**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. Always a perennial favorite, come experience and learn by doing with this curated collection of engaging experiential exercises. Our presenters will introduce you to their innovative exercises in a “speed networking” format. This year’s session includes ice-breakers, influence tactics, cross-cultural communication, faultlines and subgroup formation, diversity, equity and inclusion, social class origins, and more. Full details of the exercises will be available in the Conference Proceedings.

**Three Keywords**: experiential exercises, curated collection, active learning

**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). This session is typically well-attended and we almost always run out of chairs so a large room would be great!

**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 with these different activities 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 experiential exercises follows:

**Exercise 1: A Forgotten Dimension of Diversity: Social-Class Origins**

**Facilitator: A**

An article in *Harvard Business Review* encouraged me to create a new exercise for my diversity class on social-class origins. Borrowing from privilege exercises such as (<https://uca.edu/training/files/2017/11/Privilege-Exercises-Action-Steps-Handout.pdf>) and the privilege walk exercise (<https://www.eiu.edu/eiu1111/Privilege%20Walk%20Exercise-%20Transfer%20Leadership%20Institute-%20Week%204.pdf>) which stems from McIntosh’s 1988 white privilege article, I created a similar exercise to introduce social-class origins to my students. In this Experiential Fire session, I will show how to use this exercise and how I engage in the exercise with the students. Then I will debrief the activity and provide examples from class. I will include handouts for participants to take with them and utilize in their courses.

**Exercise 2: Organizational Behavior: Let’s Get Personal**

**Facilitator: B**

Organizational Behavior may seem abstract to a college sophomore/junior. In this brief exercise, undergraduate students are asked to do a quiet, solo activity to keep throughout the semester as a touchpoint to link the class material to their life experience.

Two simple verbal prompts are offered to aid students in visualizing the initial course concepts through the lens of their existing work history. Keywords and themes are extracted, and our course comes back to these keywords and themes as we move through course modules, specifically those regarding individuals (perception, attitudes, personality, and others).

This is quiet activity and reflections are only shared with the instructor to encourage honesty, candor, and self-awareness. Beyond our group debrief, individual students leverage this solo activity in future reflection essays and during exams. Overall, the thread of this short exercise is woven throughout the semester.

**Exercise 3: Convincing Others—Influence Tactics that Work**

**Facilitator: C**

This exercise introduces students to the concept of influence tactics used to convince others in the workplace to do something you want them to do. I use this exercise in the Power and Politics chapter for my Management and Organization class, beginning the section on Organizational Politics. Students break into groups and I randomly choose one student to be the “leader.” The leader receives a few pieces of candy (one or two fewer than the group size), and the others in the group write notes to the leader to try to convince the leader to give them candy. After the leader makes a decision, the class discusses the types of influence tactics used and which ones worked better than others. The instructor then explains the research on the effectiveness of various types of political influence tactics.

**Exercise 4: Improving Understanding of the Concepts of Faultlines and Subgroup Formation**

**Facilitator: D**

While students usually understand the concept of diversity based on an attribute (e.g., gender diversity) quickly, they find faultlines relatively difficult to understand. Thus, the purpose of this activity is to help students improve understanding of the concepts of faultlines and subgroup formation based on the alignment of multiple demographic characteristics. I show visualized examples of three teams with individual members’ demographic characteristics in class. These teams have different levels of faultlines (high, moderate, and low). I then ask students to discuss which team is more (less) likely to form subgroups and conflicts. Next, I will facilitate discussions and debrief why demographic alignment is likely to lead subgroups and distinguish faultlines from diversity based on an attribute. This activity can be adopted in undergraduate and graduate OB, diversity, and team courses.

**Exercise 5: Title: Did I Hear You Wrong?**

**Facilitator: E**

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, 1980). This creates interesting situations when 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 6: Using Social Identity Theory in a Sneaky Way to Increase Cohesiveness in the Classroom**

**Facilitator F**

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 students often asked questions about it) and a participant shared some theoretical support for the idea regarding how this can create cohesiveness in the classroom. Since this time, I have worked diligently to increase cohesiveness in various ways, and will share a new method: three “get out of your seat” exercises which allows students to identify with their classmates, with their group members, and finally, with the instructor. This session will illustrate specific as well as alternative ways in which to do this. Thus, facilitating identification with the three entities is the goal of the session.

**Exercise 7: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Awareness and Practices in a Manufacturing Facility: A Short Case Study**

**Facilitator G**

The short case study asks students to read and consider issues in a manufacturing facility which has received low scores on an employee survey regarding the value of diversity at the facility. The facility is also struggling with diversity, equity and inclusion awareness and practices. Students are asked to identify issues within the case and make recommendations about how to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in the facility. During the Experiential Fire session, question prompts and strategies to get at the difficult underlying issues will be presented, which could be useful to faculty to use in their own classrooms when analyzing case studies addressing DEI issues.

**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. If this isn’t possible, any time frame is fine.

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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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