

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

1) Title of Proposal:

Inviting “Lincoln” into the Classroom to Teach Power, Influence, and Negotiation

2) Abstract:

Please include a brief session description (not to exceed 100 words). If your proposal is accepted, this description will be printed in the conference program.

The movie *Lincoln* portrays President Lincoln’s efforts to pass the 13th Amendment in the House of Representatives. This film is an effective tool for teaching about power, influence, and negotiation. The movie highlights effective persuasion techniques, including delay tactics, agreement in small pieces, guilt, power struggles, and freedom of choice. This session shows short clips from the movie and includes discussion of the organizational behavior principles and practices involved.

3) Keywords:

Use three or four keywords to describe your session.

Power, Influence, Negotiation, *Lincoln*

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

I'm flexible, according to what will work best in the program.

6) Planning Details:

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

I'd like to show short movie clips throughout the session. If necessary, I can save them on my computer and bring a projector and speakers.

7) Learning Objectives or Goals for the Session:

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

- Participants will be able to analyze interactions depicted in the popular motion picture, *Lincoln*, to better understand and more effectively teach five different power and influence tactics.
- Participants will learn how to use various clips from the movie *Lincoln* in organizational behavior 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.

This session will focus on the topics of power, influence, and negotiation. Five specific techniques will be examined. Two examples include freedom of choice (but you are free) and agreement in small pieces.

The “But You Are Free” technique has been popularized by Jessica Stillman. “This simple approach is all about reaffirming people's freedom to choose.”¹ Lincoln used it twice in this movie.

¹ <http://www.inc.com/jessica-stillman/the-most-effective-persuasion-technique-youve-never-heard-of.html>

People are often more likely to agree to a smaller, simpler request than a complex, risky request. This is an effective clip for teaching students that it can work well to (1) break down a complex issue into manageable pieces, and to (2) solve distributive arguments by agreeing to “shelve” future consequences and deal in the present.

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.

What will you actually do in this session?: Analyze power and influence tactics portrayed in the movie *Lincoln*.

What activities will you facilitate, how long will they take, and how will participants be involved? Activities involve watching short clips and discussing them. Participants will be involved in the debrief of each clip.

Timeline:

Introduction of the movie and concepts (5 minutes)

Showing clip from the movie (focusing on agreement in small pieces) (3 minutes)

Discussion of the clip (4 minutes)

Watching clip from the movie (focusing on power struggles) (4 minutes)

Debrief of the main concepts (5 minutes)

Reviewing clip that focuses on freedom of choice (3 minutes)

Discussion of the concepts demonstrated in clip (4 minutes)

Wrap up (2 minutes)

*If it is a 60-minute session, clips and discussion about two additional tactics, delay tactics and guilt, will be included.

10) For Activities and Exercises:

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

N/A

11) Implications for Teaching or for Teachers:

What is the contribution of your session?

This session will help teachers to use engaging video clips that will bring to life concepts in a way that will demonstrate their effectiveness.

12) Application to Conference theme:

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

This session shows how a large community of citizens dealt with conflict in both effective and ineffective ways. It supports the theme by showing how one influential leader, Lincoln, used power and influence to enact change in a challenging 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 have never presented anything like this. It is not under review anywhere else.

14) References and/or Additional Materials:

The paragraphs below contain additional information about the power and influence tactics demonstrated in the movie.

Introduction

The movie *Lincoln* (2012) portrays President Lincoln's efforts to pass the 13th Amendment in the House of Representatives. Lincoln's success can be attributed to a negotiation strategy that overcame both time constraints and voter hesitation. If the war were to end before the 13th Amendment was passed, the newly readmitted southern states would vote against it. With this in mind, Lincoln set an aggressive goal to pass the 13th Amendment in January rather than April. Research shows that anchoring has a high impact on outcome. Lincoln's goals and early anchoring allowed him to frame each negotiation in a way that mitigated counterattacks from his political peers.

Strategies for Maintaining the Upper Hand

Lincoln was able to maintain control over three intense negotiations because of his preparation, focus on interests instead of positions, and emotional control. "Negotiations are all about preparation, and the side with the most preparation wins."² Lincoln was a master of preparation. He stated, "A compass, it'll point you True North, but it's got no advice about the swamps and deserts and chasms that you'll encounter along the way. If in pursuit of your destination, you plunge ahead, heedless of obstacles, and achieve nothing more than to sink in a swamp...What's the use of knowing True North?" He was strategic about who he negotiated with, and he only targeted representatives who could be persuaded to change their votes. He also obtained critical information by asking the right questions.³ For example, two citizens approached him about a toll booth dispute. In return for his help, he asked if they would support the amendment. Their reply taught him that citizens were concerned about ending the war instead of granting freedom to slaves.

