# Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 26, 1999 THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ABSEL DURING THE 1980's

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#### ABSTRACT

This paper will review the contributions to the experiential pedagogy during the 1980's by the Association Business Simulation for and Experiential Learning. A review of the proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the association will be used to establish patterns and significant contributions and trends. During part of this decade the Association with a partner, the North American Simulation and Gaming Association (NASAGA), also had its own journal, the Journal of Experiential Learning and Simulation, (JELS), published by Elsevier North Holland, Inc.

The JELS was short lived; it actually was published for less than five years but was acclaimed and recognized by the profession. It won the award for the highest quality new journal in its first year, but in five years was gone. Some of the more senior members of ABSEL, at present, were on JELS first editorial boards of which there were four:

- 1. Editorial Review Board for Applied Social Sciences.
- 2. Editorial Review Board for Management Organizational Behavior.
- 3. Editorial Review Board for Marketing.
- 4. Editorial Review Board for Simulation. The other main source for publishing the research of the membership was the Proceedings. This paper will review both sources.

#### THE 1980'S IN PERSPECTIVE

During the early 1980's, ABSEL membership and attendance at its annual meetings were at approximately the same level as today. At the start of the decade, Experiential Learning was a relatively new and controversial teaching method. Research on pedagogy was not recognized by many of the research oriented major universities. This author in the mid 70's was advised by his chairman not to do this type research nor to author experiential textbooks. My research was later recognized with an ABSEL award for "Best Paper in the Experiential Area". The subsequent text, the first in Human Resource Management, went through 5 editions and was adopted at more than 500 colleges and universities.

Two of the three authors of the first major organizational behavior experiential texts were no longer in universities even though the book was on the market for over 25 years and 6 editions. This bias is still evident today, with most of the ABSEL membership being from teaching oriented colleges and universities.

In the 1970's a number of books that consisted of Organizational Behavior experiential exercises were published which dominated the market into the 1980's and even '90's. These included Kolb, Rubin, and McIntyre (1971); Knudson, Woodworth, and Bell (1973); Lau (1975); Vaughn and Deep (1975); Hall, Bowen, Lewicki, and Hall (1975); Finch, Jones and Litterer (1976); Katz and Rosenzweig (1976); and Morris and Sashkin (1976).

In 1983, in order to ascertain the emphasis in management curriculums, we sampled the management departments of 100 U.S. business schools ("Experiential Methods in the Management Curriculum", NEWS AND VIEWS, ABSEL Vol. 5 (2), pp. 13). The management department was selected because it typically includes courses covering: 1) behavioral skills, 2) technical skills, and 3) business policy-the three aforementioned management functions.

A total of 31 department of management chairpersons responded. The survey was not conclusive but the data certainly provided adequate information to indicate the direction in the department. The responses are divided into two groups: schools with undergraduate bodies of less than one thousand, and schools with a thousand or more undergraduates. When appropriate we examined the two groups to determine if

curriculum or teaching methods might be correlated to school size. Seventeen larger schools responded (graduate student enrollment up to 2500 students) and fourteen smaller schools responded (graduate bodies ranging from 50 to 800 students). A summary of the questionnaire findings follows.

Organizational behavior was the most emphasized field of study in the management department in a remarkable 51% of the smaller schools. At the larger schools, departments were more divided on their emphasis: a technical course, operations management, was identified as the least stressed course at the smaller schools, while business policy was the least stressed at the larger, at less than 2%. Of further interest, this study polled the management department's involvement in the instruction of information systems, a very contemporary rapidly changing technical skill. The decisive conclusion was that management information systems were not stressed in the management department. MIS was emphasized in only a slim 6% of either school size, and was actually singled out as being the least emphasized in close to 30% of the smaller and 33% of the larger schools.

The questionnaires revealed that all schools employed a spectrum of teaching methods: lecturing, cases, discussion and experiential exercises. Interestingly enough though, some respondents reprimanded their faculty as being "foot draggers" in the evolution.

Not surprisingly, professors in schools with undergraduate student bodies of over a thousand lecture a little more frequently than those in the smaller schools (38% vs. 33% of class time respectively). The remainder of the time lecturing, cases and discussion are utilized in even proportion.

Experiential exercises have gained popularity in all the management departments, with only one chairperson replying that exercises were not utilized. About 18% to 20% of class time was spent practicing these exercises. They allow the students to role play and actually experience for her/himself how she/he reacts in a given situation. Furthermore, the exercises provide the opportunity to observe how other individuals react. When the chairpersons were questioned about complaints from the students regarding this avant-garde learning experience the overwhelming response was that there were none. Most chairpersons did point out, however, that occasionally a few faculty members criticize or find some fault with the experiential approach to learning.

