

# Simulations, Games and Experiential Learning Techniques:, Volume 1, 1974

## DEBITS AND CREDITS FIRST NATIONAL ABSEL CONFERENCE

Stanley C. Vance, University of Oregon

It seems appropriate that as we conclude our first national annual ABSEL Conference we take an accounting of our debits and credits. On this meeting's plus-minus score sheet our 98 registrants representing 74 different educational and business institutions located in 25 states plus Puerto Rico and Canada, focused upon a great variety of pertinent items in their 55 presentations.

Much of our conferencing might be categorized in the following alliterative summary:

	<u>Plus</u>	<u>Minus</u>
A.	Choice	Chaos
B.	Sophistication	Sophistry
C.	Peer	Personal
D.	Experiential	Experimental

A. The Choice-Chaos pairing refers to the wide variety of business games now available. This is a positive point, and in one sense the continued development of more and varied games is an index of innovation, ingenuity and a striving to fill specific and functional needs.

On the negative side, this multiplicity might be interpreted as fragmentation and chaos. A number of questions were raised in our sessions as to the need, for example, of the capstone, integrative-type game at the senior and graduate levels assuming the typical student has already played a variety of specialized games in functional areas such as production, accounting or marketing. Because of this over-exposure do we still have a need for the macro game after a sequence of micro games?

B. The second dichotomy deals with the concern felt by every seasoned gamer as to where sophistication ends and sophistry begins. There is an universal frailty particularly in neophyte simulators, to make one's own game respectable by accentuating the arithmetical. But formulas, equations and super-programming can easily sidetrack away from reality into fantasy. An obvious result is the avoiding of such a game by practitioners, particularly in industry.

C. The Peer-Personal contrasting is concerned with team playing as versus individual playing. The advantages of the team technique are well known. However, we might be overlooking what could be an insidious limitation--the possibility that team playing also leads to groupism, social engineering and the bureaucratic. If the team approach to business simulation accelerates the transformation of students into bureaucrats then our game-playing could be countervailing to a presumed objective of education for business administration, namely the enkindling and development of entrepreneurial zest.

## Simulations, Games and Experiential Learning Techniques:, Volume 1, 1974

D. The last set of contrasts, experiential-experimental, might be translated into training-research. Are we solely concerned with teaching and training or, in our simulation structuring and playing, are we striving to add to the fund of knowledge There is nothing wrong with the training and preparation for life aspects of the experiential but particularly for those of us in university teaching is this enough? Yet, to date, our emphasis has been on the experiential with relatively little stress on the research-experimental.

As a pioneer father in this relatively new field of business simulation, I do wish to tell you I am proud of my own offspring and the thousand-plus others that now populate our domain. Hopefully I can speak for all the other pioneer fathers and say we are proud and pleased at the zest, creativity and productivity that you have shown at our ABSEL sessions at Oklahoma Christian College. If I can properly equate your zeal and competency I would be willing to make a forecast as to the relative preeminence of teaching techniques in the future. You will note in the table what I see as a progressive decline in the conventional classroom approach, an upping and then a slight decline in the case method, and an incidental impact of closed circuit television and learning machines. Simulation, to the contrary has markedly increased and, I feel, its prospects for the near future are excellent. Considering trends and prospects, I am sure that if Jimmy the Greek Snyder were asked to make odds, he would say that we can't lose with ABSEL.

	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>
Lecture-Text	80	70	65
Case method	17	20	18
Simulation	2	8	15
TV and LM	1	2	2
	<hr/> 100	<hr/> 100	<hr/> 100