

Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Exercises, Volume 9, 1982

TOWARD THE ULTIMATE EXPERIENTIAL EXERCISE, THE STUDENT VIEW

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports the results of a survey of students who participated in an experiential exercise. The exercise was reported at the 1980 meeting of ABSEL in Dallas, Texas. [ii]

In that paper, the author described the operation of a commercial radio station by students for academic, economic and experiential reasons.

The survey questionnaire was mailed to the 65 students who "worked" at the station and graduated in the years 1974-1980 inclusive. Of these 65 students, 29 completed the questionnaires and returned them to the author. The results of the survey show an overwhelming positive response to their participation in the program.

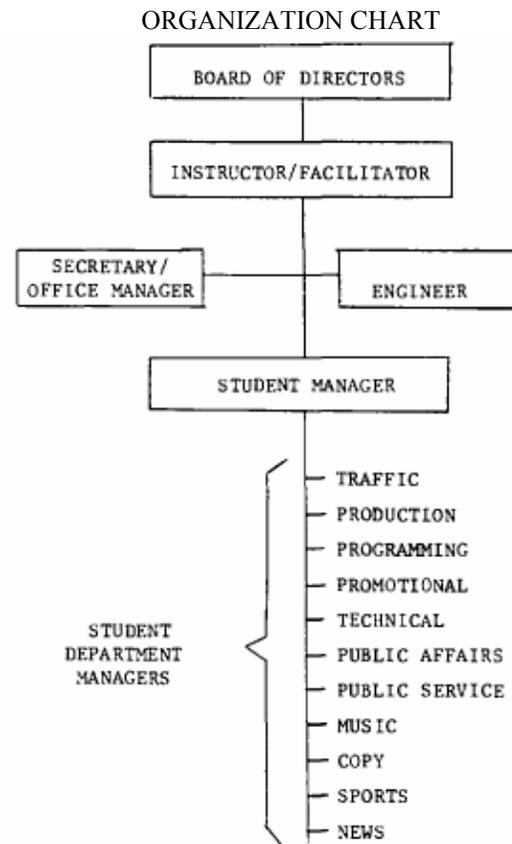
INTRODUCTION

In teaching we are continually searching for new methods which may make the difference between a program which is both exciting and educational and the program which is neither. To this end, those of us in ABSEL continue to work, experiment and report to our colleagues of our success and failures.

When the original paper, "Toward the Ultimate Experiential Exercise," was presented in Dallas, much interest was exhibited and the primary question was "What are these students doing now and what did they think of the program?"

For a brief review, the radio station operated by the students is an FM commercial broadcast station. It is operated essentially by students of the Wabash College in Crawfordsville, IN. A Board of Directors is charged with overseeing the operation but this involves only an annual meeting to check the results of the past year and plans for the upcoming year. The figure below shows the relatively standard organization chart.

FIGURE 1



The Board of Directors consists of faculty and staff of the college with the student manager being an ex-official member. The Instructor/Facilitator is responsible to supervise the students operating the station for purposes of fiscal matters and adherence to the many rules and regulations of the Federal Communications Commission and the various other government agencies. The Secretary/Office Manager and Engineer are non-student. In addition, the Instructor/Facilitator helps coordinate with the various other academic departments who may be using the laboratory in their teaching.

The Survey

The author, who has now relocated to another school, returned to review the records of the Placement Director at Wabash for the purpose of listing the names and addresses of all students who participated in this exercise and graduated from 1974-1980. The population numbered 65 students.

A questionnaire was developed, (Appendix A), to attempt to determine how the students may have used this experience in school and after as well as their perceived satisfaction with the exercise. The questionnaire consisted of both specific and open-ended questions.

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Questions 1, 2, 3 asked for factual information such as semesters worked, hours per week worked, and duties in which the student might have been involved. Because most of the students participated on a volunteer basis, this then provided an indirect measure of the satisfaction with the exercise. Questions 4 and 5 asked about the usefulness of the exercise in later life while questions 6, 7, 8 asked for subjective opinions of their experience.

Results of the Survey

The data received from the 29 respondents were coded and entered into the computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis showed an overwhelming positive attitude by those who chose to respond. Follow-up was not attempted because the responses were mostly anonymous and it was not known who actually responded.