Some chairpersons felt that eventually business schools would provide behavioral labs where students could have "hands on" opportunity in developing behavioral skills such as leadership, group decision making, and communication.

Asked why these labs were not already established at our nation's business schools the consensus was: 1) lack of funding, and 2) available space. Very few respondents indicated a lack of interest to the prospect. Where labs were already in use, the respondents were very enthusiastic. Are behavior labs a wave of the future? Will more schools be able to provide this learning device to their students? The chairpersons were divided on their predictions. Some felt that neither adequate space nor funding will become available and that moreover, there was an absence of trained faculty to staff such labs. Furthermore, a very few professors were repulsed by the "touchy-feely" image of the labs, claiming they were not in keeping with the rigors of business school. Nevertheless, many respondents acknowledged existing student demand for behavioral labs and predicted such labs would be the wave of the future. Responses indicated high acceptance of this method by students, and that if there was a barrier, it was being created by other faculty. Interestingly, it was acceptable for those who experienced it and was criticized by those who didn't experience it.

#### ABSEL CONTENT ANALYSIS RESULTS

During the decade of 1980-89, ABSEL published in its two Publications, its yearly Proceedings and in its journal, the Journal of Experiential Learning and Simulation, a total of 649 articles. The number that we identified as Experiential declined steadily during the decade, from about forty-five percent in 1980 to about twenty-four percent in 1989,

averaging about thirty-two percent during the entire period.

The overwhelming number of experiential articles were devoted to the two functional areas, Organizational Behavior and Management. Totals for the decade were 28 percent for OB and 16 percent for Management.

Marketing articles accounted for 6 percent, HRM 2 percent, Finance 1 percent, Accounting 3 percent, International Business 3 percent, Cross Cultural areas 1 percent, General Business 5 percent, and non-functional areas accounted for 35 percent of the total. The disparities between the functional areas are undoubtedly due to the perception that experiential activities are most suited for behavioral rather than analytical subjects.

Teaching Tools: Which experiential tools were used in the decade's 200 plus experiential articles? Role playing dominated with 37 percent; diagnostic instruments comprised 14 percent; case studies 7 percent; in-basket 2 percent and other made up 30 percent. Role playing dominated the Organization Behavior and Management area, with 47 percent in OB and 19 percent in Management.

Given the increasing emphasis in consumer behavior during the 1980's, it is important to note the lack of marketing exercises given the learning opportunities using active teaching methods.

Two other areas seem especially noteworthy. The first is the general lack of cross cultural and international business exercises. Given the increasing importance of both areas, the organization failed to gather the momentum that was certainly warranted.

The last concerns the role of the teacher in insuring the success of exercises. Is it possible that certain personalities will be more effective with different teaching methods? Do experiential methods require an environment of greater trust, for example, for the student to experiment and provide feedback in activities. It would seem that the facilitator role would require a different set of interpersonal skills. Tying this to the previous point, is it possible that certain teaching methods are more suitable for different cultures also?

#### CONCLUSIONS

After a decade of research effort it appears to us that far too many situation-specific studies are being reported, the impact of our educational processes remain clearly understood, and our theoretical developments are lagging far behind the needs and developments of our society (Whatley and Hoffman). This critical statement was written more than 15 years ago and remained true through out the decade of the 1980's. Research at ABSEL is primarily a function of the association's annual meeting and its proceedings and so the research there is a function of the interests of individuals rather than the need for developing a body of knowledge and its foundation of research.

This exercise will provide one step forward for the organization. It will provide a compilation of the abstracts of experiential articles with an index and table of contents. This should be a very useful resource and research tool for individuals interested in experiential exercises themselves or in research concerning its effectiveness.

