Title:

Gather Around the Experiential Fire

Abstract:

We welcome our MOBTS whānau (extended family) to join us as we gather around the proverbial experiential fire to share a collection of engaging experiential exercises from a number of presenters in a hands-on "speed dating" format. This session will include short interactive descriptions of a variety of novel experiential exercises for use in management education and learning environments. Full explanations for how to use each of the exercises will be available to all attendees. As one of the MOBTS' most engaging, longest running, and always at capacity in terms of seating sessions, we can't wait to see everyone there!

Keywords:

Experiential exercises, teaching tools

**Introduction.** This proposed session, originally conceived by Rae André well over a decade ago, has become an extremely popular session at OBTC simply because it is about exploring targeted and engaging exercises together. Participants are united in their desire to learn and explore and as presenters we are excited share about the tools and techniques we use that we have found really “work” in terms of generating learning. There can be no “Fire” without a community of united and interested people working together (a management learning and education *whānau*) to build it. To actively engage with others in a room full of colleagues and friends during a session where a series of passionate experiential education facilitators are presenting exercises they have tested and found powerful in terms of student learning is truly an amazing experience.

For many of us, experiencing an “Experiential Fire” is akin to going to a buffet of your favorite foods with a group of people who love food as much as you do – some of the dishes (exercises) you will like more than others, it’s likely you’ll only have room for a few of them when it comes to actually eating (using) them, you can come and go in a relatively quick timeframe and be completely satiated with what you ate (learned), and the entire meal is made exponentially better because of the process of experiencing it with like-minded, invested, and interested others. We are all a whanau of interested and passionate colleagues who care about working together with our students, colleagues, and our larger communities in terms of maximizing everyone’s potential for developing the skills required to be a lifelong learner.

**Theoretical Foundation/Teaching Implications**. In this session, participants gather to learn about a variety of experiential exercises suitable for face-to-face (in person) as well as some virtual contexts. Although experiential exercises are frequently presented at IMOBTS, the exercises presented in this session differ in that their essence can be communicated in just eight minutes or less. The brevity of presentations is intended to be a “teaser” to highlight a fraction of the learning potential in these exercises; thus this session provides the participants a smorgasbord of ideas and connections with facilitators whom they can follow up with about subtle details and explanations. In short, this session offers a useful collection of a wide assortment of exercises that can be used to both achieve a number of instructional objectives and address a wide variety of possible topics at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The domain specific topics that are targeted through the Experiential Fire exercises vary every year. What remains the same for this session is its theoretical and practical foundation. As Jeanie Forray and Kathy Lund Dean aptly shared in their first *Journal of Management Education* (JME) introduction as Editors-in-Chief five years ago, “We view this time as ripe for innovation with SOTL in ways that honor external stakeholders’ legitimate concerns about teaching quality and the learning experience of the next generation in college and University settings” (2014, p. 484). As scholarship and practice are intimately and inextricably tied together, there can be no doubt of the pivotal role that innovative teaching and learning *practice*, as a partner to scholarship, will play as we shape the learning experience of the next generation. Using experience to create learning is the basis of our “Fire” time together. The theoretical foundation underpinning the Experiential Fire is experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Just as we do for our students in terms of providing them with experiences to illustrate concepts, we do here for faculty members with respect to illustrating, via “doing”, innovative teaching tools. Once again, as Kathy Lund Dean and Jeanie Forray aptly share, “developing new experiential engagements” aimed at critically and constructively addressing current issues are becoming increasingly important to reshaping the learning environments of our students (2019, p.125). Rather than review the theory and related calls for an experiential approach to education and learning (e.g., Kalliath & Laiken, 2006; Kenworthy & DiPadova-Stocks, 2010; Whetten, 2007) we will use the space below to provide you with an overview of the actual session and each of the experiential exercises that we would like to present.

**Learning Objectives**. In terms of contribution, this unique format allows for all members of our community, those new to the society as well as those “long-timers”, to engage in both presenting and participating roles. Faculty at all career stages can learn about established experiential exercises, slight adaptations of these, and new innovations in teaching and learning exercises. Additionally, the actual participation in the exercises allows for networking and connection between presenters and participants and participants and participants which often results in ongoing dialogs on shared experiential teaching topics. To draw similarities to other resources in our field, this session is analogous to a real-time, face-to-face, hands on, visual and experiential, “short and sweet” mini-representation of the type of resources we all read about in the *Journal of Management Education*’s (JME) Teaching Innovations and Resource Reviews sections as well as most of what can be found in the new *Management Teaching Review* (MTR) portfolio. Those journal sections are incredibly valuable resources to our management education community, and, thus, so is this session. “The Fire” has become something of an institution at both MOBTS and IMOBTS conferences. Although the format remains similar throughout the years, the actual exercises presented at each “Fire” are different. This year’s exercises are all new and have not been shared at MOBTS event in this format before. Just as every new fire requires fresh wood as its fuel, every iteration of our Experiential Fire requires new exercises as fuel for our minds.

**Exercise Overviews. Included here at a later date**

**Session Description**. After a brief introduction to the format of the session, each presenter will have up to eight minutes to present his or her experiential exercise. The audience is asked to participate in each of the exercises to better understand the essence of each exercise and its respective capacity to enhance student learning as well as to facilitate subsequent discussion. Complete instructions and any necessary materials (e.g., role descriptions, score sheets, pictures, or figures) will be available for all attendees. These will provide more details as to typical reactions/questions from various learner populations, suggested courses or topics for the exercises, and suggested audiences (e.g., undergrad, graduate, executive). Presenters will try to cover some of these specifics as time permits, however historically the experiential aspects fill the 5-7 minute allocation. A brief summary of each of the proposed exercises is described below and detailed “how to” descriptions of each exercise will be shared in the conference Proceedings.

Please note: We would respectfully request Wi-Fi access, PPT projection, and a room with clear visibility to someone in the front of the room is preferred (i.e., a tiered case or lecture room is fine). A large white board is also requested.

**References**.

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