Specific results indicated by those who responded were:

	\bar{x}	range	n	%
Time: Semesters worked	4.7	11	29	
Hours as Freshman	5.5	19	11	
Hours as Sophomore	14.2	39	16	
Hours as Junior	13.0	39	22	
Hours as Senior	10.6	48	23	

Duties:

Disc Jockey	22	76
Management/Officer	9	31
Salesman	12	41
Copywriter	6	21
Music Audition	10	35
Programming	9	31
Other	14	48

Follow—up:

Now working in Broadcasting	3	10
Exercise helped employment search	10	34
Enhanced my resume	4	14
Management experience helpful to me	1	3
Helped improve my communication skills	5	17

Subjective;

Would you participate again		
Much More	13	45
About the Same	15	52
Less	1	3

Would encourage more participation to others	23	79
Just a good extra time filler	7	24

Message to Administration of school:

Operate just as now	13	45
Require as part of Speech	2	7
Teach Radio courses	6	21
Provide more money support	11	38

Evaluation and Conclusions

While this survey is only a sample of the many students which have participated in this exercise over the many years, and then only those who chose to respond, the results indicate a very strong support for the exercise. It is viewed as a "real world" experience which helps prepare the student for eventual entry into the

working community.-

Responses to question one concerning number of semesters worked at the station indicated that of the eleven students in the sample who started as freshmen, eight continued through the senior year. For those responding to the question of "If you had it to do over, what would you do?", 97 percent indicated they would participate as much or more than they did the first time. Some of the responses received included~

"WNDY has proven to have been an invaluable life experience for me." (student now working in radio and teaching communications.)

"Explore the various options that this unique educational tool can offer to the advancement of the Liberal Arts education."

"It was a tremendous challenge to make the station work. Most will leave service with a good education in small business economics."

to the administration-

"Its (admin) control of the station management and general operations should remain limited."

"My business (broadcasting) is in desperate need of educated people who also know their way around a microphone. WNDY is the ideal vehicle to produce this animal."

"Get involved! It's great practical experience." (student who only worked at station as part of a Speech course. Now working as a manager in a manufacturing plant.)

"Too much worry and emphasis over academics and how much outside activities deter from scholastic work. Almost all of my interviewers asked in depth about my radio station work, particularly about my experience with person to person interfaces and my unique, individual contributions and analysis of events at the radio station... Relative to this experience, their interest in my scholastic work was often token. No one hires album, to be sure - you needed better than a 3.0 CPA. However, they were all searching for more than just a dry individual who buried himself in books for four years."

"...they should get involved w/WNDY in some capacity... The benefits (especially the intangible ones) don't become apparent until after graduation. For me and my profession (law), my experience as a DJ was invaluable. It helped me develop my speaking techniques and impromptu speaking capabilities in a meaningful way." (student who graduated from Harvard School of Law in 1981.)

"WNDY radio was fun, a rare commodity at Wabash." (an aspiring actor.)

I must conclude by saying that this has been a very rewarding experience for me. It has made the "pains" during the difficult times, which occur in any project, seem of little consequence and the messages received with the responses will be retained for future reference when things appear to get tough in future projects.

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APPENDIX A

Wabash-WNDY Questionnaire

1. How many total semesters did you participate in the activities at WNDY?
2. In which class years did you participate? Average hours per week?

Year	Hours
Freshman _____	_____
Sophomore _____	_____
Junior _____	_____
Senior _____	_____
3. In what capacity(ies) did you participate?

D.J. _____
Management _____
Offices Held (list) _____
Sales _____
Copywriting _____
Music Auditioning _____
Programming _____
Other (list) _____
4. Are you now working in broadcasting?
Yes _____ No _____
If yes, what capacity?
Where?
5. Has your experience at WNDY assisted you in your employment search?
Yes _____ No _____
How?
6. If you were again attending Wabash, would your participation at WNDY be:

Much greater _____
About the same _____
Less _____
None _____
7. If you could express your opinions to students at Wabash this year, what would you recommend?
8. If you could express your opinions to the administration, what would you recommend?

Thank you! Watch the Bachelor next fall for results of this survey.

P.S. I am enclosing a WNDY pen which may someday become a collectors' item!

REFERENCES

- [1] Smiley, Bob E. "Toward the Ultimate Experiential Exercise," Experiential Learning Enters the 80's, The Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Conference of the Association for Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, 1980.