### APPENDIX

### TABLE 1

Functional Area	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	Total	%
Organizational Behavior	11	8	6	2	7	2	4	6	4	7	57	28%
Management	2	6	5	4	5	4	2	2	3	. 1	34	16%
Marketing	2	0	4	1	2	0	1	່ 1	0	2	13	6%
HRM	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	. 0	4	2%
Finance	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	. <b>0</b>	. 0	0	2	1%
Accounting	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	1%
International Business	0	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	7	3%
Cross-Cultural	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	1%
General Business	3	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	11	5%
Other	10	14	10	6	7	7	6	2	7	4	73	35%
Other/Diagnostic	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	
Other/Role Play	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	
Other/Case	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Other/Student Teaching	0	о	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	
Other/In-Basket	1	о	0	0	0	0	0	0	о	0	1	
Other	2	10	7	4	6	6	6	2	7	4	54	
Total Articles Published	69	84	78	43	67	49	67	64	62	66	649	
<b>Total Experiential Articles</b>	31	36	26	14	24	14	17	12	17	16	207	
Percent of Content	45%	43%	33%	33%	36%	29%	25%	19%	27%	24%	32%	

### TABLE 2

Functional Area	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	Total
Organizational Behavior	35%	22%	23%	14%	29%	14%	24%	50%	24%	44%	28%
Management	6%	17%	19%	29%	21%	29%	12%	17%	18%	6%	16%
Marketing	6%	0%	15%	7%	8%	0%	6%	8%	0%	13%	6%
HRM	6%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Finance	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Accounting	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	6%	1%
International Business	0%	11%	4%	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	6%	0%	3%
Cross-Cultural	0%	6%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
General Business	10%	0%	0%	7%	8%	7%	6%	8%	6%	6%	5%
Other	32%	39%	38%	43%	29%	50%	35%	17%	41%	25%	35%

Activity Type	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	Total	%	% of Total
Organizational Behavior								<u>.</u>		. <u>.</u>			10101
Case	2	1					1				Δ.	7%	27%
Role Plaving	5	3	6	2	5	1	3	5	3	3	36	64%	47%
Diagnostic Intrument	2	3	-	_	1	·	-	•	1	-		1.3%	25%
Role of Student Teacher									•	÷ .	0	0%	0%
in-Basket	1										1	2%	20%
Other		1			1	1		1		4	8	14%	10%
•	10	8	6	2	7	2	4	6	4	7	56	100%	27%
Management					-	_	-	-	-	•	•••		2770
Case		2			1	2			1		6	18%	40%
Role Playing	2	1		3	3	2	2	1	1		15	44%	19%
Diagnostic Intrument		2	3	1	1				1	•	8	24%	29%
Role of Student Teacher											0	0%	0%
In-Basket		· 1									1	3%	20%
Other			2					1		1	4	12%	5%
-	2	6	5	4	5	4	2	2	3	1	34	100%	17%
Marketing													
Case											0	0%	0%
Role Playing	2		3	1	1		1	1			9	<b>69</b> %	12%
Diagnostic Intrument											0	0%	0%
Role of Student Teacher											0	0%	0%
In-Basket											0	0%	0%
Other			1		1					2	4	31%	5%
-	2	0	4	1	2	0	1	1	0	2	13	100%	6%
HRM													
Case											0	0%	0%
Role Playing	1	1							. ·	ĸ	2	50%	3%
Diagnostic Intrument											0	0%	0%
Role of Student Teacher											0	0%	0%
In-Basket	1										1	25%	20%
Other							1				1	25%	1%
-	2	1	0	0	0	Ó	1	0	0	0	4	100%	2%
Finance													
Case	1										1	50%	7%
Role Playing											ο	0%	0%
<b>Diagnostic Intrument</b>											0	0%	0%
Role of Student Teacher											0	0%	0%
In-Basket											0	0%	0%
Other							1				1	50%	1%
_	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	100%	1%
Accounting													
Case											0	0%	0%
Role Playing									· 1		1	33%	1%
Diagnostic Intrument											0	0%	0%
Role of Student Teacher											0	0%	0%
In-Basket											0	0%	0%
Other_		1							1		2	67%	3%
-	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	100%	1%

