A REALISM COMPARISON OF SIMULATION TECHNOLOGIES/METHODOLOGIES

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SYMPOSIUM OVERVIEW

The five members of the symposium will present comparative data and findings concerned with two simulation technologies/methodologies. The data, findings, and subsequent discussions will center on comparing the degree of reality that each technology/methodology generates and simulates while it is being used in an interactive way with students in a classroom or learning module situation.

The eight-(8) technologies/methodologies to be addressed by this symposium are: cases, games, exercises, role-plays, critical incidents, assessment centers, cooperative/internship programs and the real job. The advantages and disadvantages with regard to use of each of the technologies/methodologies will be enumerated and discussed by the symposium participants.

THE REALISM OF CASES AND EXPERIENTIAL EXERCISES
(by Eugene G. Gomolka)

The educational objectives for management courses vary by the level of the course, and the complexity of the material to be taught. Cases and experiential exercises are often used by instructors as a means to achieve the educational objectives sought, including knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The effectiveness of cases and experiential exercises, as well as other teaching methods, is somewhat influenced by the perceived realism which students attach to the teaching method.

Experiential exercises often suffer from a perceived lack of realism by students, limiting their effectiveness. Exercises, which are simple and straightforward need to be well set up by the instructor, and extensively debriefed, to make sure that the relation of the exercise to real business administration situations is clearly identified. Otherwise, students will feel that the simple classics such as the NASA exercise, building paper airplanes, etc., are a waste of their time. More complex experiential exercises, particularly those with business settings, generally score better on perceived reality. The tradeoff inherent in more complex experiential exercises is the lengthy staging time necessary to make them work. Exercises, which are multi-staged, or contain a number of parts, which can be spread out over several class sessions, are effective in addressing this problem. The question of realism for experiential exercises seems to be of sore importance in graduate level and executive training courses. Exercises at these levels need to be more realistic to meet more focused expectations.

ROLE PLAYING AND SIMULATION GAMES
(by James B. Thurman)

Role-playing requires trainees to actually respond to specific problems, making it possible to "learn by doing.' Adaptable to a wide range of problem situations. They are used for teaching such behavioral skills as interviewing, grievance handling, performance reviews, leadership styles, conference leadership, team problem solving, and effective communications.

Simulation games require participants to play themselves in a variety of possible scenarios. They are used for teaching general management principles such as financial policy, long-range planning, strategic management, decision making, communications, marketing, and production.

ASSESSMENT CENTERS AND CRITICAL INCIDENTS
(by Patricia Sanders)

Assessment Centers are one of the relatively new behavioral simulation technologies/methodologies that have come into more widespread use within the past ten- (10) years. Among the advantages/disadvantages to be discussed are: performance vs. the inhibition factor, confidentiality vs. openness, the scoring/rating validation/invalidation methods, and comparative vs. standard factor/performance rating. In addition, the degree of realism the assessment center generates/simulates will be discussed so that comparisons to other technologies/methodologies can be made.

Critical Incidents are a much newer from of behavioral simulations, and the use of this technology/ methodology has not as yet reached its full development or potential. In many aspects, it is in need of further delineation and standardization.

COOPERATIVE/INTERN PROGRAMS AND THE REAL JOB
(by William A. Ward and Tracy Rishel)

The symposium will examine the advantages/ disadvantages of COIP's and additional discussions will be engendered by the members of such items as: commitment vs. tune-out" (alienation) in COIP's, value generation and adjustments, laboratory vs. participation syndromes, etc. In addition, the high degree of realism generated by COIP's will be contrasted and compared to other simulation technologies/methodologies.

The Real Job (working--Studs Terkel Style) is the supposed comparative standard for the other technologies/methodologies. Theoretically the Real Job should generate 100% realism. However, is this the Case? Why? Is it possible for other simulation technologies/methodologies to more accurately portray behaviors and interactions under controlled conditions and situations? How? This portion of the symposium will align all eight (8) items of the comparative matrix with regard to realism generation, and offer appropriate discussions regarding the comparisons, etc. using The Real Job as the baseline.