



Teaching Conference for
Management Educators

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

Submission Template

SUBMISSION GUIDANCE

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

1) Title of Proposal:

Gather Around the Experiential Fire

2) Abstract:

Come join us as we “gather around the experiential fire” once again to experience and enjoy a collection of engaging experiential exercises from a number of presenters in a hands-on “speed dating” format. This session includes traditional face-to-face and online-based exercises on topics including personality, perception, task interdependence, change management, communication, team building, self-management, motivation, personal leadership, wellness, perception, theory-practice reflection, content review strategies, and tweeting. The full details for using these exercises will be available in the Proceedings.

3) Keywords:

Experiential exercises, teaching tools, teaching and learning activities, blended and online 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?

Wi-Fi access, PPT projection, and the room should have a flexible arrangement of chairs. Tables are not necessary but we can deal with them if they are in the room. A tiered case room with fixed seats would be our least preferred option. Large white board is also requested. This is not an appropriate roundtable session.

7) Learning Objectives or Goals for the Session:

In this session, participants gather to learn about a variety of experiential exercises suitable for face to face (in person) as well as some virtual contexts. Although experiential exercises are frequently presented at OBTC, the exercises presented in this session differ in that their essence can be communicated in just five minutes or less. The brevity of presentations is intended to be a “teaser” to highlight a fraction of the learning potential in these exercises; thus this session provides the participants a smorgasbord of ideas and connections with facilitators whom they can follow up with about subtle details and explanations. In short, this session offers a useful collection of a wide assortment of exercises that can be used to achieve a number of instructional objectives and address a wide variety of possible topics at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

8) Management or Teaching Topics:

The domain specific topics that are targeted through the Experiential Fire exercises vary every year. What remains the same for this session is its theoretical and practical foundation. As Jeanie Forray and Kathy Lund Dean aptly state in their first *Journal of Management Education* (JME) introduction as Editors-in-Chief earlier this year, “We view this time as ripe for innovation with SOTL in ways that honor external stakeholders’ legitimate concerns about teaching quality and the learning experience of the next generation in college and University settings” (2014, p. 484). As scholarship and practice are intimately and inextricably tied together, there can be no doubt of the pivotal role that innovative teaching and learning *practice*, as a partner to scholarship, will play as we shape the learning experience of the next generation. Using experience to create learning is the basis of our “Fire” time together. The theoretical foundation underpinning the Experiential Fire is experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Just as we do for our students in terms of providing them with experiences to illustrate concepts, we do here for faculty members with respect to illustrating, via “doing”, innovative teaching tools. Rather than review that theory and related calls for this type of approach to education and learning (e.g., Kalliath & Laiken, 2006; Kenworthy & DiPadova-Stocks, 2010; Whetten, 2007) we will use the space below to provide you with an overview of the actual session and each of the experiential exercises that we would like to present.

With respect to deeper investigation for anyone who is interested in innovative teaching tools, in addition to the regular section on theoretically grounded exercises, the Resource Reviews section of the JME is aimed at providing people with “...a place where teachers can find reviews of materials that can be used in management education. Book and film reviews would naturally fall into this category, but I want us to be adventurous and include poems, plays, pictures, photographs, games, and so on and so forth” (Billsberry, 2012, p.611). Also, for anyone who is interested in specific exercises presented in this year’s Experiential Fire, the theoretical foundations for each of the exercises presented during this session will be described in the conference proceedings.

9) Session Description and Plan:

After a brief introduction to the format of the session, each presenter will have five minutes to present his or her experiential exercise. The audience is asked to participate in each of the exercises to better understand the essence of each exercise and its respective capacity to enhance student learning as well as to facilitate subsequent discussion. Complete instructions and any necessary materials (e.g., role descriptions, score sheets, pictures, or figures) will be included in the proceedings. These will provide more details as to typical reactions/questions from various learner populations, suggested courses or topics for the exercises, and suggested audiences (e.g., undergrad, graduate, executive). Presenters will try to cover some of these specifics as time permits, however historically the experiential aspects fill the 5 minute allocation. A brief summary of each of the proposed exercises is described below.

10) For Activities and Exercises:

Exercise #1: PERSONALITIES + T-SHIRTS = TEAM FORMATION

Facilitator: Author 1

Research indicates individuals display their social identity through clothing cues (Feinberg, Mataro, & Burroughs, 1992). Therefore, a t-shirt could convey an individual's personality. Students complete an online Big 5 Personality test and upload their results to Blackboard. Test results are used to assemble teams with diverse personalities. For example, a team may consist of students with varying degrees of introversion, neuroticism, extroversion, etc. Students are also required to write a reflection paper on the results of their test. This provides a foundation for students to discuss the topic in class.

