OBTC

Teaching Conference for Management Educators

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

Submission Template

SUBMISSION GUIDANCE

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Only one document should be submitted

Submission Template for the 2015 OBTC Teaching Conference for Management Educators

1) Title of Proposal:

Creating Community and Early Engagement: Sharing as a Community of Educators

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.

Are you frustrated with students who skip the first class meeting or wait until the last minute to access an online class? Are you discouraged by students who are the last to join a group for a project? Are you looking for activities/exercises to use in the first week of class? This session explores ways to build community and foster early engagement in your classes and provides participants an opportunity to share tips, tools, and techniques. So bring your first week activities/exercises and join us sharing as a community of educators. (91 words)

3) Keywords:

Use three or four keywords to describe your session.

building community, early engagement, experiential exercises

4) Format

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

5) Time Requested:

___ 30 Minutes
___ 60 Minutes (*Roundtables must select 60 minutes*)
_X_ 90 Minutes

6) Planning Details:

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

A standard conference room is requested with movable chairs, projector, white/chalk board or flip charts.

7) Learning Objectives or Goals for the Session:

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

- To provide participants an opportunity to address the challenges they face in fostering early engagement in their classes.
- To provide an opportunity for participants to share exercises, activities, tips, and techniques for building community in face-to-face, blended, and fully online classes.
- To provide participants with a collection of exercises/activities to use in their own classes to use to build community and increase engagement.

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.

Creating community and fostering early engagement is important in all classes regardless of the subject or the delivery methods. Students who become engaged early are more

likely to be successful in the class and less likely to withdraw from the class. This is especially important in classes with group or team projects to help students get acquainted and traverse the "forming" stage of group development.

Instructors often use a variety of "icebreaker" activities to help students become more comfortable in class. Such activities have many benefits. They can help develop a welcoming climate and promote social presence (Dixon, Crooks, & Henry, 2006) and increase the comfort level of introverts and encourage them to speak more freely. In heterogeneous groups, these activities help individuals get to know one another and foster communication. Historically these activities involved face-to-face verbal communication but as students have evolved from a verbal to a visual to a virtual generation (Proserpio & Gioia, 2007) the exercises and activities we use in our classes must also transform.

Brown (2001) identifies a three stage process for building community. The first stage is making friends with whom one is comfortable communicating. The second is a state of acceptance where participants feel a sense of satisfaction and kinship after a significant discussion on an important topic. The third stage is camaraderie after a long or intense association where there was personal communication. Effective icebreaker activities can help students progress through the first two and launch the third of these stages.

In face-to-face classes, engaging students at the beginning of the course might be as simple as the instructor facilitating an activity or exercise, but in online courses students have increased responsibility for initiating participation (Redpath, 2012). At the same time without the stimulus of face-to-face interaction in online classes, students may not feel a sense of immediacy to become active in the class. Indeed "transactional distance," a psychologically perceived distance (Moore, 1993) can be more challenging in online classes. In online classes, the lack of face-to-face interaction can be overcome by creating an environment conducive to collective learning and collaboration (Arbaugh, 2000). The use of activities and exercises can reduce the perceived distance (Dixon, Crooks, & Henry (2006). This session explores the challenge of creating community and fostering early engagement in traditional, blended, and online classes and provides participants with additional activities and exercises to use in their classes.

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.

A 90-minute segment is requested with time allocated as follows:

Welcome and Introductions	10 minutes
Sharing challenges of building community	15 minutes
Small group breakout	30 minutes
Large group report out/debrief	30 minutes
Wrap-up	5 minutes
Total time	90 minutes

As participants enter the room they will draw a card with a starter question to be used in a small group activity. After a brief overview and introductions, participants will have the opportunity to share the challenges they experience in building community and fostering early engagement. Next they will form small groups based on the class delivery mode (i.e., face-to-face, blended, online) of interest. In the small groups, they will share the activities and exercises they currently use or have used in the past. Participants will reconvene as a large group, share their results, and brainstorm additional ideas for building community and fostering early engagement in their classes. Organizers will collect activities, exercises, tips, and ideas shared by participants and distribute to participants after the conference.

10) For Activities and Exercises:

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

No special materials are needed for this activity.

11) Implications for Teaching or for Teachers:

What is the contribution of your session?

Early engagement and a sense of community in classes lead to student success in both learning and enjoyment. This session helps participants enhance their repertoire of tools and techniques for building community and facilitating early engagement in their classes regardless of delivery mode. Participants will explore the challenge of facilitating early engagement in a variety of classroom setting and share, as a community of educators, a variety of activities and exercises useful in a variety of class settings.

12) Application to Conference theme:

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

This session is in direct alignment with the conference theme of "Creating an active learning community where students connect their learning to the subject, themselves, and their fellow learners" in that early engagement facilitates an active learning community. Students who engage early in a class are better positioned to make connections between the course material and their own circumstances. Early engagement also fosters connections to others in the class to build a community of learners. In that we address early engagement in online classes, this session also facilitates "Linking learners though technology and social platforms that challenge students to learn online in ways that connect and support spirit, passion, and ideas."

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 had not been previously presented nor is it under review elsewhere. Thus, it is unique to this conference.

14) References and/or Additional Materials:

Arbaugh J. B. (2000). Virtual classroom versus physical classroom: An exploratory study of class discussion patterns and student learning in an asynchronous internet-based MBA course. Journal of Management Education, 24: 213–233.

Brown, R.E. (2001). The process of community-building in distance learning classes**.** Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 5 (2), p 18-35.

Dixon, J. S, Crooks, H., & Henry, K. (2006). Breaking the ice: Supporting collaboration and the development of community online. Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology, Volume 32(2) http://cjlt.csj.ualberta.ca/index.php/cjlt/article/view/51/48 retrieved 1/17/15

Moore, M. G. (1993). Theory of transactional distance. In D. Keegan (Ed.), *Theoretical*

principles of distance education, (pp. 22–38). New York: Routledge.

Proserpio, L., and Gioia, D.A. (2007). Teaching the Virtual Generation. *Academy of Management Learning and Education* 6(1), 69-80.

Redpath, L. (2012). Confronting the Bias Against On-Line Learning in Management Education. *Academy of Management Learning and Education* 11(1), 125-140.