# TABLE 3

ſ	Activity Type	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	Total	%	% of Tot <b>a</b> l
F	International Business													
	Case											0	0%	0%
	Role Playing			1				1				2	29%	3%
	Diagnostic Intrument									1		1	14%	4%
	Role of Student Teacher											0	0%	0%
	In-Basket											0	0%	0%
	Other		4									4	57%	5%
T	-	0	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	7	100%	3%
•	Cross-Cuitural													
	Case											0	0%	0%
	Role Playing					1						1	33%	1%
	Diagnostic Intrument		1									1	33%	4%
	Role of Student Teacher											0	0%	0%
	In-Basket											0	0%	0%
	Other		1									1	33%	1%
	-	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	100%	1%
	General Business													
	Case							1				1	<b>9%</b>	7%
	Role Playing	1			1	2	1					5	45%	6%
	Diagnostic Intrument	2								1	1	4	36%	14%
	Role of Student Teacher											0	0%	0%
	In-Basket								1			1	9%	20%
	Other											0	0%	0%
		3	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	11	100%	5%
	Other											-		
	Case	1	2									3	4%	20%
	Role Playing	2	1	1	1	1						6	8%	8%
	Diagnostic Intrument	4	1	1	1	-						7	10%	25%
	Role of Student Teacher	0	0	1	0	0	1					2	3%	100%
	In-Basket	1		-			-		•	_		1	1%	20%
	Other	2	10	7	4	6	6	6	2		4	54	74%	68%
		10	14	10	6	7	7	6	2	7	4	73	100%	35%
	<b>-</b>													
	Iotais		F	^	^		2	2	•		0	15	704	100%
	Case Bala Blavian	4	5	11	0	10	2	2	7	5	2	15	770 2704	100%
	Role Flaying	13	0 7	11	0 2	13	4	,	,	5	3 1	20	3/70	100%
	Diagnostic Intrument	0		4	2	2	1	0	0	4	1	20	1470	100%
	Role of Student Teacher	2	1	0	0	0	۱ ۵	0	1	0	0	2	170 204	100%
	Other	2	17	10	4	8	7	8		8	11	79	284	100%
	- Ctilei	20	26	26		24	14	17	12	18	15	206	100%	100%
		30	30	20	1-1	24	14		12	10	10	200	100 %	100%
	C202	13%	14%	0%	0%	4%	14%	12%	0%	6%	0%	7%		
	Role Plaving	43%	17%	42%	57%	54%	29%	41%	58%	28%	20%	37%		
	Diagnostic Intrument	27%	19%	15%	14%	8%	0%	0%	0%	22%	7%	14%		
	Role of Student Teacher	0%	0%	4%	.0%	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%		
	In-Basket	10%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%	0%	0%	2%		
	Other	7%	47%	38%	29%	33%	50%	47%	33%	44%	73%	38%		

# TABLE 3 CONTINUED

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#### **GENERAL EXERCISES**

Author	Title	Vaaa
Amason, etal.	Preparing Student Groups to Participate in Experiential Group Projects: An Organizational Development Approach	1981
Butler	The Algebran Industry: A Tutorial Framework	1096
Calas	Putting Experience Back Into Experiential Learning: A Demonstration	1000
Cotlar	An Experiential Effect From Charismatic Encounters	1097
Crino, etal.	The Johari Window as a Measure of Personal Development	1002
Crino, etal.	"A Modular Approach to Experiential Learning: Classroom & Consulting Applications"	1902
Giamartino, etal.	Experiential Learning About the World of Work: A Program for Primary and Secondary School Educators	1986
Gomolka	Images of Effectiveness: A Classroom Exercise	1986
Graf, etal.	Factors Influencing Perception: Gaining Understanding Through Experience	1985
Graham	ABSEL Revisited: In-Class Student Involvement Increases Learning	1985
Kline	Developing the Competencies of "Resistance to Stress" and "Accurate Self-Assessment"	1985
McAfee	Experiential Learning Exercises: Sources and Specific Examples	1988
McAfee	The Test Preview Game: Applying the Game Show Format	1981
McAllister	Testing the Page Technique: Results and Further Developments	1987
McAllister	The Impact of Using Group Performance Evaluation as an Experiential Exercise	1989
Murtuza	Dramatic Monologues as Surrogates for Experiential Learning	1987
Newmiller	A Demonstration of the Effects of Feedback as a Category of Reinforcement	1984
Newstrom, etal.	The Johari Window: A Reconceptualization	1983
O'Leary, etal.	The Involvement of Student Bodies in the Teaching of Advanced Technical Concepts	1982
Oyster, etal.	The Symbol Exercise: An Initial Group Activity	1983
Richardson, etal.	The Problems of Motivating Students and Clients in Live-Case Projects	1980
Roderick, etal.	Grading as a Teaching and Feedback Mechanism: Involving Students in the Grading Process	1988
Stone, etal.	Intercollegiate Case Competitions for M.B.A. Students: Initiation and Implementation	1981
Tansuhaj, etal.	The Research/Teaching Interface: Turning a Pretest into an Experiential Exercise	1986
Trinkaus	Agenda ItemsBoard of Supervisors' MeetingTown of Jori	1980
Washburn	Frame Game - MULTRIX: The Multiple Choice Matrix Game	1981
	GENERAL CONCEPTUAL PAPERS	
Author	Title	Year
Basuray, etal.	Experiential Learning Revisited: Some Thoughts on Designing More Adaptive Management Education	1986