Lincoln designed three strategies to reach his key groups (See Planning Doc). Each group's first priority was to end the war, so he was pressured to choose between peace or passing the 13th Amendment. Instead, he achieved both goals by seeking to understand the unique interests behind those positions. For example, Thaddeus Stevens told Lincoln that he didn't care about the people, only how long the fight had been. When Lincoln asked for his vote, he showed Stevens that opposing the amendment would undo all of his previous work. Lincoln's focus on interests gave him the flexibility to identify both divergent and integrative solutions and to gain the necessary votes.⁴

Lincoln's preparation paid off when he was pressured to end the war quickly at the expense of the amendment. One of his followers reminded him of the dead and how much guilt he would

² <http://www.quicksprout.com/2012/02/02/a-step-by-step-guide-to-winning-almost-every-single-negotiation/#>.

³ <http://www.negotiations.com/articles/value-creation/>

⁴ *Getting to Yes*

feel if more died. It was a highly emotional decision for him, but he reminded himself of his reservation price and BATNA by quoting Euclid, “things that are equal to the same thing are equal to each other.” He chose to continue delaying the surrender negotiations in order to reach his ultimate goal.

Lincoln also effectively controlled the House’s highly-charged emotional climate. First, he created a sense of urgency in his followers. He called himself a whaler, declared that the harpoon had already been thrown, and relentlessly called for his supporters to finish the job. He refused to back down. Second, he recognized that negotiators will often escalate emotions in order to encourage capitulation.⁵ When he first announced his intentions, a vicious campaign was circled to denounce his character. He didn’t respond, and the campaign never gained traction. In addition, Thaddeus Stevens told him that radicals are more successful. Lincoln responded, “If I’d been radical, we would have lost the war.”

Persuasion Techniques

Students can learn a great deal about persuasion from Lincoln. Persuasion is influenced by an individual’s image, ability to transfer energy, and strategic use of anger.⁶ Lincoln did all of these things very well. Through the first half of the movie, he was portrayed as frail. He clutched an old tattered blanket, spoke quietly, and stooped over as if the weight of the world rested on his shoulders. Opponents would never view him as a threat, and that gave him an advantage. In addition, he transferred a calm energy to others. When the Battle of Wilmington commenced, his staff ran around riling everyone up. Lincoln, however, sat down and told a humorous story about King George. Calm prevailed, and his followers were better able to make strategic decisions.

In addition, the movie does a good job of portraying Lincoln as personable. He told whimsical stories and spoke with a twang. Steven Spielberg mentioned that the movie focused a lot on his eyes because it helped viewers connect with him emotionally.⁷ It also emphasized Lincoln’s air of gentle purity. He used quiet disappointment several times in the movie to convince someone to change their mind; this “disappointment” technique can be much more powerful than anger or force. At the same time, when he did use anger, it was that much more powerful and helped push his cause forward.

Finally, Lincoln wielded an enormous amount of power because he was beloved by the people. Even his opponents liked him, and this made them more open to sharing information with him. This helped him formulate counter-offers that were more personally meaningful.

Lincoln’s Influence Strategies

Lincoln had immense power, but it was dependent on his ability to build and maintain trusting political relationships. He used a number of effective strategies in his goal of ending slavery: Delay tactics, agreement in small pieces, guilt, avoid power struggles, and emphasize freedom

⁵ <http://www.fastcompany.com/3001209/negotiate-car-salesman-5-tactics-help-you-win-every-time>

⁶ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jasonnazar/2013/03/26/the-21-principles-of-persuasion/>

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-w4A43wkGU>

of choice. Each will be discussed in turn, along with reference to a movie clip that portrays this technique.

Delay Tactics (Clips 1 and 2)

Miller states that “negotiators who can anticipate how the other party will react are not easily manipulated.”⁸ Lincoln was well-versed in the political system and knew that his opponents would try to pressure him into quick, unwise decisions. In order to counteract this strategy, Lincoln leveraged his time management skills.

In this clip, Lincoln was under pressure to gain Preston Blair’s vote. Preston Blair would only vote for the amendment if Lincoln began to negotiate the South’s surrender. Lincoln and Blair both wanted the war to end, but Lincoln needed the amendment to pass first. He declared that “time is the great thickener of things,” and decided to start the negotiations. He delayed the delegates’ arrival in Washington, however, until he could gather the necessary votes. In this way, he appeased Blair and won the Republican Party’s votes.

