

ABSEL'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING/EXPERIENTIAL EXERCISES: THE DECADE OF THE 1970S

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ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes the contributions of ABSEL's membership to the development of experiential learning and experiential exercises during the decade of the 1970s. It overviews papers written on experiential learning and experiential exercises by ABSEL contributors during each year of the decade, and for the decade as a whole. Further, it categorizes each experientially-related paper by the paper's major focuses to provide a systematic means of assembling literature reviews for related future research projects in various topical areas of experiential learning/experiential exercises. Also, year-by-year and decade-long statistics on types of delivery systems (i.e., regular paper session, workshop or demonstration, tutorial, panel or roundtable presentation) and extensiveness of published manuscripts (i.e., full paper, condensed paper) are provided. Finally, year-by-year and decade-long comparative statistics related to the number of proceedings papers written on the three primary pedagogies supported by ABSEL (i.e., experiential learning/experiential exercises, simulation games, and cases) also are included.

INTRODUCTION

On April 26-27, 1974 the first meeting of the Association for Business Simulation and Experiential Learning (ABSEL) was held at Oklahoma Christian College in Oklahoma City. With the establishment of ABSEL, a forum for the fast-emerging field of business-related experiential learning was now in place. From this very first meeting, it quickly became clear that two dominant themes would frame the field of experiential learning at future ABSEL conferences. The two primary thrusts were: (1)

experiential learning/experiential exercises (including, among others, such related pedagogies as internship programs, game show formats, assessment centers, COMPUSTAT tape usage, and Delphi forecasting) and (2) **simulation games** (non-computerized and computerized games). Even the awards given to ABSEL participants for innovation and research quality were initially divided and, to this day, remain split between these two focuses.

While the evolution of experiential learning over ABSEL's 25-year history has somewhat blurred the early clear distinction between simulation games and experiential exercises (see Graf & Kellogg, 1990), there remains three general differentiating factors between the two. Simulations generally are computerized, multiple-iteration experiences utilizing chained decisions; experiential exercises, on the other hand, are usually non-computerized, single-iteration exercises using non-chained decisions. The number of times a decision must be made for a participant to develop an understanding of the phenomena is at the heart of the concept of iterations. Simulations usually require a series or set of decisions (multiple iterations) to have full impact on learning, whereas, experiential exercises can have noticeable impact after only one iteration. Chained decisions, on the other hand, reflect the fact that the results of one set of decisions influence the decisions made in future iterations. For example, simulation games usually require participants to live with past decisions and do not allow them to begin anew for each trial. Experiential exercises, on the other hand, may require participants to make hundreds of unique decisions during the exercise, but with only one iteration--the results of one iteration are not the input or starting point for a second iteration, as is the case for a simulation game

Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 26, 1999

(Graf & Kellogg, 1990). The third general distinction between experiential exercises and simulation games, at least early-on in the history of ABSEL, was use of the computer. In 1974 and, for the most part, for the next 25 years, most simulation papers focused on a computerized approach to learning, while most experiential exercises remained non-computerized.

In 1977 the ABSEL Board of Directors voted to add a case-track to the organization's previously two-dimensional focus (Goosen, 1986). This action likely occurred because the number of case-related submissions was on the decline (4 case-related papers appeared in the 1975 Proceedings, 1 in the 1976, and no case-related pieces were present in the 1977 Proceedings). Early reaction to this decision appeared quite positive in that 8 case-related papers were included in the 1978 Proceedings. Noteworthy, however, is that the majority of these were "live cases," a form of experiential exercise rather than true cases.

The purpose of this paper is to summarize the contributions of ABSEL's membership to experiential learning/experiential exercises during the decade of the 1970s.¹ Piggybacking on the experiential segments of the pioneering effort of Ken Goosen (1986) and differentiating among manuscripts utilizing the aforeoutlined experiential versus simulation categorization schemes, this paper overviews the types of experientially-related papers produced by ABSEL contributors and published in its conference Proceedings during each year of the decade of the 1970s, and for the decade as a whole. Further, it categorizes each experientially-related paper by the paper's major

focuses² to provide a systematic means of assembling a literature review for future research in various topical areas of experiential learning/experiential exercises. For example (and extending the effort of Goosen), if researchers are interested in identifying the human resource experiential exercises that have been developed by ABSEL contributors during the 1970s, such information, including volume (year) and page number in the Proceedings, is now available (see Table 1). Also, the summary statistics generated through this effort will permit one to identify and compare on a year-by-year basis and for the decade, the number of experiential learning/experiential exercise papers to the numbers of simulation-related and case-related papers included in ABSEL Proceedings over that same period.³ Finally, year-by-year and decade-long numerical summaries of the types of delivery systems used to relay exercises and research to conference participants (i.e., regular paper session, workshop or demonstration, tutorial, panel or roundtable presentation), and

