SESSION V SYMPOSIUM: COLLABORATION ON COMPUTER MODELING VIA COMPUTER CONFERENCING

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This symposium evolved from informal discussions among psychologists interested in the use of computer simulation for instructional and research purposes who attended the Simulation and Gaming Conference at Denison University in June 1976. The questions that were addressed at that time were as follows: (1) How could new models be constructed for instructional systems such as the EXPER SIM system (Main, 1974; Stout, 1974)? (2) How could the intellectual activity associated with model development aid faculty members, particularly those from smaller colleges, in meeting their personal and professional research needs?

A decision was made for interested faculty from different colleges to collaborate in the building of a model that would have instructional and research value. The major problem concerned how the collaboration could take place. One alternative was to try one's luck with the U.S. mail. The time lag and lack of dynamic interchange made this formal collaborative communication uninviting. Another alternative was to arrange occasional conference calls, perhaps coupled with the U.S. mail. The problems associated with getting

several busy faculty members to agree on a common time for such conference calls are enormous. What about face-to-face meetings? This alternative was not ruled out, but it was believed that such a meeting would be more productive if it could be preceded by dynamic interchanges.

The group decided to experiment with computer conferencing as a means of collaborative communication before and after a face-to-face meeting. The purpose of the computer and face-to-face conference was to build a computer simulation model. This symposium addresses the challenges and problems associated with such an endeavor and explores other potentialities of computer collaboration.

REFERENCES

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