

Title: Experiential Exercises for Teaching Human Resource Management

Abstract

This professional development workshop will help participants teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in human resource management to incorporate experiential learning exercises in the classroom. The workshop consists of six separate learning exercises that have been used successfully by management educators teaching Human Resource Management or a related subject. Each exercise focuses on a different topic using a variety of experiential learning methods. The exercises will address the following topics: selection, equal employment opportunity/diversity, performance appraisal, work-life balance, and compensation. Based on a 2.5 hour workshop, session attendees will be able to select and participate in four exercises.

Why Workshop Should Be Of Interest To ELA

The Experiential Learning Association (ELA) is committed to the development, use, and dissemination of experiential learning exercises in the management classroom. ELA attracts faculty and practitioners with varying levels of experience in facilitating experiential learning. Learning goals for each of the exercises vary, however, the overarching goal of the workshop is to increase participants' knowledge of experiential learning exercises that can be used when teaching of human resource management. Those new to experiential learning will see how experiential learning can be used as a teaching method in the management classroom. In addition, session attendees may be able to adopt the exercises demonstrated in this workshop in their classroom.

Workshop Overview

This experiential workshop is aimed at faculty teaching Human Resource Management (HRM) or a related subject. Session attendees will participate in 4 different exercises that have been successfully used in the classroom to teach a Human Resource Management topics.

The session length is 2.5 hours so that attendees can fully participate in four exercises. The exercises will be facilitated simultaneously at different round tables and each presenter will facilitate their exercise 4 times. We anticipate that each exercise will take 30 minutes to facilitate. The following is a brief description of the exercises that will be facilitated.

Developing ADA Compliant Position Descriptions (Vicki Taylor, Shippensburg University): The Americans with Disabilities Act makes it unlawful to discriminate in employment against a qualified individual with a disability. Furthermore, employers are required to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals that are able to perform the *essential functions* of the job. This exercise will help participants to understand how employers determine the *essential functions* of a job.

Working in teams of two, participants will be given copies of a position description and asked to evaluate the position description for compliance with The Americans with Disabilities Act. Using handouts provided by the facilitator, participants will first identify the “essential functions of the job.” Next participants will use a job analysis checklist tool to determine the physical, mental, and performance requirements of the job. A facilitated discussion follows that highlights how job descriptions relate to the ADA.

Using Video Stimulus to Enhance Retention (Lisa Stickney, University of Baltimore & Timothy Golden, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute): Students today have been raised in a fast-paced interactive world, and it has fundamentally changed the way students process information. They grew up multi-tasking and playing video games while watching programs that display as many as 100 images per minute (Prensky, 1998). They operate in a world where learning is fun and they want to be entertained (Proserpio & Gioia, 2007). Using film and video clips in the classroom is one way to achieve this.

In our interactive session, we will begin by discussing various ways to use films when teaching HR, and then, we will run two exercises involving videos. Also, we will provide a list of resources to assist faculty interested in using film in the classroom, including several files which we will share with participants who bring a flash drive. Participants will also be encouraged to share their own experiences using video to enhance student retention of important HR concepts.

Determining Merit Pay Increases (Jannifer David, University of Minnesota Duluth): Merit pay continues to be a popular means for distributing pay raises in the United States. This method of distributing pay raises considers both employees’ job performances during the previous time period and their positions in their salary ranges.

Participants in this exercise will be presented with performance information, salary rates, salary ranges, and background information for hypothetical employees. Participants will be directed to allocate a set merit budget across these employees based upon the information provided. This exercise will be done in small groups so that participants experience the collaborative nature of merit pay systems and work through conflicts as varying opinions arise regarding performance and what other factors should or should not contribute to these fictional employees’ merit raises. An instructor-led discussion follows the decision making process so

that the variety of outcomes determined by the different groups can be seen by all participants. This discussion raises the idea that there are frequently multiple ‘correct’ answers to any reasonable question.