² ABSEL papers often are multi-faceted in that, for example, while the primary focus of a paper may be on sharing an actual human resource experiential exercise with conference participants, often such papers also share instructor's notes on "administering" the exercise and maybe even statistics related to participant satisfaction ("outcomes") with the experience. In such instances, the first page number of that paper (i.e., page 30) would be recorded in each related category in Table 1 to denote the various contributions that the paper makes to the literature. In this instance, for example, page 30 would be recorded under "Descriptions of Actual Exercises/Programs" in the "Human Resources" section, in the "How To Use/Administer Exercises," and in "How to Assess the Impact of The Exercise" category in the "Research on Exercise Effectiveness (Outcomes)" section. The title for page numbers appearing in Table 1 can quickly be found by simply cross-referencing that page number with the actual Proceedings "Table of Contents" page numbers found in the Appendix of this paper.

¹ The other two decade-long companion papers in this series on the contributions of ABSEL's membership to experiential learning/experiential exercises were developed by Lane Kelley, University of Hawaii at Manoa (the decade of the 1980s), and John Butler, Clemson University (the decade of the 1990s).

³ When information assembled in this paper is combined with information included in the two companion papers for the decades of the 1980s and 1990s that are being developed by Kelley and Butler, an overall silver anniversary look at experiential learning/experiential exercises at ABSEL will be possible.

Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 26, 1999

the extensiveness of the published manuscripts (i.e., full paper, condensed paper) for each focus category (experiential learning/experiential exercises, simulations, and cases) also are presented (see Table 2).

EXPERIENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS APPEARING IN THE 1974 PROCEEDINGS

Excluding the four “Concluding Observation” reports written after the 1974 conference concluded, 48 actual papers were included in this first ABSEL Proceedings (Kenderdine & Keys, 1974). Of these 48, the vast majority were simulation-related. In fact, only 8 of 48 were not focused on some aspect of gaming (i.e., design of games, learning via business games, games as a framework for research). Of these 8, 1 paper was case-related, and the remaining 7 were directly focused on experiential learning/experiential exercises. Interestingly, 3 of those 7 used simulation games as the means to frame the discussion. The paper of Byrne and Wolfe [22]⁴ focused on how a simulation game can serve as the vehicle for experiential learning, Faria and Nulsen’s [54] on how internal and external assignments (exercises) can be used to embellish a marketing simulation experience, and Leftwich’s [61] paper on how “mini-courses” (finance/accounting related special assignments) can be used to supplement a business simulation.

All of the four remaining papers were strictly experientially focused. Hoover’s [31] paper provided ABSEL’s first discussion and definition of experiential learning and how it differs from the more traditional methodologies.

⁴ From this point forward to the end of this manuscript, all numbers that appear in brackets and follow authors’ names represent the beginning page number of a paper in that year’s ABSEL Proceedings. Further, since all such citations (page numbers inside brackets) in the body of this manuscript correspond directly with papers appearing in ABSEL Proceedings Volumes 1-6, and the “Tables of Contents” for those volumes appear in the Appendix that follows, only Proceedings volumes (not individual papers) will be cited in the Bibliography.

Lowe’s [48] paper examined how selection of elective courses and the format and delivery of those courses can permit participants in a course to better attain their personal goals. Lowe’s view was that elective courses can be transformed into split-track courses, permitting both those students desiring the structure of a conventional course and those seeking a personally meaningful experience the access they seek. The Byham [300] paper examined how assessment centers are actually types of simulations used both to identify management potential (to be used to screen and select future managers) and to train assessment center participants (participating managers). Finally, Certo and Dougherty [36] examined a methodology utilized in administering a specific organizational behavior structured experiential exercise, the “Stuck/Unstuck” exercise. They then generalized on this experience to discuss the teaching potential of related exercises.

