

**ROCK AND ROLL IS HERE TO STAY:  
ENHANCING EXPERIENTIAL PEDAGOGY WITH MUSICAL EXERCISES**

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**OVERVIEW**

The old adage that music “calms the savage beast” probably was based upon centuries of folklore. Today, the research on the benefits of music is growing at a pace faster than a rolling stone. In addition, there appears to be no limit to the efficacy of music. For example, music research is found in medicine, agriculture, horticulture, psychology, and education to name just a *few*. There already exists a multiplicity of studies reporting the benefits of music as a pedagogical technology. While this research was an impetus for this workshop, it is not the main focus of this workshop. This workshop will engage its audience in several exercises (see attached) that can be utilized in the classroom for a variety of purposes.

While the proposed design of the workshop is quite simple, it should prove to be quite effective. It consists of several exercises that revolve around musical themes. Some of the exercises will actually have live music as the focus point of the exercise while other exercises will involve knowledge of types of music, musical artists, song titles, musical themes and/or lyrics.

One experiential exercise that will employ live music, for example, is the ageless game of musical chairs. This simple, but high energy game, can be used to determine who gets a job promotion, who will receive a pay increase, or as a down-sizing exercise. Another live music based exercise is “music bingo” which will be presented as both an effective listening exercise as well as a team-building exercise.

Exercises that do not involve live music will include activities such as matching musicians & quasi-metaphors, music cross-word puzzles, and other related music trivia projects. These exercises

can serve as ice breakers, energizers, or to enhance creativity, group dynamics and cultural diversity. Once students have participated in these exercises they can then be divided into teams. Each team will be assigned the task of developing their own musical exercise that will be presented to the class. This task will allow them to experientially engage in all of the basic management processes.

This workshop will present more exercises than can probably be covered in the time allotted. However, it will allow the audience to experience the excitement, exhilaration, interest, and innovation that experiential exercises with a musical theme can generate. Drawing from the related literature and the author’s own experience of using music in the classroom, the lessons learned leave a very positive and lasting effect on the students.

This workshop represents the culmination of two years of work in this area by the author. All ABSEL members who attend this workshop will be invited to participate in, as many exercises that time will allow in order that they can experience the excitement and fun that these exercises will generate. Again, while it is part of the overall scheme to provide a relaxed and enjoyable learning environment, I will emphasize the necessity that these exercises need to be fully debriefed after they have been completed to insure that learning takes place.

Finally, I will discuss the configuration of my sound system. This may seem like a trivial topic, but in order for music to be utilized in the classroom, it must be of sufficient sound amplitude and quality. Most classrooms are not designed to handle the necessary wattage required and the

majority of portable CD players and boomboxes are extremely inadequate. It took me over a year of research and many conversations with audio experts to come up with a portable and reasonably priced sound system.

### **THE LEARNING ROBUSTNESS OF MUSICAL CHAIRS**

In my experience as an educator and a trainer for over thirty years, this favorite child's game has the robustness to be one of the best learning tools available today. It is very simple to set up, an extremely exciting exercise to participate in, a very enjoyable and energizing activity for the audience to observe, and its educational potential is only limited by the instructor.

The process is simple. Chairs are arranged in a row in alternate positions. There will be one less chair than participants. The participants walk around the chairs in a circular fashion while the instructor has some up-tempo music playing. When the instructor stops the music, the participants sit in the closest available chair. Obviously one participant will not find a chair and is removed from the exercise. The music is started again and the process repeats itself until only one participant is left. The instructor should exercise caution to stop the music at differing intervals and in a manner that is oblivious to the participants. In addition, since this exercise generates a very high excitement level, the instructor needs to urge caution to prevent injury to the participants.

Not only is this exercise an excellent icebreaker, but, it can be used to award the last participant in the activity a job and/or a promotion or an incentive bonus. Several iterations of it can be used for a massive layoff where all of the participants who are eliminated from the game are selected to be terminated. As was mentioned above, the games pedagogical potential is virtually limitless.

### **HOT POTATO**

This exercise is an adaption of musical chairs with the added benefit that it is designed to facilitate more participants. A sponge ball, the "hot potato" is given to one of many students standing in the classroom. When the music is activated the student tosses the ball to another student who in turn tosses the ball to another, etc. until the instructor stops the music. The student holding the "hot potato" at that time is eliminated from the game, assumes his or her seat, and gives the ball to the closest standing student. The music is activated and the game resumes until only one student is left standing holding the "hot potato". The learning outcomes follow the same lines as those stated above in musical chairs. The major differences between this and musical chairs is that the instructor can involve an entire class, is a faster paced game, and is a little easier to utilize a sponge ball than the row of chairs which may or may not be convenient to use.

### **MUSIC BINGO**

This musical exercise shows cultural diversity in-groups. If you have a diverse work group, you have a better team concept and can work together to obtain goals or results. In this exercise, each team is given a Bingo Card with sixteen song titles and/or recording artists on it. A variety of songs are played for approximately thirty seconds each. The teams will have to identify the song title and/or recording artist and mark the appropriate space on their bingo cards. The first team to get BINGO is the winner. Since this exercise uses a variety of types of music the team having the most diverse group should be the winners.

### **MUSICAL STOP & GO**

This exercise is designed to be used in courses where the students are taught in teams. Thus, the intent of this game is to demonstrate the impact that one-team members performance can have on the entire team.