Performance Appraisals and Merit Pay (Mary Anne Hyland, Adelphi University): In this exercise, students compare performance data and identify challenges related performance appraisal. The main goal of the exercise is for students to critically evaluate a fictional organization’s approach to performance management.

Students receive background information on Acme Corporation and its performance management approach. They are told to put themselves in the role of a department manager who has two supervisors reporting to him/her. The supervisors provide performance appraisal data from their top two employees, and the manager must decide who receives a \$5000 bonus based on each employee’s performance data. Students work in groups of two to choose who should receive the \$5000 and are asked to justify their choice. A facilitated discussion about the challenges of performance management follows.

Using the IRAC Case Analysis to Teach Students How to Make Legal, Ethical and Strategic Employment Law Related Decisions (Jerry Carbo, Shippensburg University): HR Managers and staff are confronted with employment decisions on a daily basis. These decisions often have legal ramifications. These legal concerns occur in every function of HRM. While HR managers should not take it upon themselves to substitute their own legal judgment for those of a legal expert, they cannot afford to call an attorney every time they need to make a decision. Further, unlike a purely legal analysis, HR Managers must make decisions based on more than just the law. While they need to take steps to assure they comply with the law, they must also consider the practical, ethical and strategic ramifications of their decisions.

The IRAC (Issue, Rule, Application, and Conclusion) method has been used for decades in the law school setting to help law students to analyze legal problems. It is also a common method used in the practice of law to prepare legal memos. This method can be an effective tool to help HR Students to learn to identify potential legal issues in the workplace, identify the applicable rules, ethical standards and management theories related to such an issue and then to solve the issue in a way that is legally compliant, ethically fair and managerially sound.

Participants will be given a brief overview of how to use IRAC in a legal, ethical, strategic and practical manner. They will then be given an HR scenario that includes a legal concern. They will also be provided some brief legal “rules” from statutes or case law. Participants will be given time to develop an IRAC response to the scenario. A facilitated discussion will follow addressing the legal concern, the other HR related concerns and the use of IRAC.

Practicing the Selection Process (Melissa Fender, Rutgers-Camden and Ted Peters, University of Baltimore): In most large organizations, line managers rather than HR personnel execute majority of the hiring process. Their most profound and exposed involvement generally comes during the selection process. Thus, it is vital that they learn the “ins and outs” of effective and legal employee selection.

This session features two selection activities. The first activity requires participants to evaluate whether or not an organization should add a general intelligence test to its current selection criterion of just an interview. They are given relevant data from both instruments and from performance evaluations; they must evaluate these data (easily done in Excel) to determine the validity (or not) of the proposed new instrument. This demonstrates the importance and use of statistical analysis in selection.

In the second activity, groups of participants develop the selection criteria for a job that students are generally familiar with – the Management Department secretary – using the job description and job specification done in prior class sessions (these will be provided to ELA participants). Typically, these criteria involve testing, work sampling and interviewing. The documentation of each criterion must include: (1) a description of it, including the exact wording in the case of interview questions; (2) minimum scores for tests and work samples; and (3) the reasons for its inclusion. Each group will briefly report out what it has developed; a debrief follows.

Workshop Format

Welcome and Introduction by Session Organizer (15 minutes)

Roundtable Facilitation of Each Exercise (2 hours, 30 minutes per exercise)

- Each table will be occupied by the exercise facilitator and session attendees
- The facilitator will conduct the exercise as it would be executed in the classroom
- The facilitator will debrief the exercise
- Session attendees will rotate to another table after 30 minutes

Large Group Summary Discussion (15 minutes)

- Session organizer will facilitate a discussion of lessons learned and alternative uses or modifications of the exercises demonstrated.
- Networking opportunities will be provided for facilitators and session participants.

Organizer & Presenters

The organizers and all presenters agree to register for the Eastern Academy of Management meeting and participate for the entire workshop.

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