The numbers appearing in the first column of Table 1 labeled “Vol. 1 (1974)” represent the number of the first page of papers appearing in that volume. Each row that crosses that column reflects an issue relevant to experiential learning or experiential exercises (i.e., “How To Design/Construct Exercises). The two numbers in the cell of the aforementioned row/column category are pages 22 and 54. These numbers [22 and 54] then identify the starting page of two different Proceedings papers in Volume 1 on how to design or construct experiential exercises. Further, from information in column 1 (Volume 1), one can see that 4 papers contained information focusing on how to use/administer exercises, 2 papers included one type or another of information on how to assess the impact of an exercise, and 6 papers focused on exercises in specific topical areas (i.e., marketing, finance/accounting). Again, to identify the Proceedings paper associated with a specific page number in Table 1, see the “Table of Contents” for that volume (year) in the Appendix of this manuscript.

Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 26, 1999

TABLE 1

GRID REFLECTING THE FOCUS OF EXPERIENTIALLY-RELATED PROCEEDINGS PAPERS: 1974-1979*

Issue Related to Experiential Learning or an Experiential Exercise:	Proceedings Volume (Year)						Total # For the Decade of the 1970s
	Vol. 1 (1974)	Vol. 2 (1975)	Vol. 3 (1976)	Vol. 4 (1977)	Vol. 5 (1978)	Vol. 6 (1979)	
<u>How To Design/Construct Exercises</u>	22, 54	218, 234, 311, 382	463, 492	59, 195, 369	69, 245	7, 24, 112, 115, 196, 313, 315, 325	21
<u>How to Use/Administer Exercises</u>	36, 48, 54, 61	25, 191, 218, 234, 291, 311, 382, 389	68, 87, 97, 112, 163, 324, 448, 498	177, 187, 195, 328, 339, 347, 353, 369, 377	3, 5, 7, 9, 69, 90, 107, 139, 223, 228, 245, 291	7, 29, 107, 112, 115, 167, 175, 185, 313, 315, 321, 325	22
<u>How to Assess the Impact of the Exercise:</u>						24, 29, 107, 121, 171, 199, 235, 239, 249, 266	
--Research on Exercise Effectiveness (Outcomes)	22, 31	25, 31, 365	87, 193, 492	67, 144, 159, 277, 284, 291	16, 69, 90, 83, 179, 186, 193		21
--Using an Exercise as a Research Experiment	22	191	426, 455, 463	51, 82, 90	16, 283	32, 66, 68, 121	14
--Using an Exercise for Hypothesis Testing		31, 325	455, 463	59, 135, 166, 284			8
--Using an Exercise to Evaluate Teaching Perf.	36			23, 51	83, 297		5
<u>Descriptions of Actual Exercises/Programs:</u>							0
--Production/Operations							0
--Marketing	54		97, 324, 389	127, 361	13, 69, 207, 245, 252, 259	7, 167, 171, 175	16
--Organizational Behavior/Communications	36	382	87, 498	72, 339, 353, 369, 377	83	39, 63, 68, 96, 321	15
--Human Resources	300		112, 163	23, 347	297, 302	29	8
--Finance/Accounting	61	318			114		2
--Entrepreneurship/Small Business		218			223		2
--General Management/Business	48	25, 191, 234, 389		59, 144, 159, 195	16, 83, 146, 228		13
--Cross-Cultural/International/Diversity		25, 191		347, 361	69, 83, 90, 114, 207	7, 185, 199	12
--Problem Solving/Decision Making	36	291	389	152	107	66, 321	7
--General Learning							0
--Other			448 Econ	328 Econ	Health 235 Admin		2
Totals Number of Experientially-Related Papers	7	12	14	26	26	27	

* With the exception of the numbers in the "Total # for the Decade of the 1970s" column (which reflect the summation of all papers in the proceedings of that decade on that particular issue) and the "Total Number of Experientially-Related Papers" row at the bottom of the grid (which denotes the total number of experientially-related papers in a specific volume), all other column numbers represent the first page number of a specific proceedings paper. To identify the proceedings paper associated with a specific page number, see the "Tables of Contents" for that volume (year) in the Appendix.

Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 26, 1999

From information in Table 2 for the year 1974 (see columns labeled “74”) one can see that all papers were full-length papers presented in regular paper sessions. Further, 1 paper focused on cases, 40 on simulation games, and 7 papers on experiential learning/experiential exercises.