	Programs	
Biggs, etal.	Institutional Users of Experiential Learning Packages: A Preliminary View From Publishers' Adoption Lists	1983
Brenenstuhl	Interdisciplinary Approaches to Problems in Utilizing Experiential Techniques	1080
Burns, etal.	A Path Analytic Study of the Effects of Alternative Pedagogies	1004
Catalanello	To Use of Not to Use Experiential Techniques That is the Question	1000
Davis, etal.	The Role of Experiential Knowledge and Human Information Processing in Decision Making	1980
Gentry, etal.	Do We Learn From Experience?	1988
Gomolka etal	A Baview of Current Developments in Experiential Learning	1983
Greenhalah	The Velue of Content Developments in Experimental Learning	1988
etal.	The value of Conjoint Analysis in Enhancing Experiential Learning	1981
Kelley	Let's Talk to the Experiential Authors	1985
Lamb, etal.	An Instrument for the Assessment of Learning Dimensions: A Progress Report on the Learning Dimension Scale	1981
Mendleson	The Value of Pre-Teaching in Role Playing	1092
Meyers	Developing Creative Thinking Through Experiential Learning	1002
Raveed, etal.	Publishing Opportunities and Requirements for Business Simulation and Experiential Loarning Materials	1902
Schreier, etal.	Teaching Styles in Simulation Experiential Learning Variation "Traching Alexandria Learning Waterials.	1981
Schreier	ifelong Learning and ABSEI : An inguine on Definition and Politicipation	1981
Schreier	Monstranda for Business Simulation on Constraint Industry in Definition and Relationships	1989
Trinkaus	Partieinent Ture Diffusionen in Descenten in Learning	1984
Mand atal	The the of Entremences in Response to Experiential Methods: An Informal Look	1981
waiu, etal.	The Use of Experiential Leaching lechniques: Creativity vs. Conformity	1989
whatley, etal.	Opportunities for the Future: ABSEL's Role	1984

#### **EVALUATION OF EXPERIENTIAL METHODS**

Author	Title	Year
Arthur, Jr.	An Evaluation of In-Class Student Involvement	1980
Basuray	The Learning Style Inven. Debate Revisited: An Empirical Assess. of the Construct Validity Rel. to Experiential Learning Theory	1982
Blythe, etal.	A Relative Evaluation of Experiential and Simulation Learning in Terms of Perceptions of Effected Changes in Students	1981
Burns, etal.	A Cornucopia of Considerations in Evaluating the Effectiveness of Experiential Pedagogies	1988
Burns, etal.	Report on Programmatic Research on Perceived Learning Barriers with Simulation and Experiential Learning	1983
Calas, etal.	The Relationship of Cognitive Style Maps to the Preference for Experiential Learning of Undergraduate Students	1982
Cooke	The Dilemma in Evaluating Classroom Innovations	1986
Dutton	Participation Expectations of Students in Experiential Settings	1985
Gentry, etal.	Operationalizing a Test of a Model of the Use of Simulation Games and Experiential Exercises	1981
Gosenpud	Who Gains and Who Does Not From Experiential Learning	1982
Kelley	Trainee v. Trainee Subordinates Evaluation of Experiential Learning	1982
Kelley	Attitude Toward Experiential Exercises, The Student-Teacher Relationship, Student Psychological Types, and Performance	1980
Kelley, etal.	The Teacher-Student Relationship in Experiential Classes and the Student's Perception of Course Effectiveness	1980
Kelley	Weaknesses of Research Methods in Experiential and Simulation Studies	1980
Klein	Problems Associated With the Assessment of Experiential Learning Using the Multiple Choice Test	1982
Lamb, etal.	An Investigation of the Validity of a Recommendation for Experiential Exercise Debriefing	1985
LeVan, etal.	An Empirical Analysis of Experiential Learning for Learning Reinforcement	1981
Schreier, etal.	Simulation/Experiential Learning Audit	1981
Specht, etal.	Experiential Learning-Based Discussion vs. Lecture-Based Discussion: A Comparative Analysis in a Classroom Setting	1984
Sugges, Jr.	Designs for Research on Simulation-Games, Cases, and Other Experiential Exercises	1981
Summers, etal.	Simulation and Experiential Practices of Faculty: A Data-Based Workshop	1985
Taylor	The Use of Theory Power for Increased Research Momentum in Business Simulation and Experiential Exercises Research	1983

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Experiential Exercises; Volume 16.
Sanders, Patricia & Tom Pray. (1988).
Developments in Business Simulation &
Experiential Exercises; Volume 15.