Students are required to bring a t-shirt that they think identifies their personality to class in a concealed package the week before team formation. Each team is announced by hanging the t-shirts of the members in class for everyone to see. Students attempt to determine the personality types in the group based on the t-shirts. This creates rich dialogue. For example, one particular team had three t-shirts depicting sports. The students postulated that this particular team would have people vying for a leadership role and may exhibit extroversion as their primary personality type. Once all the teams are announced, the students immediately meet with their new team members and select a team name. What is interesting is watching the dynamics of the teams as they go through this process. After this activity, students are debriefed to discuss some of the personalities that emerged during the activity. Finally, the personality types are revealed for each group, but without the students' names.

Exercise #2 A ROLE PLAY TO TEACH THE THREE LEVELS OF TASK INTERDEPENDENCE

Facilitator: Author 2

When people (particularly teams) work together on a task, there are three possible levels of interdependence (Thompson, 1967). Task interdependence is "The extent to which team members must share materials, information, or expertise in order to perform their jobs" (McShane & Von Glinow, 2014, p. 137). The simplest is pooled, where each person works alone and submits the product of their work to another. An example would be a researcher writing a report; the team members write their portions separately from one another and submit them to the researcher, who "pools" the contributions.

In sequential interdependence the output of one team member is the input of the next, and so on. An example is an assembly line, or production line of some sort.

The third and most complex type is reciprocal interdependence. The lines of communication go from each member to each other member. An example would be a

new product design team, where representatives from all functions of the organization need to be involved, and in close communication with one another throughout the design process.

The concept of task interdependence can sometimes be difficult for students to grasp. The purpose of this role play is to demonstrate the three types of interdependence by members of the same team, with three “acts,” in which each type of interdependence is modeled in each successive act. The role players simulate members of a team in an automobile manufacturing company assigned to develop a new model of a sports sedan.

Exercise #3: AN EXPERIENTIAL MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY: MOVE IT!

Facilitator: Author 3

One third of the students are randomly selected as the management team of the company “Motivated Moving, Inc.” MM’s management team is tasked with getting their employees to move into a particular seating arrangement. MM’s employees have been privately given a small incentive to stay in their current seating until the end of the activity. If the management team successfully gets the students into the seating arrangement, they will have earned enough resources to improve upon the small incentive provided to the employees. The management team rarely succeeds at completing the task, although the employees almost always stand to gain if they go along with management’s requests. Learning points include: change management, task interdependence, idiosyncratic deals, leadership, motivation, incentives and communication.

Exercise #4: HOW I MOVED MY ROCKS: AN EXERCISE FOR PERSONAL LEADERSHIP

Facilitator: Author 4

Covey (1989) called the habit of beginning with the end in mind as the principle of personal leadership. Those of us who facilitate leadership classes might connect this idea to Kouzes and Posner (2008) practice of inspiring a shared vision. But the big question is how do we help students, especially undergraduates to be able to create a tangible vision of the future? Once they do, how do we facilitate the process of having them move toward this vision? This exercise involves two parts. First, what are your big rocks? This part of the exercise is based on an exercise that Covey did in many of his seminars (1992). This exercise is then extended by looking at a technique that keeps students focused on this vision all semester. All participants will get to experience the first part of the exercise and receive a handout on how to extend the exercise with students as they develop their personal leadership capacity.

Exercise #5: WELL-BEING AND DAILY TRACKER: AN EXPERIENTIAL TEAM ASSIGNMENT

Facilitator 5

The formation of learning teams is a standard method employed in management education. Teams allow for greater complexity in assignments and help create a realistic representation of the many challenges (and opportunities) that arise from working with others. Yet all-too-often the traditional team experience and project falls flat, as it lacks personal meaning and true interdependence amongst the members. I sought a way to counter this by creating a semester long, experiential team project that would be personally meaningful, establish interdependence, and create a set of experiences that would be applicable to the many topics explored in OB.

To do this I used the Well Being Finder and Daily Tracker (Rath and Harter, 2010) published by Gallup. The instrument is designed to be taken everyday (online) by an individual to assess his/her well-being (broken down by well-being in career, social, financial, physical and community) and what elements have contributed to it (e.g. sleep, exercise, socializing). The overall objective of the assignment for the learning team is to work together to boost the collective well-being of the team over the course of the semester. I will share the basics of the instrument, an overview of the actual team assignment and some anecdotal outcomes.

Exercise #6: ONLINE ACTIVITY & EXAM FORMAT

Facilitator: Author 6

In an effort to encourage students to “see” and engage with leadership and management skills course content on a daily basis, I have introduced “Daily Observations.” Students use their environment, television, film, athletic events, student organizations, the workplace and their families as stimuli for their posts. The assignment is explained as follows:

“The observation assignments/blog posts (five each week – one per day; no observations over official breaks) are an opportunity for you to incorporate the course material into your daily life. This aspect of the course serves as an opportunity to watch course concepts live all around you each and every day. As you become more familiar with the course material, this will become second nature (which is the idea). Take notes in meetings or jot down the concepts while at your desk throughout your day.”

