



**OBTC 2015 at University of La Verne
June 17th – 20th, 2015**

**Submission Template for the
2015 OBTC Teaching Conference for Management Educators**

1) Title of Proposal:

Growing Classroom Community through Creativity: A Beginning Roadmap

2) Abstract:

This session will focus on creative strategies that management educators could use in order to enhance the level of community in their classrooms. There will be a chance to try on several creative activities for size, assess them, and decide which ones would work for you. There will also be opportunities to share creative activities that you already use in your own classes. Please join us if you'd like to explore commonalities, communication, and connectedness through creativity.

3) Keywords:

Use three or four keywords to describe your session.

Creativity, community, ways of knowing, active learning

4) Format

- Activity or exercise
- Discussion roundtable (60 minute only)
- General discussion session

5) Time Requested:

- 30 Minutes
- 60 Minutes (*Roundtables must select 60 minutes*)
- 90 Minutes

6) Planning Details:

Does your session have any special requirements for space or materials?

White board, movable furniture, in focus machine

7) Learning Objectives or Goals for the Session:

What are 2-4 specific learning outcomes that participants will get from your session?

1. To discover and develop connections between creativity and community
2. To experience and assess several creativity exercises
3. To generate and share ideas about how to integrate these activities into our classes

8) Management or Teaching Topics:

Describe what management and/or teaching topics are relevant to your session, and why. Please include theoretical, disciplinary, or theoretical foundations that will help reviewers understand how your ideas fit within the broader field of management.

The dominance of logical-rational ways of knowing in management education can create challenges for those interested in reinvigorating classroom learning experiences and research applications. Given the fluid and accessible state of knowledge in the 21st century, there is a call for more attention to fostering student creativity. As Barak(2009) notes:

It is evident that creative thinking skills, openness to change, flexibility and the ability to cope with challenging tasks are essential for integration in today's society and workplace...(p. 345)

The need for creative thinking in our classrooms is driven by the need for creative solutions to problems in today's society.

All of this may sound compelling to many in higher education but they may also find it challenging to determine how to go about developing students' creative confidence without creating major resistance (Kelley & Kelley, 2013). One way to approach this important challenge is to marry the creative activities with those that develop community, ensuring that students will find the approach both exciting and fun, and thus be more willing to take the necessary risks to ensure success. Active learning (Chickering & Gamson, 1987) has always been a central feature of the classes I teach. Consequently, it seems appropriate to merge creative activities with those that foster building a culture of community rather than treating them separately.

One exciting consequence of this union has been an activity known as "Our Evening with Soul" which showcases students' creative gifts. The class decided to voluntarily host their own "Evening" after a particularly spirited discussion about the lack of viewable art in the business school. The two-hour event featured a variety of creative works done by the students including photography, poetry, painting, ceramics, jewelry, stained glass, music by a saxophonist and very talented pianist who also sang, and salsa dancing as well as their very own in-house D.J. Not surprisingly the bond of community was greatly strengthened in the class as a consequence of presenting this very special "Evening." In a post-class reunion, students acknowledged that many of the creative activities they had engaged in had created the opportunity to "get to know one another" and that the "interactive involvement games at the beginning of the term helped to develop community."

9) Session Description and Plan:

What will you actually do in this session? What activities will you facilitate, how long will they take, and how will participants be involved? Reviewers will be evaluating how well the time request matches the activities you'd like to do, and the extent you can reasonably accomplish the session's goals. Reviewers will also be looking for how you are engaging the participants in the session. Include a timeline for your session.

1. 5 minutes - Introduction: Introduce topic of session by viewing "Our Evening with Soul" video. Brief discussion of connection between creativity and community
2. 5 minutes – Success Stories. Break into pairs and answer questions about various life successes participants have had. Interview each other and then trade cards with another pair and repeat. Have time to perhaps meet 6 + people. Debrief
3. 5 minutes – Improv activity: "The Name Game." Designed to help participants learn names. It's a fun and entertaining exercise; it enhances listening skills, builds community, and nurtures creativity (Huffaker & West, 2005). Debrief
4. 5 minutes - View "Stand by Me" done by the group, "Playing for Change." Musical video emphasizes theme of conference and creates a reflective change of pace (Champoux, 2001). Also creates opportunity to talk about the regenerative power of reflection as it relates to creativity during debrief.
5. 5 minutes - Participants will write on 3x5 card one example of a strategy they use in class to develop community. Group sharing of ideas.
6. 5 minutes – Wrap up/Assessment. Introduce "Ways of Knowing" (Lazear, 2000) and list how many of those were utilized in session. Use an "appreciative approach": What did you like about the session and what would you like to have seen more of? (Watkins & Mohr, 2001) and/or ask the "Velcro" question: what aspect will stick the most with you which is another way of asking what is their major take-away from the session.
7. Rewards in the form of chocolate kisses!

