

# Developments in Business Simulation & Experiential Exercises, Volume 9, 1982

## WINDOWS INTO MANAGEMENT: A PARTICIPATIVE AID TO LEARNING

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### ABSTRACT

Two-dimensional matrices that combine two independent dimensions into a graphic model with four products serve as "windows into management" for business students. Such models can combine either ordinal or nominal scales, focus on people, situations, or out-comes, and serve as descriptive or prescriptive classification schemes. Although each model over-simplifies reality, their visual presentation alone greatly enhances verbal discussion. More significantly, students can participate by assessing them-selves (or their situations) on each scale, and reporting the results to the class for tabulation and discussion. The process helps students internalize abstract concepts.

### INTRODUCTION

Two primary aids in student learning will be combined in this paper-visual matrix models and miniature experiential exercises. The benefits of using visual aids are well documented in the training literature as a means for enhancing student interest and facilitating the retention of conceptual information. The use of experiential exercises has rapidly expanded during the past decade, resulting in a student body in many colleges and universities that has learned to expect such opportunities for involvement.

The "windows into management" to be explained below are typically two-dimensional matrices that combine two independent (but related) dimensions into a graphic model. (Each of the dimensions is generally split into two parts, with the four conceptually distinct (and arbitrarily labelled) products as the outcome. Each model, therefore, presents a four-part "window" into one focused element of the overall management process, allowing viewers to see a different slice of organizational life every time they look through one of them. The experiential element emerges when students are provided the opportunity to assess themselves on each of the dimensions and consequently classify themselves, their instructors, or their environments as one of the four types.

The objectives of this paper are to 1) describe the ways in which these models can be differentiated; 2) present some illustrations of them (both classic and new ones); and 3) urge the classroom use of such existing models, as well as the development of additional ones.

### MODEL DIFFERENCES

A preliminary review of the management and training literature has uncovered several dozen 2-x 2 models (either in graphic or verbal form). The models data-logged to date can be differentiated in at least three significant ways, as follows:

#### Dimensions

Some dimensions appear as nominal scales and others as ordinal scales. The former are dichotomized: the latter are continuous, generally ranging in degree from "high" to "low". Some models use two nominal scales, others use two ordinal scales; and the remainder combine one of each.

#### Focus

Some models result in the classification of people into four different types; others classify managerial situations or environments; still others produce four types of outcomes.

#### Nature

Some models are essentially descriptive, presenting four different results of the classification scheme without any implications as to the relative value or worth of each class. Other models are clearly prescriptive, with a quite obvious connotation of the relative preference for various outcomes.

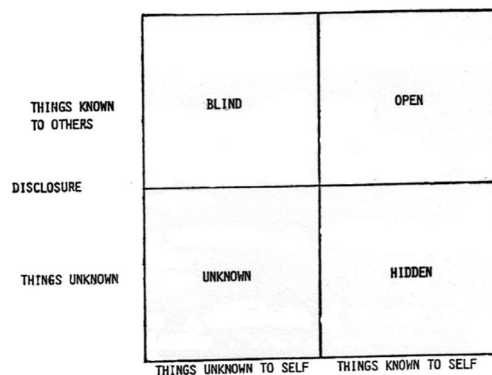
### ILLUSTRATIONS

A few examples will be briefly reviewed here.

#### Johari Window

This familiar model combines a person's assessment of the degree to which they know themselves, with the degree to which they disclose themselves to others. Four products emerge, labelled as Blind, Hidden, Unknown, and Open (see Figure 1). This model uses nominal scales, presents four personal situations, and is clearly descriptive.

**Figure 1**  
**Johari Window**



INSIGHT

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## Approaches to Conflict

This model combines the aspirations persons have for themselves in interpersonal conflict (preference for winning vs. losing) with their preference for the other party's outcome (winning vs. losing). The outcomes are for both to win, both to lose, the one to win and the other to lose, or the one to lose and the other to win (see Figure 2). This model is categorized as basically prescriptive, with a focus on outcomes, and using nominal scales for each dimension.

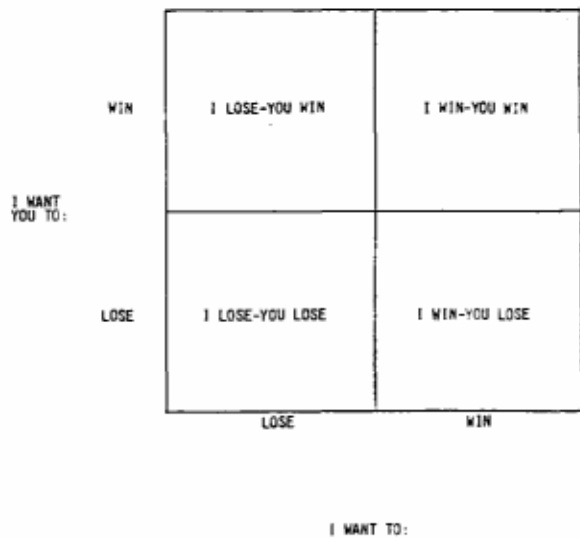


FIGURE 2  
APPROACHES TO/OUTCOMES OF CONFLICT

## Types of Trainers

This new model combines an assessment of the platform skills of a trainer with that person's content expertise (see Figure 3). These scales are ordinal, the model classifies people, and it is implicitly prescriptive (the Technical Expert, Bomb, and Entertainer are inadequate; the Professional is preferred).

