

# Experiential Learning Enters the Eighties, Volume 7, 1980

## M.B.A. ORIENTATION SIMULATION FOR MANAGING TIME AND THE AREAS OF ONE'S LIFE

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### ABSTRACT

This simulation exercise examines the academic, personal and social life of new graduate students entering an M.B.A. program. The assumption is that each student must consider and program these areas of life, in order to maintain a balanced personage, and fulfill the necessary demands of a graduate program. The overall goals of this exercise are: to explore a novel way of managing time; to enhance an awareness of the three main areas of a student's life (academic, personal, social); to experience and learn ways of resolving conflicts common to new graduate students; to provide a role playing situation for students.

### INTRODUCTION

The total exercise requires approximately 1 1/2 - 2 hours, and uses a format where the audience is divided into groups of three participants. An unlimited number of groups can be directed simultaneously. The physical setting requires a room large enough to comfortably accommodate tables or circles of chairs for each group.

The materials needed are: pencils and paper for all participants, an "Instruction" sheet for the facilitator, a "General Profile of Douglas Dallas" for each participant, a "Personal Profile of Douglas Dallas," a "Social Profile of Douglas Dallas," an "Academic Profile of Douglas Dallas," copies of the "Weekly Schedule for Douglas Dallas for each participant, and a Conflict Form" for each participant.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR TILE FACILITATOR

1. Start by introducing the exercise and its purpose. Describe various conflicts that graduate students encounter, and talk about the necessity of planning one's time and properly resolving conflicts. Describe how "balance" can be viewed from the framework of the academic, personal, and social self.
2. Divide the large group into sub-groups of three members each. Describe how each sub-group will act as the total personage of a hypothetical student named Douglas Dallas. Give each participant a "General Profile of Douglas Dallas."
3. After each participant reads the general profile, assign or let them select, the specific role they are to play in the simulated student's life. One person will be the academic self, another the "personal self," and the third will play the "social self." After the selection is made distribute the individual profile sheets that correspond to each participant's role.
4. After the participants read their individual roles distribute a copy of Douglas Dallas "weekly schedule." Each person should individually program in the hours required for their part of the personage (Academic 20, Social 20, and Personal 20).
5. After each triad member programs in the required number of hours, distribute a clear schedule and instruct them to work

together to consolidate their individual schedules into only one schedule.

6. After the revised schedule is completed distribute the "Conflict Sheet," and another clear "weekly schedule." Instruct the group to work through the conflicts together as the total personage of Douglas Dallas.
7. The simulation can be continued by creating and introducing a new weekly schedule and "conflict sheet" for the second week.
8. Ask the group to spend several minutes sharing their feelings and the learning that took place.
9. After sufficient sharing reassemble the entire group for deprocessing. Ask all group members to discuss their feelings on and reactions to the entire exercise.
10. Conclude with a short discussion on the importance of time and conflict management in the life at graduate students.

### DOUGLAS DALLAS' GENERAL PROFILE

Douglas, age 22, graduated last spring with a B.A. in liberal arts. He attended a midwestern state supported university with an enrollment of 15,000. In college he participated in the typical activities, he was a member of a national social fraternity and several campus clubs. During his four years on campus he made the Dean's Honor Roll twice, and the President's Honor Roll once. While a senior he served as a residence hall advisor. That job paid for his room and board and gave him some spending money.

Douglas has just enrolled in the M.B.A. program at S.M.U. The program is one complete calendar year long (three semesters), with 48 credit hours required for the degree. The catalogue lists 9 courses (27 hours) that form the core requirements. From these requirements Douglas has decided to enroll in five courses for 16 hours. The second number in the course listing indicates the number of hours for that specific course.

BA 6322 FINANCIAL REPORTING AND MANAGERIAL ACCOUNTING. Study of uses and limitations of accounting information; measurement/recording of economic events, assets, and equities or corporate entities; planning and control techniques; and statements for external and internal uses.

BA 6324 FUNDAMENTALS OF MARKETING. This basic course in marketing examines three major areas: (1) the nature of marketing decisions, (2) the environment in which these decisions are made, and (3) the relationship of these decisions to the firm, to business, and to society with a managerial perspective.

BA 6325 INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR. An overview of the various perspectives from which individual and organizational

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behavior can be studied. An examination of the contribution of behavioral perspectives to administration and management.