10) For Activities and Exercises:

Attach any materials needed to run the activity and debriefing questions. Evidence for effectiveness may also be included.

11) Implications for Teaching or for Teachers:

What is the contribution of your session?

To remind participants that they are all creative; that creativity is a teachable process; (Bryan, Cameron, & Allen, 1998) and, finally, that engaging in this kind of learning can make a solid contribution toward growing community in groups.

12) Application to Conference theme:

How does your session fit with the overall OBTC theme of Learning in Community?

Growing community in the group while playing with various creativity exercises should provide participants with first-hand knowledge and experience of "Learning in Community."

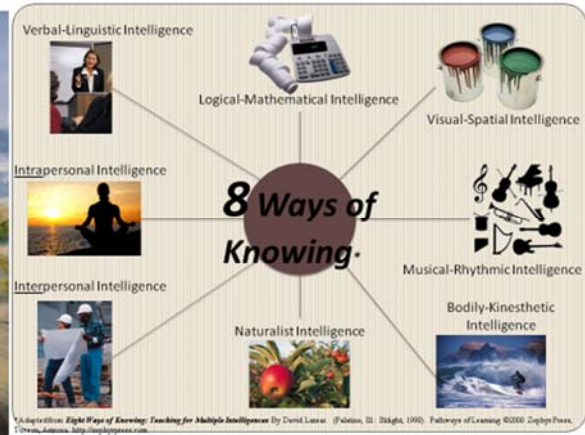
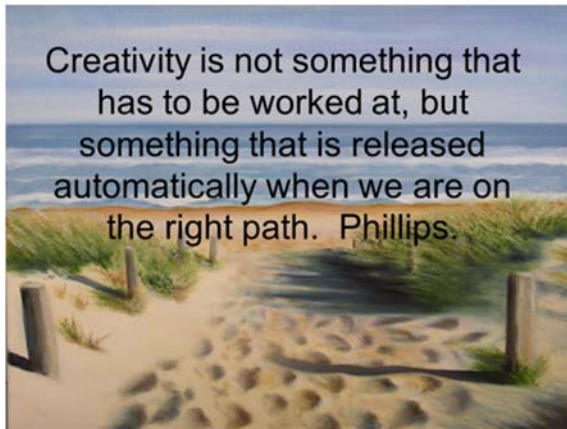
13) Unique Contribution to OBTC:

Have you presented the work in this proposal before? If so, how will it be different? Is this proposal under current review somewhere else? If so, please explain. How will your proposal be different for the OBTC conference?


I presented a session on creativity at MOBTC in Philadelphia last March; however, the emphasis was focused inwardly on nurturing individual creativity rather than focusing externally using this approach to grow community within a group.

14) References and/or Additional Materials:

1. *Sample slides and references*



Student Reactions



Student Comments:

- A non-judgmental atmosphere
- The freedom to openly express ourselves and share our soul and spirit
- Getting to know one another from the beginning
- Last Thursday field trip
- Group activities & snapshots
- Openness and willingness to share our gifts
- Interactive involvement games at the beginning that helped develop community

"It was nice to be able to see the souls of other people and I'm glad we were able to get see the personal sides of our classmates. It is rare to get a glimpse of what makes people who they are."

2. References

Barak, M. (2009). Idea focusing versus idea generating: a course for teachers on inventive problem solving. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, vol. 46 (4), 345-356.

Bryan, M. & Julia Cameron & Catherine Allen (1998). *The Artist's Way at Work*. New York: William Morrow.

Champoux, J. (2001). *Using Film to Visualize Principles and Practices*. Cincinnati: South-Western College Publishing.

Chickering, A. & Zelda Gamson. (1987). Seven principles of good practice. *AAHE Bulletin*, 39: 3-7.

Huffaker, J. & Ellen West. (2005). Enhancing learning in a business classroom: An adventure in improv theater techniques. *Journal of Management Education*, Vol. 29 (6).

Kelley, T. & David Kelley (2013). *Creative Confidence*. New York: Crown Publishing.

Lazear, D. (2000). *Pathways of Learning*. Tucson: Zephyr Press.

Watkins, U. & Bernard Mohr (2001). *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.