NOTE: *The detailed discussion of the experiential contribution in the 1976 through 1979 Proceedings were omitted due to page limitations.*

AN OVERVIEW OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FOR THE DECADE OF THE 1970s

Numbers in the far right column of Table 1 entitled “Total # For the Decade of the 1970s” provide an overview of the total number of experientially-related ABSEL Proceedings papers with particular focuses for the decade of the 1970s. For example, 21 different papers would be helpful in explaining “How to Design/Construct Exercises,” and 53 papers focused on “How to Use/Administer Exercises.” Also, if one were interested in learning how to assess the impact of an exercise, 31 papers focused on “Research on Exercise Effectiveness (Outcomes),” 14 on “Using an Exercise as a Research Experiment,” 8 on “Using an Exercise for Hypothesis Testing,” and 5 on “Using an Exercise to Evaluate Teaching Performance.” Further, if one were interested in papers reporting on actual exercises or programs, 16 can be found on “Marketing,” 15 on “Organizational Behavior/Communications,” 8 on “Human Resources,” 3 on “Finance/Accounting,” 2 on “Entrepreneurship/Small Business,” 13 on “General Management/Business,” 12 on “Cross-Cultural/International/Diversity,” 7 on “Problem Solving/Decision Making,” and 3 on “Other” issues (2 on economic-related issues, and 1 on health administration).

More importantly from Table 1, however, for those wishing to have a systematic means of

assembling a literature review for research in various topical areas, are the categorized starting page number of papers appearing in each of the six Proceedings for the decade of the 1970s. For example, with Table 1 in hand, the researcher will know exactly where to turn in specific Proceedings to find all exercises related to finance or accounting. The three articles related to this topic start on page 61 of Volume 1 (1974), page 318 of Volume 2 (1975), and page 114 of Volume 5 (1978)--see Table 1.

Table 2 overviews the type of delivery system utilized (i.e., paper presentation, workshop/demonstration, tutorial, panel/roundtable) and the extensiveness of published manuscripts (full paper, condensed or abstracted paper) for each of the three paper tracks (experiential learning/experiential exercises, simulation games, cases), and for all tracks combined for the decade of the 1970s. Non-underlined column totals summarize the total number of papers appearing in that year’s ABSEL Proceedings for each of the three tracks (i.e., a total of 12 experientially-oriented papers appeared in the 1975 Proceedings). Underlined row totals (labeled “TOT”) for each track reflect the total number of papers of that type for the decade of the 1970s. For example, the total number of “Simulation Games” papers presented in workshops or demonstrations for the decade was 10. Underlined column “Totals” (excluding the far right column) reflect the total number of papers for all types of delivery systems for the decade (i.e., there was a total of 112 “Experiential Learning/Experiential Exercise” papers that appeared in ABSEL Proceedings during the decade of the 1970s). The numbers in the far right column labeled “Totals” (with underlines and overlines) represent the total number of papers for all tracks for that delivery system/level of extensiveness. For example, full paper presentations for all three tracks for the decade of the 1970s totaled 271. Finally, worthy of note from numbers in the “Totals” column is that only 4 of 297 papers appearing in

Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 26, 1999

Proceedings during the 1970s were condensed or abstracted. The remaining 293 papers were full papers.

NOTE: *The Reference section of this paper was omitted due to page limitations.*

TABLE 2
TYPE OF DELIVERY SYSTEM UTILIZED AND EXTENSIVENESS
OF THE PUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT

Type of Delivery System Utilized (Extensiveness of the Published Manuscript)	Experiential Learning/ Experiential Exercises							Simulation Games							Cases							TOTALS
	74	75	76	77	78	79	TOT	74	75	76	77	78	79	TOT	74	75	76	77	78	79	TOT	
Paper Presentation (Full Paper)	7	8	13	24	26	22	<u>100</u>	40	19	25	18	21	35	<u>158</u>	1	4	1		2	5	<u>13</u>	<u>271</u>
Paper Presentation (Condensed Paper)						1	<u>1</u>						3	<u>3</u>							<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>
Workshop or Demonstration With Paper		4		1		2	<u>7</u>		6		4			<u>10</u>							<u>0</u>	<u>17</u>
Tutorial With Paper							<u>0</u>							<u>0</u>							<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Panel or Roundtable With Paper			1	1		2	<u>4</u>			1				<u>1</u>							<u>0</u>	<u>5</u>
TOTALS	7	12	14	26	26	27	<u>112</u>	40	25	26	22	21	38	<u>172</u>	1	4	1	0	2	5	<u>13</u>	<u>297</u>

Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 26, 1999

APPENDIX

1974 TABLE OF CONTENTS

Brief Introduction to ABSEL	1
List of Officers and Members of the Advisory Council of ABSEL	2
Editors' Foreword	4
I. An Introduction to Experiential Learning Via Business Simulations	6
<i>Long Live Your Business Game</i> , Stanley C. Vance	7
<i>"Marketing in Action" in Collegiate Education</i> , Ralph L. Day	8
<i>How to Create Your Own Business Game with "Imaginal"</i> , Richard F. Barton	15
II. Toward a Philosophy of Experiential Learning: A New Frontier	21
<i>The Design, Conduct and Evaluation of a Computerized Management Game as a Form of Experiential Learning</i> , Eugene T. Byrne and Douglas E. Wolfe	22
<i>Experiential Learning: Conceptualization and Definition</i> , J. Duane Hoover	31
<i>The Teaching Potential of a Structured Experience</i> , Samuel C. Certo and Robert H. Dougherty	36
<i>The Lecture Versus the Game</i> , David J. Fritzsche	41
III. Experiential Learning and Business Games: Some Conceptual Questions Involved in Operationalization	47
<i>Tracking the Elective: Student-Goal Oriented Education</i> , Larry S. Lowe	48
<i>The Use of Internal and External Assignments with a Marketing Simulation Game</i> , Anthony J. Fazio and Ray O. Nulsen, Jr.	54
<i>Constructing Mini-Courses to Supplement Business Simulations</i> , Howard Leftwich	61
<i>A Video-Tape/Computer Learning Experience</i> , Morton Cottlar and Ralph H. Sprague, Jr.	64
IV. The Design of Business Games and Experiential Learning Environments	69
<i>A Collective Bargaining Negotiation Simulation: Settle or Strike</i> , Morris Sackman	70
<i>Simulation in Personnel Administration</i> , Richard W. Beatty	77
<i>Introduction to Pabulum: A Public Administration Game</i> , Edwin L. Heard	85
<i>Enrichment of a Multi-Functional Game Through Dynamic Overlays and Intensive Decision Analysis</i> , John S. Hoagland and Harold L. Pazer	93
<i>An Orientation to the Oklahoma Farm Management Game</i> , Odell L. Walker and Vernon R. Eidman	100
<i>A Description of "INSTRAT: A Game of Investment Strategy"</i> , Lawrence J. Gitman	108
<i>D&G: A Decision Mathematics Game</i> , Geoffrey Churchill	116
<i>The Use of "Production Scheduling Simulation" in a Production Planning and Control Course</i> , S. Kyle Reed	123
<i>Interactive Gaming: A Production Example</i> , K. Roscoe Davis	127
<i>Marketing Interaction: A Marketing Management Game</i> , Stephen K. Keiser	135
<i>ADMAG: An Advertising Management Game</i> , James D. Culley	143
<i>Meeting the Decline in College Enrollments Using the Money Game in the Classroom</i> , K. H. Johnson and D. S. Shannon	148
<i>Training Salesmen with "The Sales Management Game"</i> , Louis E. Boone	158
<i>Smith Management Game (BUSOP)</i> , Jerald R. Smith	165
<i>The Business Game: A New Approach to Managerial Accounting</i> , Kenneth R. Goosen	167
V. The Administration of Business and Administration Games: The Creation of Experiential Learning Environments	173
<i>Administration: The Key to a Successful Gaming Experience</i> , Harold K. Wilson	174
<i>Simulation: A Frustration, a "Game," or a Meaningful Learning Experience</i> , James W. Gentry and Thomas L. Brown	182
<i>Using Complex Simulations in Policy Courses in Institutions with Limited Resources</i> , L. E. Baldwin	186
<i>Flexibility in Simulation Design for Continual Student Motivation</i> , Leroy D. Brooks	190
<i>A Terminal Keyboard Experience in Executive Gaming</i> , Ralph H. Sprague, Jr. and Morton Cottlar	197
<i>Application of Theory and of Computerized Grading in Management Simulation</i> , Charles R. Scott, Jr.	205
<i>The Executive Education Experience Using the Toronto Management Game</i> , Roger N. Wolff and George H. Haines, Jr.	209
<i>Experiences with the Harvard Management Game</i> , Ralph M. Roberts	217
<i>Managing the Dynamic Small Business Via Simulation</i> , James E. Estes	223
<i>The Use of a Business Game and a Simulated Stock Exchange in a Business Policy Course</i> , Robert McGlashan	231
<i>Managerial Strategy and Systems—An Integrative M.B.A. Course</i> , Bernard H. Sord	238
<i>SIMQ, a Business Simulation Game for Decision Science Students: Towards a Total Gaming and Teaching Package</i> , Arthur C. Nichols	245
<i>The Use of Simulation in a Financial Planning Course</i> , Neil E. Seitz and Billy M. Thornton	248
<i>Simulation as a Supplementary Learning Experience in Marketing Principles</i> , Jack R. Dauner	256
VI. Intercollegiate Gaming: A Special Application of Business Simulations	262
<i>Intercollegiate Business Gaming: The State of the Art</i> , Ronald Jensen	263
<i>Intercollegiate Business Gaming from a Participant's Viewpoint</i> , David B. Burks	268
<i>Correlates of Satisfaction, Learning and Success in Business Gaming</i> , Achilles A. Armenakis, Hubert S. Feild and William H. Holley	272