BA 6326 MANAGEMENT SCIENCE AND COMPUTERS. Introductory course consisting of four modules; computer, descriptive and inferential statistics and forecasting, and stochastic decision-making.

BA 6428 ECONOMICS FOR BUSINESS DECISION. Survey of microeconomic and macroeconomic theory and applications including market structures; pricing and output decisions of the firm; and the determination of the level of income, output, employment, and inflation.

You are about to play, with two other individuals, the simulated life of Douglas Dallas. You will be assigned, or allowed to choose, one specific part of Douglas' personage (academic, personal, or social). As a triad you will then encounter some of the conflicts, and need for time management, that most new M. B.A. students experience.

### DOUGLAS DALLAS' ACADEMIC PROFILE

While you have a good self concept there are times when you get down on yourself. You are not a brilliant intellectual, but with time and hard work you can always complete the task. You enjoy learning, are very creative, and like to play with ideas. These are all reasons for continuing your academic career. You realize you are at a disadvantage in the job market because you took no business courses. That is your reason for entering an M.B.A. program.

You also realize your study skills were not perfected while you were an undergraduate. Now you want to grow, especially in areas of communication skills, vocabulary building, etc. While you had a 3.3 grade point average in college, your lack of motivation often caused you to make B's instead of A's. With the heavy competition of an M.B.A. program, you realize you must constantly study and push to make the grades. You now wish your study skills were better.

In playing the "academic" role of Douglas Dallas' personality you have 20 hours that you must manage in your weekly schedule. Some of the activities you need, or want, to accomplish are:

- overcome the fear that you might flunk out. This M.B.A. program seems more frightening than your undergraduate program.
- spend more time studying.
- work on understanding the 'case method' of learning. You have never taken a course with this method of instruction and you are worried.

### DOUGLAS DALLAS' PERSONAL PROFILE

In high school you played football and baseball. In college you didn't try out for the team in either sport. You did, however, play intramural sports. You are an avid jogger, and like racquetball, tennis, and skiing. You are conscious of your weight, are in excellent health, eat good food, drink moderately, and like to get a full eight hours of sleep.

While you have a good self concept there are times when you get down on yourself. You are not a brilliant intellectual, but with time and hard work you can always complete the task. You enjoy learning, are very creative, and like to play with ideas. These are all reasons you decided to continue your academic career. You realize you are at a disadvantage in the Job market because you took no business courses. This is your reason for entering an U.B.A. program.

You have deep seated values that you act upon. You are a religious person and try to attend regular church services.

As a single individual you enjoy dating at least twice a week. However, you also enjoy spending some time alone each week. This is sometimes hard to do because your roommate is always home.

In playing the 'personal' role of Douglas' personality you have 20 hours that you must manage in your weekly schedule. Some of the activities you need, or want, to accomplish are;

- purchasing some new clothes.
- buying groceries.
- cleaning the apartment (it's your week).
- purchase some extra books and school supplies.
- catch a few rays at the pool.
- sleep in at least once this weekend (since you have had to get up early every day for The past two weeks).
- do your laundry.
- get a hair cut.

### DOUGLAS DALLAS' SOCIAL PROFILE

You enjoy learning, are very creative, and like to play with ideas. These are all reasons you decided to continue your academic career. You realize you are at a disadvantage in the job market because you took no business courses. For this reason you decided to bet your graduate degree in the Business School.

Others often comment on your personality. You have a good sense of humor, are liked by others, and make friends easily. While teachers have complimented you on your ability, and leadership characteristics, they also have encouraged you to become more involved in leadership positions.

You like social gatherings and the time you spend with others. You are quick to make conversation and like to learn about people. Since being accepted into the M.B.A. program, you are especially interested in talking to others about their careers. In thinking about the future, you plan to use this year wisely, to meet as many business people as possible, to make contacts, and to learn about the business opportunities available.

In playing the "social" role of Douglas personality you have 20 hours that you must manage in your weekly schedule. Some of the activities you need, or want, to accomplish are:

- get at least one date this weekend.
- play softball with other M.B.A. students and the faculty.
- attend the new M.B.A. "get acquainted"
- party on Saturday night.
- meet and talk with several of your M.B.A. peers about forming a study group.

