**Experiential Fire: Passing the Torch**

**Abstract**

Come join us as we pass the torch to new facilitators and a brand new set of exercises for this year’s experiential fire. This year’s torch bearers are excited to share a wide variety of exercises and approaches and welcome your participation to keep those fires burning. A perennial favorite, come experience and learn by doing with this curated collection of engaging experiential exercises. Our seven presenters will introduce you to their innovative exercises in a “speed networking” format. This year’s session includes cross-cultural communication, empathy, learning, change, persuasion and cohesion and non-verbal communication. Full details of the exercises will be available in the Conference Proceedings.

**Three Keywords**: experiential exercises, active learning, innovation

**Session format**: Symposium

**Time requested**: 90 minutes.

**Resource needs**: Larger room that can fit 50 people with the typically available classroom resources (PC computer/projector, whiteboard/markers).

**Conference Track**. General, however, if possible it would be helpful to place this session immediately before the Management Teaching Review session.

**Unique Contribution**. This is a unique symposium that has not been presented before and is not under review. The Experiential Fire format has been a presence at MOBTC for over a decade.

**Introduction**.

This dynamic and experientially focused session is designed to engage the audience as active participants in short exercises run by each of the presenters. These exercises explore the ways in which a broad range of management concepts and topics can be taught and experienced in a variety of innovative ways at both undergraduate and graduate level. Audience members have the opportunity to ask questions of the presenters and to connect after the session concludes to discuss the details, logistics and purpose of the exercises at length. This session is of value to educators of all disciplines and levels and should be equally attractive to those who are looking to adapt and add new tools to their kit or who simply wish to explore and be exposed to new approaches and ideas.

**Theoretical Foundation/Teaching Implications**.

This session is heavily grounded in experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). In the last decade a variety of opportunities for experiential exercises in traditional and non-traditional teaching environments have been proposed (Batchelor & Burch, 2016; Boggs, Mickel & Holtom, 2007; Crowne, 2017; Gibson, Ward, Comer & Rossi, 2017) along with broader calls for an experiential approach to classroom activity (Kalliath & Laiken, 2006; Kenworthy & DiPadova-Stocks, 2010; Whetten, 2007). In addition, the ethical aspects of using experience as an approach to teaching learning have also been discussed (Dean & Forray, 2016). The intention of this session is not to debate the rights or wrongs of the experiential approach (though of course those ideas may well be raised during the session) but to bring to the audience a variety of possibilities which could be adopted or adapted for further use, experimentation and development. The remainder of this submission presents an overview of the actual session and each of the experiential exercises that we would like to present. Additionally, any related theoretical foundations for each of the exercises presented during this session will be described in the conference proceedings.

**Symposium Overview**.

This symposium will follow the historic Experiential Fire format. In this structure, we will begin with a very brief history of the session, a description of the session, and then a short welcome from a representative from the Management Teaching Review. Swiftly, we will begin the panel of short 5 minute presentations (think power networking or speed dating) where the facilitators demonstrate and describe key dimensions of their experiential exercises to and with willing audience members. Detailed instructions will be provided in the proceedings which include, but are not limited to instructions, role descriptions, and relevant digital resources (video clips, images, PPTs, hyperlinks). After the presentations the audience will have the opportunity to ask questions and network with presenters and other members.

An abbreviated summary of the seven experiential exercises follows:

**Exercise 1: Yikes! I Look Ugly Today**

**Facilitator: A**

This short role-play exercise explores issues associated with cross-cultural communication. Scholars maintain that cultural values shape all our perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors (Hofstede, 1981). This creates interesting situations when two individuals from different cultural backgrounds are communicating. Even when the medium of communication is a common language such as English, both parties word their messages and interpret those of the other party in light of their own cultural values. This can easily lead to miscommunication and conflict in the workplace. In today’s diverse workplace cultural intelligence is not a desired but a critical skill. Through this exercise instructors can enhance their students’ cultural intelligence, and cross-cultural communication skills.

**Exercise 2: Using Behavioral Mirroring to Enhance Empathy**

**Facilitator B**

One component necessary to enhance positive change in the world is increased empathy and perspective taking. Behavioral mirroring / behavioral synchrony is one activity that has shown promise for improving individual empathy (Bräuninger, 2014) and self-other awareness (Koch, Mehl, Sobanski, Sieber, & Fuch, 2015). This exercise will guide participants through a short behavioral mirroring activity and provide instructions and debrief questions to use in their own classrooms. The mirroring activity is appropriate for skill development courses (e.g., Managerial Skills, Negotiations) or as a short exercise when teaching about ethics in business.