1974

VII. Business Games and Experiential Learning Situations: A Framework for Research	279
<i>A Student's View of Leadership Training with a Two-Level Hierarchy: Two Course Simulations</i> , Bernard Keys and Chris Jones	280
<i>Autocratic Versus Democratic Decision Making: The "Executive Game" as an Experiment</i> , Herman S. Napier	291
<i>Identifying Potential Game Participants</i> , George A. Johnson and Laird London	295
<i>Assessment Centers Selection Based on Simulation</i> , William C. Byham	300
<i>Business Games in the Process of Management Training in Israel and the United States</i> , Aryeh Kidron	304
VIII. Some Concluding Observations on Simulations, Business Games and Experiential Learning Techniques	310
<i>Evolution and Flexibility in Business Gaming</i> , Richard F. Barton	311
<i>Quantitative Applications of Games</i> , Geoffrey Churchill	313
<i>Growing Emphasis on Implementation</i> , Ralph L. Day	314
<i>Debits and Credits: First National ABSEL Conference</i> , Stanley C. Vance	316
IX. Membership Roster of the Association for Business Simulation and Experiential Learning (as of May 5, 1974)	318
X. Program of the National Conference on Business Gaming and Experiential Learning, Held at Oklahoma Christian College, Oklahoma City, April 26-27, 1974	325

1975 TABLE OF CONTENTS

Brief Introduction to ABSEL	ix
List of Officers for April 1975-July 1976	xi
Foreword: SOME OBSERVATIONS OF THE INDIANA MEETING OF ABSEL	xiii
Comments on Annual Meeting	xv
Process and Content in Experiential Learning and Simulation	xviii
I. OPENING PLENARY SESSION	1
ABSEL Research - From Adolescence to Adulthood, Bernard Keys	3
Framing the Future of Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Stanley C. Vance	5
II. NEW SIMULATIONS FOR TEACHING OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT	7
Inventory Simulation—A Time Sharing Television Output Simulation, J. Ronald Fraser	9
"Q&IT" - An Operations Management Game, George A. Johnson	15
III. CONVENTIONAL VS. EXPERIENTIAL TEACHING METHODS	23
An Experiential-Cognitive Methodology in the First Course in Management: Some Preliminary Results, J. Duane Hoover and Carlton Whitehead	25
Experiential Training Methodology, Traditional Training Methodology, and Perceived Opportunity to Satisfy Human Needs, Samuel C. Certo	31
IV. WORKSHOP ON HARDWARE, SOFTWARE, AND PEOPLE PROBLEMS IN INSTALLING BUSINESS GAMES	39
Operational Problems and Solutions of Business Gaming: A Primer, David J. Fritzsche	41
One Experience with the V.K. Gadget Company—An Introduction to Managerial Accounting, Robert J. Lord	48
V. COMPUTER ASSISTED TEACHING METHODS IN MARKETING COURSES	65
A conversational Marketing MIX Exercise, Murphy A. Sewall and Stanley Arbeit	67
The Use of Program BAYES in the Teaching of Sample Size Determination in Survey Research, James W. Gentry, Alvin C. Burnes, and Edward T. Reutzel	73
VI. EVALUATING THE EFFECTS OF BUSINESS GAMES	81
An Experiential Study of Performance in a Basic Management Course, Daniel Brennenstuhl	83
Using Student Opinions in Evaluating Results with a Business Game, Ralph M. Roberts and Steven E. Field	92
VII. EVALUATING PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOR IN SIMULATION GAMES	101
Some Impacts of Varying Amounts of Information on Frustration and Attitudes in a Finance Game, William D. Biggs	103
Player Performance Under Differing Player Configurations in the Investment Game: Some Preliminary Observations, Carl C. Nielsen	111