At the end of the clip Lincoln is faced with a negotiation with his son. Robert wanted to join the army, and instead of saying yes or no, Lincoln began to brush his shirt and talk of other things. Robert accused, “You’re delaying! That’s your favorite tactic!” These two clips are an effective way to teach the power of delay in arriving at creative and mutually-satisfactory solutions.

Agreement in Small Pieces (Clips 3, 4, and 5)

Lincoln faced a unique set of challenges as he negotiated with the Radical Republicans and Mr. Yeaman. Neither were willing to support the 13th Amendment, but both agreed that slavery was morally wrong. The Radicals were upset that the amendment would not guarantee freedom *and* legal rights to the slaves. Mr. Yeaman was not supportive because he feared that it would open the door to a whole host of other civil rights concessions. In both instances, Lincoln appealed to them from common ground. He spoke to Stevens and showed him that voting against the amendment would negate all of his previous work. Stevens realized that holding out for a “perfect” amendment would actually put the slaves in jeopardy of losing their freedom permanently. In an unexpected move, Stevens supported the amendment.

People are often more likely to agree to a smaller, simpler request than a complex, risky request. This is an effective clip for teaching students that it can work well to (1) break down a complex issue into manageable pieces, and to (2) solve distributive arguments by agreeing to “shelve” future consequences and deal in the present.

Guilt (Clip 6)

This movie shows how guilt can sometimes be used as an effective persuasion technique. In this clip, he met with Representative Yeaman. He started the conversation with a personal story and allowed Yeaman to learn about his father. He then ever so subtly implied that even his father,

⁸ <http://www.fastcompany.com/3001209/negotiate-car-salesman-5-tactics-help-you-win-every-time>

who was a hard, difficult man, felt that slavery was morally wrong. Yeaman felt guilty and admitted that he, too, felt that it was wrong, but he was concerned about granting equal legal rights to African Americans. Because Lincoln approached the subject softly and didn't make him defensive, Yeaman gave away his hand. This was an effective way for Lincoln to manage the distributive issue that was holding back Yeaman's vote. Lincoln then appealed to him from a moral perspective and asked him to vote in the present.

Avoid Power Struggles (Clip 4)

When Lincoln met with the Confederates, he could have thrown his power around and made a lot of demands. While this would have been justified, it also would have made Reconstruction more difficult. Lincoln started the negotiation by finding common ground and reassuring the Confederates that his plan was to restore them to the Union. The Confederates responded aggressively by telling Lincoln they would not surrender if the 13th Amendment was passed. The Confederates were not in a position to negotiate that point, but Lincoln responded gently. He told them that he only needed two or three of the Southern states to vote in favor of the amendment, and he was confident that he had already obtained those votes. The Confederates acquiesced and Lincoln ended the negotiation by asking, "Shall we stop this shedding of blood?"

This is a great technique to highlight in class. Lincoln's prior preparation allowed him to avoid a power struggle. This in turn saved him from having to make concessions or drag out a war until the Confederates were ready to agree. It was such a simple step, but it made a world of difference to the outcome. It also allowed him to maintain an image of a loving, caring President who was ready to help the nation heal.

Freedom of Choice: But You Are Free (Clip 5)

The "But You Are Free" technique has been popularized by Jessica Stillman. "This simple approach is all about reaffirming people's freedom to choose."⁹ Lincoln used it twice in this movie. First, he approached a Lame Duck Democrat who admitted that he hated the Union because it killed his brother. Lincoln responded that when the war ended, his brother's death would have helped the Union win. He would have to decide, however, if that was enough for him. Second, Lincoln spoke with his wife who was very angry with him. She told him to throw her in the madhouse, but he refused. He told her that she could either lighten his burden or make it intolerable, but she had to choose.

This strategy is powerful because it represents an ethical way of dealing with people. Feeling a loss of control in a negotiation leads to bad decisions and resentment. This clip shows how stressing freedom of choice can help others to feel accountable for their actions and can be an effective influence tactic.

⁹ <http://www.inc.com/jessica-stillman/the-most-effective-persuasion-technique-youve-never-heard-of.html>

In summary, the movie *Lincoln* can be an effective tool for teaching power, influence, and negotiation. By studying the tactics used by this great leader, students can learn skills that will help them in learning the art of influence.