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### WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF DOUGLAS DALLAS

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
7-8 am							
8-9 am	BA6322 (8-9:30)	BA6428 (8:30-10:30)	BA6322 (8-9:30)	BA6428 (8:30-10:30)			
9-10 am							
10-11 am							
11-12 am		BA6324 (11-12:30)		BA6324 (11-12:30)			
12-1 pm	EAT		EAT				
1-2 pm		EAT		EAT			
2-3 pm	BA6325 (2-3:30)	BA6326 (2-3:30)	BA6325 (2-3:30)	BA6326 (2-3:30)			
3-4 pm							
4-5 pm							
5-6 pm	EAT	EAT					
6-7 pm			EAT				EAT
7-8 pm				EAT			
8-9 pm							
9-10 pm							
10-11 pm							
11-12 pm							

### CONFLICT SHEET

As college students you found that your best made schedules can be completely destroyed because of conflict situations that must be dealt with. Your success in graduate school is sometimes dependent upon your ability to resolve conflicting needs, and adjust to events that interrupt your schedule.

Listed below are several conflicts, or possible conflicts that Douglas Dallas experienced during his first week of M.B.A. classes. As the three parts of Douglas' personality you should make decisions about the conflicts, and accordingly make a new schedule.

In some instances the conflicts listed here take precedence over all the other activities. If they interrupt an hour you programmed, you simply lose that hour.

The object is for your triad to agree on how time should be spent when there is more than one part of the personality that demands time. For this exercise conflict is resolved when two of you agree on the use of a particular time slot.

#### General Conflicts

- You spot a sign in the Business School, advertising a Speed Reading course. It will be conducted during four sessions this weekend and next. The cost of the course is ~50. The meeting times for both weeks are: Friday 7-10 pm; Saturday 9-12 pm.
- A notice in your mailbox informs you that pictures will be taken for the M.B.A. resume Book on Friday at 10:00 am. You should allow 10 minutes.
- You receive another notice from the office of External Affairs, inviting you to an M.B.A. reception with the Business School's Associate Board. Since this group is comprised of top executives in Dallas you decide to go, Thursday 5-6:30, 2001 Bryan Tower, downtown Dallas.
- The office of External Affairs is holding a meeting for all M.B.A.'s one week from Friday. The purpose is to talk about job possibilities in Dallas, and to get started on the resume design. You need to arrive with a rough draft of your resume. You start penciling it out.
- You are financing your graduate education by taking out a small student loan, being awarded a small scholarship, spending a large chunk of a savings account, and receiving money from your parents to make up the difference. You never really realized how expensive this whole program was to be. Therefore, you investigated the possibility of obtaining a graduate assistantship. One of the faculty members wants to discuss it with you this week. Schedule a meeting time. If you decide to take the assistantship you will need to plan how you will block out 15 hours next week. Incidentally, the work will involve: grading papers and tests, doing research, and writing some cases.

#### Academic Conflicts

- Since you and some of your fellow classmates are having difficulty grasping the case study approach to marketing, the professor has agreed to hold a case method session on Wednesday, at 4 pm. allow 1 1/2 hours.
- On Wednesday you are given a pop quiz in BA 632b. You know you failed it and decide to see the instructor.
- On Wednesday a short paper is assigned for the following Monday in BA 6325. While you are familiar with the material and topic, it will still take four hours to write and type the paper.
- At the close of classes on Thursday you are scared because you just can't comprehend the case approach to BA 6322. You consider dropping the course or changing to the lecture section. Maybe you should talk to the M.B.A. coordinator first. (7)

#### Personal Conflicts

- You notice in the school paper that the Union ~vie this weekend (Friday and Saturday nights) is Young Frankenstein. You missed it when it played the neighborhood theaters and you have wanted

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to see it. You don't know whether to go alone, get a dare, or stay home and study.

- A personal crisis develops when your alarm didn't go off and you make it to the last half of your Wednesday class. Since you didn't have your standard morning start, you are disoriented until noon.
- You decide to stop by the school bookstore for a light novel to pleasure read. You spend the last two hours before bed that night reading the book.
- Sunday afternoon you decide to bike around the campus for a "study break." Two hours are wasted.
- Tuesday night you decide you need a few minutes of physical exercise.

### Social Conflicts

- Several M.B.A.'s decide to get together at Cardinal Puff's for T.G.I.F. If you go allow 2 hours.
- Some of the M.B.A.'s have challenged the faculty to a softball game on Saturday at 10:00 a.m. Should you go or sleep in?