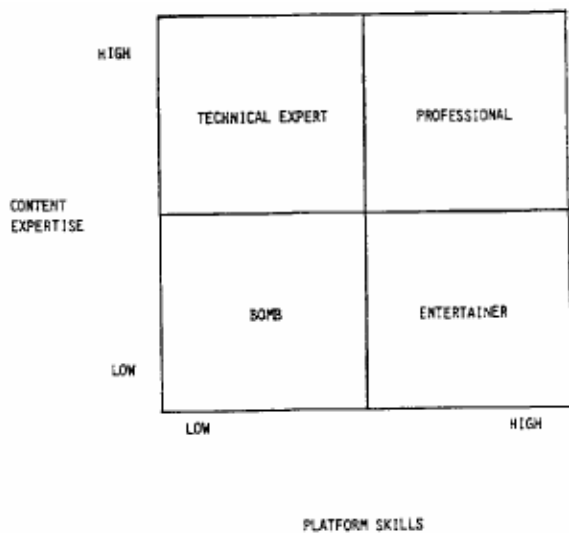


FIGURE 3  
FOUR TYPES OF TRAINERS

## Readiness to Learn

This model incorporates two ordinal scales (employee consciousness and employee competence) to produce four levels of readiness to learn - the unconscious incompetent, the conscious incompetent, the conscious competent and the unconscious competent. The model is descriptive, and classifies people at four different levels (see Figure 4).

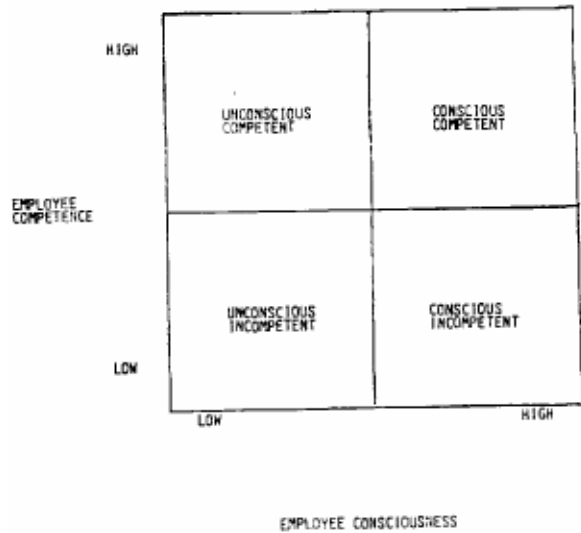


FIGURE 4  
READINESS TO LEARN

## Evaluation Outcomes

This is a conceptual portrait of the classic products of research - Type I and II errors, and true positive or true negative outcomes (see Figure 5). The

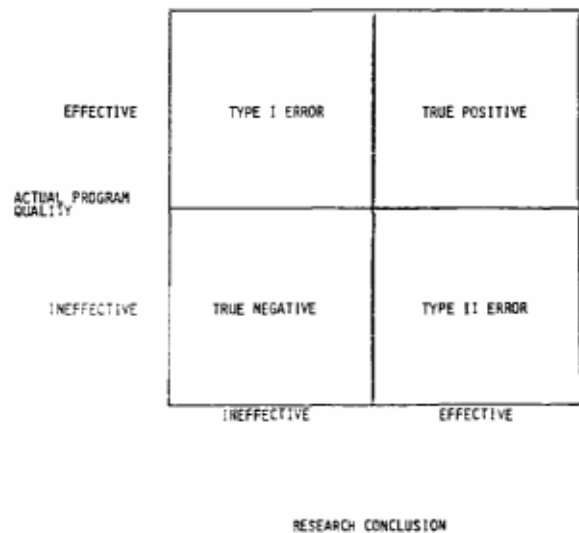


FIGURE 5  
ASSESSING EVALUATION OUTCOMES

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products are the combination of the research conclusion combined with the actual program quality. As such, the model describes four different outcomes, and is clearly descriptive.

### **USES AND DEVELOPMENT**

At a minimum, professors can use this type of model as a visual aid (overhead, flipchart, chalkboard, or handout) to supplement their verbal presentation of these topics. The author readily admits that the world is not a 2 x 2 model; however, such a format does provide the elegance of simplicity that characterized Kurt Lewins views of the world.

All of the models allow at least passive participation by students --they can be encouraged to identify with one of the four products. Alternatively, they can be asked to assess themselves on each of the two scales, thereby more actively involving themselves in the use of the model. Subsequently, the instructor can poll the class members to determine how many fell into each quadrant, and why.

To date, the author has accumulated over fifty models in the general topical areas of management and organizational behavior. Several of these have been developed following the identification of two related dimensions in the literature, with meaningful titles then created for the four products. Readers are encouraged to search for additional window models, as well as to develop their own from their knowledge of the literature.