



**OBTC 2015 at University of La Verne  
June 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**Submission Template**

**SUBMISSION GUIDANCE**

- \* Remove all identifying properties from this document \**
- \* All files must be saved in PDF format \**
- \*Please include ALL supplementary text at the end of this document\**
- \*Only one document should be submitted\**

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

### **1) Title of Proposal:**

Problem-Based Learning and Design Thinking: Intersections in Student Consulting Projects

### **2) Abstract:**

My teaching has been heavily influenced by both Problem-Based Learning methodologies and, more recently, by Design Thinking. In this session, I will explore ways that the two approaches can be brought together through student consulting projects. Students exposed to design thinking learn how to first develop empathy for the 'client' then to do a deep dive into the underlying issues of a problem or opportunity before brainstorming possible solutions and engaging in successive rounds of low resolution prototyping. In a PBL approach, we have challenged students with authentic business problems in a live client engagement, using more traditional consulting skills. Can the two be brought together to create a richer consulting experience and better solutions? Come be part of the discussion as we explore the possibilities.



### 3) Keywords:

*Problem Based Learning; Design Thinking; Student Consulting*

### 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?*

No specific requirements.

### 7) Learning Objectives or Goals for the Session:

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

Participants will learn:

1. Basic concepts of Problem Based Learning
2. Basic concepts of Design Thinking
3. Explore possible synergies between the two in developing student consulting projects.

## **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.*

PBL is grounded in Constructivism as a means of contextualized learning while Design Thinking arises from the techniques developed and refined at IDEO and at Stanford's d-school. Both focus on developing solutions for authentic problems or opportunities through deep research and understanding of a situation, development of initial hypotheses and iterative testing of those hypotheses, but design thinking starts from developing empathy for the end user and tangible prototyping of potential solutions. In the context of student consulting projects, there appears an opportunity for merging the two techniques to generate richer and more customized solutions for the client.

## **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.*

I will start with a brief overview of the two approaches and how they have influenced my teaching. I will then describe different types of student consulting projects and ask participants to discuss ways that the two techniques can be blended and what the potential benefits might be of bringing design thinking into the PBL environment.

## **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?*

Both PBL and Design Thinking offer unique and engaging ways to involve students in their own learning as well as helps them to develop practical skills through application.

## **12) Application to Conference theme:**

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

Both PBL and Design Thinking can be utilized in team based settings. In our experience, the intensity of the PBL approach creates a strong sense of community within the classroom, as all of the students, working in teams, struggle with similar challenges. Design thinking, with its emphasis on gaining empathy, requires engagement with others to achieve that goal.

## **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?*

While I have presented on both PBL and Design thinking at prior conferences, I have not brought the two together to look for the synergies possible between them.

## **14) References and/or Additional Materials:**