Exercise #7: #LEARNING1TWEET@ATIME: TWITTER IN THE CLASSROOM

Facilitator: Author 7

Twitter is a social media platform for micro-blogging or in the company’s words, “Twitter is an information network made up of 140-character messages called Tweets” (Twitter, 2014b). Twitter defines Tweets in the following manner: “[a] Tweet is an expression of a moment or idea. It can contain text, photos, and videos. Millions of

Tweets are shared in real time, every day” (Twitter, 2014a). Many tweets include hashtags, which are “a word or phrase preceded by a hash or pound sign (#) and used to identify messages on a specific topic” (Oxford Dictionary, 2014). There are hundreds of ways to use Twitter with more educational applications developing all the time (Academhack, 2008, Online College, 2009, Gerstein, 2011). In the U.S. classroom nearly all students now use and carry smart phones which makes tweeting an accessible learning strategy, although you can use Twitter and tweet from a tablet, laptop, or desktop as well.

Since millennials have grown up texting, tweeting is an analogous form of communication and engaging for most college students. In my classroom we have used twitter in three different ways, all of which can be virtual or face to face. The first is having students send tweets to a page on a given course topic (See @SE2015Naz or @DaveCampbell116). This requires the instructor to set up a Twitter page or use their own personal page and retweet posts to their page. The second strategy is having students respond to questions using a pre-established hashtag (#) during a class discussion (#410Ethics). Third students can use Twitter as a means to respond to in class polls that test interest or opinions on various topics. Various poll services exist, such as PollDaddy (www.polldaddy.com) and Poll Everywhere (www.polleverywhere.com).

Exercise #8: LET’S PLAY BALL

Facilitator 8

This exercise is designed for exam or chapter reviews in undergraduate courses. The exercise uses a baseball game modified for the classroom environment to have students work together in learning course content. The classroom is set up like a baseball game, including physically moving desks and splitting the class into two teams. The instructor numbers the balls 1 to 10 corresponding to pre-prepared questions and answers. Instructors assign bases to questions, singles, doubles, triples, or home runs, depending on the difficulty of the question. Representatives from the team on the field throws numbered balls to their classmates on the opposing team that correspond to questions on course material. The teams compete using innings lasting three minutes or three strikes per team. Runners make hits and advance based on answering questions of various difficulty. Hitters can answer questions independently, allowing for a quicker pace of the game, or as a team, allowing for greater engagement and team building.

Implications for Teaching or for Teachers:

The implication of this unique format allows for all members of our community—those new to the society as well as those “long-timers”— to engage in both presenting and participating roles. Faculty at all career stages can learn about established experiential exercises, slight adaptations of these, and new innovations in teaching and learning exercises. Additionally, the actual participation in the exercises allows for networking and connection between presenters and participants and participants and participants, which often results in ongoing dialogs on shared experiential teaching topics.

11) Application to Conference theme:

This proposed session, now in its eighth iteration and originally conceived by Rae André, has become an extremely popular session at OBTC simply because it is all about *Learning in Community*. There would be no “Fire” without a community of interested people to build it. To actively engage with others in a room full of colleagues and friends during a session where a series of passionate experiential education facilitators are presenting exercises they have tested and found powerful in terms of student learning is an amazing community-based experience. For many of us, experiencing a “Fire” is akin to going to a buffet of your favorite foods with a group of people who love food as much as you do – some of the dishes (exercises) you will like more than others, it’s likely you’ll only have room for a few of them when it comes to actually eating (using) them, you can come and go in a relatively quick timeframe and be completely satiated with what you ate (learned), and the entire meal is made exponentially better because of the process of experiencing it with like-minded, invested, and interested others.

We can honestly think of no better conference theme than this one, Learning in Community, for the type of session we are proposing here. Speed dating for your new favorite experiential learning tool at what we already know is the world’s most communal (in terms of bringing people together to actively, thoughtfully, and genuinely share with each other) management education and learning conference – OBTC.

12) Unique Contribution to OBTC:

As above, if accepted, this will be the eighth iteration of the Experiential Fire session at OBTC. As such, “The Fire” has become something of an institution at our conference. Although the format remains similar throughout the years, the actual exercises presented at each “Fire” are different. This year’s exercises are all new and have not been shared at OBTC in this format before. Just as every new fire requires fresh wood as its fuel, every iteration of our Experiential Fire requires new exercises as fuel for our minds.

13) References and/or Additional Materials:

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