**Exercise 3: Doubt and Conviction in Learning**

**Facilitator C**

When beginning a new term, I discuss the opportunity college presents for students to learn what they don’t already know as a central and exciting possibility. This is a chance to consider the taken-for-granted knowledge which they simply treat as ‘given’ and which stands as truth for them. I use an article from Frontiers in Zoology on the tendency of dogs to align with the north/south axis of the earth when excreting. This example is a meaningful entrée to do so as it falls outside the other three quadrants of epistemology, specifically, 1) What do I know that I know I know, 2) What do I not know, that I know I don’t know, and 3) What do I know that I don’t know I know. The ideas of this session enter into that fourth quadrant where we can inquire into what we do not know, that we do not know we don’t know! Few, (none in my classes), know that they did not know this. Who knew?!

**Exercise 4: Seeding Tomorrow**

**Facilitator D**

This is a concrete way to intrigue learners about managing their own future. Hand it to them. As a tiny packet of wild flower seeds. A packet of tomorrow’s prospects, possibilities, and problems. Learners imbue seeds meaning for their chosen practice. As wild seeds go, only some will metaphorically take root. Randomly or intentionally. Learners sort out the few they intuit to be most likely to bloom in their care. Chosen seeds are like latent goals seeding tomorrow with custom-made purpose. Results to shared, discussed, and stored in mind where futures are envisioned.

**Exercise 5: Learning and experiencing Cialdini’s (2001) principles of persuasion with Infomercials**

**Facilitator E**

In this exercise, each student team is asked to choose any product (real or imagined) and create a short infomercial while applying Cialdini’s principles of persuasion. After each team presents their product to the class, students are asked to identify the principles they observed in the infomercial. Instructors can have the principles listed on the board and put a check mark beside each one as students identify them in the infomercials. To push students further, instructors can ask, “How might you use the principle of —- to sell this product?” if any principles were not applied.

**Exercise 6: Triangulating Three Ways to Create the Most Cohesive Class You’ve Ever Had!**

**Facilitator G**

In 2015, I presented a session describing how to balance sharing enough and too much personal information in the classroom (specifically, I had just lost my husband and was out of the class for a month) and a participant shared some theoretical support for the idea regarding how this can create cohesiveness in the classroom. Following this, a colleague and I presented in 2015 about how social identity theory can be used to create cohesiveness in the classroom. To this end, I now believe that there is a trifecta of ways to create cohesiveness: creating cohesiveness using three methods: getting students to identify with the instructor, with group members and with the class as a whole. My session will illustrate specific ways in which to do this. Evidence of increased attendance and lasting relationships with others in the class will be shared. Thus, facilitating identification with the three entities is the goal of the session.

**Exercise 7: It’s all in the Wrist: Deconstructing the Handshake**

**Facilitator H**

In this exercise students are asked to shake the hand of the person next to them and then to move around the room, shaking the hands of as many people as possible. We then de brief on the exercise, focusing on the students reflections of the handshakes they have shared. What is it about a simple handshake that can mean so much? Do we have expectations related to gender, and culture that should be addressed? What about #MeToo? This is a great exercise for getting students moving, engaging with each other, reflecting on their non-verbal interactions with others and how they present themselves through a simple action which can mean so much.

**Session Description**

As discussed above, we will follow a streamlined and highly structured format of an introduction, mini-presentations, to leave time for a question and answer session. This is a highly engaging session where the audience is asked to participate in the various experiential exercises which allows for active learning of our members and a “try it before you buy it” opportunity. If possible, we would like the session to precede the Management Teaching Review “Meet the Editors Session” to provide further synergy between our conference presentations and scholarship opportunities. See the timeline below for specifics.

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| **Topic** | **Presenter/s** | **Time**  **(Elapsed Time)** |
| 1. Crowd Management-Settling in | Co-organizers | 5 (5) |
| 1. Introduction | Co-organizers & Management Teaching Review Representative | 10 (15) |
| 1. Mini-presentations | Presenters (7 @ 5 min. each) | 35 (50) |
| 1. Question & Answer | Everyone | 40 (90) |

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