



**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:**

Student peer mentoring: Enhancing the learning environment

**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.*

Creating, instructing, and developing student peer mentor relationships in the classroom may provide a host of advantages for students and instructors. In this session, participants complete a brief peer-based activity, learn how peer mentoring can effectively be used in your class, and engage in a discussion regarding experiences and ideas around peer-mentoring. Peer mentoring activities discussed can be used for in-class activities including discussions, quizzes, and reworking homework together. They can also be used in conjunction with course objectives through academic and professional development over the semester.

### 3) Keywords:

*Student peer mentoring, learning, engagement, discussion dyads, peer-based learning*

### 4) Format

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

Note: There is a brief (and hopefully fun) activity or exercise completed by all participants at the start of this session, but then the session leads into more a general discussion regarding how to make effective use of this practice in management courses (both inside and outside the classroom). We feel the proposal aligns more closely to the general discussion section based on our understanding of the guidance of the OBTS website.

### 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?*

We need only a computer, projector, and screen. We could use our own laptop as well, if a hook up cord was provided for a PC.

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

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

- A.) Understanding the potential benefits for students and instructors of using peer mentors and peer activities in management courses.
- B.) Gaining applicable knowledge on when and how peer mentoring could be used effectively.

- C.) Sharing ideas regarding additional uses of peer mentoring to increase engagement and learning.
- D.) Leaving the session with a plan of how to implement peer mentoring in participants' classrooms.

## **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 idea for the session developed from a main principle of team-based learning theory (Michaelsen, Bauman-Knight, & Fink, 2003; Michaelsen & Sweet, 2011; see also [teambasedlearning.org](http://teambasedlearning.org) for video tutorial) where students initially complete an assessment or quiz or handout on their own. Then the team completes the same instrument where they have to agree on one answer as a team. The discussion aspect of this procedure enhances students learning, even when the team gets the answer incorrect.

The first author uses a great deal of peer exercises and peer mentoring in his class and has noticed positive learning experiences, as well as the development of peer support and strong ties. Prior studies have displayed positive results for peer tutoring, cooperative learning, and peer collaboration (Damon, 1984; Damon & Phelps, 1985). The first author uses all three and has noticed that students exhibit a great deal of responsibility and accountability to their peers. Each student's obligation to be prepared for class and for working with the peer is greater because the student's peer knows very quickly if he or she did not complete the work. If one student is unprepared, the prepared student often explains to the other student what he or she read and understood. This helps both students, as teaching someone else material aids in gaining mastery of knowledge.

Students also learn how to give constructive feedback to their peers. This is a valuable skill and practice as the first author has found that many students prefer not to work in groups or teams because they don't know what to do when the situation is going poorly. Equipping the students with tools to provide constructive feedback and setting up a mock activity where this occurs allows the students to gain a greater deal of comfort in sharing their thoughts on peer dynamics.

In the team-based learning model, the situation could exist where one member of a four or five-student team rarely shares his or her insights with the group. In the peer mentoring model, the group is only a dyad so each student feels required to share his or her insights. In addition, the "mentor" set-up of the peers plants a seed that each student is charged with helping to develop the other student in line with one or more course objectives.

Actively and directly providing ideas, guidance, and support to another student is a skill rarely learned in the classroom setting, yet may become more common in the workplace as one progresses in their organizational and career. Initial understanding and developing of these skills in college courses helps traditional undergraduates with

their futures and helps non-traditional students who are currently working in full-time roles.

## 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.*

2 minutes	Brief introduction of authors
10 minutes	Activity for participants: 1.) Complete quiz on one's own. The quiz will contain random trivia, as we can't assign pre-work in a session. 2.) Pair up individuals with a peer and have them complete the same quiz together. It will be replicated on the back of the page. 3.) Go through correct answers and grade the quizzes.
10 minutes	Introduction and Explanation of Peer Mentoring -How peer mentoring works -Why peer mentoring works -Outcomes of peer mentoring not working -When peer mentoring can be used -Discussion questions, homeworks, quizzes, in-class exercises -Course objectives - longer projects, includes outside of class
8 minutes	General discussion of how this could help session participants including how to implement into future courses. -Ideally this would be weaved in to the Introduction and Explanation section above to make for a richer discussion
2 minutes	Conclusion and key take-away

## 10) For Activities and Exercises:

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

The only planned handout is a short quiz with random trivia question. This is needed so participants can complete it once on their own and a second time with a peer to understand how the basic process works.

## **11) Implications for Teaching or for Teachers:**

*What is the contribution of your session?*

Establishing and developing peer mentors in the classroom provide additional opportunities for student engagement and learning. Instructors do not need to alter their teaching strategy to include peer mentoring, but rather use it to supplement their existing course objectives. In certain classes, the peer mentor relationship could provide guidance, ideas, and support with a major course project or assignment. In classes without major projects, the peer mentor set-up may help by having both students re-work homework, a quiz, or an in-class assignment previously completed individually. The discussion of the dyad creates an opportunity for students to learn from each other. The mentor aspect of the dyad fosters student helping to develop their peers and forging mutually beneficial professional relationships.

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

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

The proposed session provides opportunities for students to work with and help develop their peers. The learning extends beyond the instructor-student relationship. Students are provided opportunities to ask their peers questions on course material in a more private setting, rather than asking the instructor in front of the entire class (which can be more risky). If neither student in the peer dyad knows the answer to the question, they are often more confident asking the question as they now feel this was not sufficiently explained or is a confusing topic. This process facilitates more classroom discussion around key topics.

## **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?*

This work has not been presented before at any conference. The authors generated the proposal specifically for the 2015 OBTC conference.

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

Damon, W. (1984). Peer education: The untapped potential. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 5, 331-343.

Damon, W., & Phelps, E. (1989). Critical distinctions among three approaches to peer education. *International Journal of Education Research*, 13, 1: 9-19.

Michaelsen, L., Bauman-Knight, A. & Fink, D. (2003). *Team-based learning: A transformative use of small groups in college teaching*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

Michaelsen, L., & Sweet, M. (2011). Team-based learning. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning, Special Issue: Evidence-based teaching*. 128, 41-51.