

Abstract:

As the world emerges from the throes of the pandemic, it is proposed that many of the innovations we created to safely teach face-to-face classes just might add value post pandemic. In this session, innovations for materials, prompts and experiential strategies developed for in-person teaching post pandemic will be shared. This includes demonstrating ideas from using physically distanced blind walks to building towers with ropes and rubber bands. Participants will also be engaged to share their best practices and experiences teaching in our new world.

[85 words]

Keywords: Experiential Exercise (s), Materials, COVID restrictions

Introduction:

The world has experienced unprecedented and universal challenges in higher education. What we have normally taken for granted such as students collaboratively working around a table has been changed to physical distancing with students wearing masks and often sitting in very large rooms. Facilitating students to actively engage in their learning while honoring the dichotomy of their need to be with people and their trepidation about remaining safe is now a challenge. Through experimentation and patience, innovation occurred which resulted in students forming relationships, learning and being thankful for human interaction.

In this session, we propose to share innovations implemented during the face-to-face teaching in the 2020-21 academic year when tight COVID restrictions remain in place. The restrictions included six-foot distancing, 100% mask wearing on campus, and increased sanitization of tables and materials. Teaching face-to-face with these restrictions prompted innovation by changing the materials used in traditional experiential exercises as well as developing new class opening exercises.

The session will be organized into three sections with the sharing of best practices at the end of each section. The sections include A) Materials B) Strategies and C) Example exercises. We will share both innovations that have been applied to classic exercises such as the blind (trust) walk as well as exercises that have been created independently in response to COVID-19 safety guidelines. The innovations shared have occurred indoors and outdoors in addition to in large classrooms which accommodate movement as well as smaller rooms with restricted areas. In other words, innovation has been based on the learning objectives, reality of COVID-19 restrictions and the physical setup of the classroom.

The innovations have occurred in the following classes: Organizational Behavior, Strategic Management and Leadership. These exercises and strategies are appropriate for management education at any level as the teachable moments can be adapted to the material presented. As with most experiential exercises the modifications are only limited to the imagination of the facilitator. It is hoped that participants take away new ideas to implement as they return to more and more face-to-face education. Unexpected teachable moments were realized through the innovations and will also be shared during this session.

Theoretical Foundation/Teaching Implications

The teaching strategies and exercise strategies are founded on the four elements of Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning within one class session: 1) concrete experience, 2) reflection/observation, 3) abstract conception and 4) active experimentation. The session is focused on sharing concrete experiences that would ground the classroom experience in management topics. Reflection is included in the adapted strategies and has evolved to group debriefs in class and submitted electronic reflections which have eliminated paper. The active experimentation from Kolb's model is done differently in each class and is not a focus of this session.

Learning Objectives:

Face-to-Face Innovations: Post Pandemic learning objectives include:

1. Participants will gain ideas and new approaches to teaching face-to-face safely within typical COVID-19 restrictions

2. Participants will gain knowledge of innovative materials that can be used in classic experiential exercises to comply with typical COVID-19 restrictions.
3. Participants will be able to share their best practices teaching face-to-face in our current world situation as well as hopefully be supported in all of our efforts to innovate and move forward with our value of experiential education.

Session Description:

The session will be designed in three segments; A) Materials B) Strategies and C) Example exercises. After each section, dialog will be opened so that participants can share best practices and experiences on the section topic with being face-to-face within the last academic year.

The Materials section will offer examples of creating props that allow for physical distancing such as long color-coded ropes and PEX pipe formed into 6-foot circles. Care and sanitization protocols will also be shared as it relates to materials.

The Strategies section will include innovative changes to classic exercises with the new materials or new set-ups. Teachable moments that have arisen because of the innovations will be shared with a discussion on how classic exercises can be integrated with material different than the classic pairing.

Finally, the Example section will include sharing of an opening exercise that have been developed to follow COVID-19 restrictions. The exercise includes three rounds of students networking with their peers as well as performing a balance skill.

Session Description:

10 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introductions ● Discussion of the format and timeline
15 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Materials Section – shared screen with photos and descriptions of materials ● Off share – for discussion of best practices and sharing of experiences
15 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strategies Section – shared screen with a slide per adapted exercises ● Off share – for discussion of best practices and sharing of experiences
15 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exercise Section – shared screen with steps of exercise highlighted ● Facilitate an example of balance experience with willing participants ● Debrief experience ● Discussion of other exercises and/or adaptations that meet COVID restrictions

References:

Kolb, D. Experiential Learning as the Science of Learning and Development.

Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. 1984