Ten minutes are allowed for the quiz. The intent is to have enough time to copy the work from the completed homework, but not enough time to answer the questions “cold turkey”. Four questions, each 1 point, no partial credit, some work must be shown to receive any credit for correct answers.*
- **Projects (weekly) 10 points total:** *higher difficulty and more involved than typical homework. Assignments must show all work in a neat and organized presentation. Any mistakes in content or presentation receive 0 or half credit. One week is allowed to fix mistakes or redo entire assignment; all missed points are returned if assignment is corrected. Students must come to me to fix mistakes in my presence. Students completing the project correctly the first time receive 2 points extra credit.*
- **Examinations (2 mid-terms, 1 final exam):** *Mid-term exam scores are averaged together and compared to the final exam score. The higher of these scores is combined with the quiz and project scores to calculate the final grade.*

Describe your results. *The project has been wildly successful. Exam scores tend to increase throughout the term. My office hours are always full (a downside since, now it’s hard to eat lunch in peace at school), but I have less grading to do while the grading I do is much less intensive. The students spend more time on the homework and on the projects and on presentation.*

Describe your evaluation methods. *I consider my project a success if:*

- *The student projects are better looking and the content is correct more often.*
- *Students ask more questions regarding homework and the quiz scores improve*
- *The final exam scores are higher than in previous terms before my project had been tried.*

If I were to do the project again, I changed a policy mid-term, I would make sure that student corrections be made during my office hours or sometime when I am present to see their work. Too often students were waiting for the assignment to be returned and then copy from someone who took the trouble to do it right the first time.