



**OBTC 2015 at University of La Verne
June 17th – 20th, 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-Established Course Commitments: Implications and Possibilities for Learning and Development

2) Abstract:

We present a student-established course commitment process through which students jointly establish and commit to a shared purpose and the actions and ways of being and interacting with one another that will allow them to achieve this shared purpose. In addition, each student develops a personal commitment that will enhance his or her learning and development. During subsequent class meetings, students reflect on and discuss how well they are succeeding in fulfilling these commitments and coach one another on how they might improve. The students' shared purpose provides a powerful framework through which to facilitate student-directed learning during the semester.

3) Keywords:

Engagement, Accountability, Commitment, Partnership Learning, Student-Directed Learning, Self-Reflection, Self-Awareness, Shared-Purpose, Peer 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:

N/A.

7) Learning Objectives or Goals for the Session:

- 1) Participants will understand how to effectively create student-established course commitments and utilize them over the course of the semester to facilitate student learning.
- 2) Participants will understand how to establish a student-created shared purpose for a course and how to utilize this shared purpose to facilitate meaningful student-directed learning over the course of the semester.
- 3) Participants will go through the exercise of identifying a shared purpose for one of their courses, as well as the actions and ways of being and interacting with one another by he or she and his or her students that would allow the achievement of this [shared] purpose.
- 4) Participants will identify a personal commitment that would improve their effectiveness as a teacher in the above chosen course.

8) Management or Teaching Topics:

Partnership learning – learning opportunities that are choices about learning that are shared between students and teacher. “If students were left entirely on their own to determine what and how they wanted to learn, it is unlikely that their self-defined needs would match the content of current course offerings (Ramsey & Couch, 1994, 147).

Student-directed learning empowers learners to take responsibility for decision associated with their learning (Eriksen, 2009; Hiemstra, 1994; Knowles, 1975)

Peer learning – students can provide one another with useful information, as well as sharing the experience of learning (Boud, Cohen, & Sampson, 2014).

Being in the classroom: Ramsey and Fitzgibbons (2005, 339) describe the experience of being with students as a “community of learners”, in which the “learning is in the room with us: past experiences, present dynamics, and future potential”. This concept builds on what student’s know and encourages students and teachers to be aware and reflect on interactions and experiences to cultivate learning. When students create a shared purpose, they are accepting responsibility for their learning and the teacher must accept this state of being in a community in order to create a space for self-directed learning.

Self-reflection: “One of the most important functions of management education is helping students become aware, self-reflective citizens (O’Neil & Hopkins, 2002, 402).

Teacher as coach approach - “Coaching students further develops their capacity to understand and apply classroom concepts to their life experiences) “support students to deepen their learning”. “Teacher as a coach has three key elements: building relationships; increasing students’ self-discovery and self-knowledge through co-inquiry; and seeking to combine theory with practice via pragmatic orientation. In our activity the teacher takes on some of these key elements to stretch the students to reach new depths within their own personal experiences and draws from individual relationships to create understanding and learning (O’Neil & Hopkins, 2002, 404).

Shared purpose – Shared purpose drives collaboration (Nayar, 2014) and provides a framework to resolve conflict (Patterson, et. al, 2012) through providing a shared framework for sense-making and decision-making.

Utilizing the **classroom environment as a “studio laboratory”** for working through challenges people actually face in the workplace (Parks, 2005). Like Ron Heifetz and his colleagues’ “case-in-point” methodology, the class commitments process utilizes students’ lived experience within the classroom to facilitate their learning and development.

Gibson designed a course which allowed for student’s to tailor their learning and assignments in a way that would make the outcome personally meaningful to them. Using this collaborative instructional method transformed student passivity into active engagement which resulted in increased **accountability** (Gibson, 2011, 96).

9) Session Description and Plan:

5 minutes – Introduction, background, and logic of student-established course commitments

15 minutes – Description of implementation, insights, and challenges of and recommendations for employing student-created course commitments

5 minutes – Students’ experience

25 minutes – Each participant will work through the exercise of identifying the [shared] purpose of one of her or his courses, as well as the actions and ways of being and interacting with one another required of he or she and his or her students that would allow the achievement of this [shared] purpose.

Discuss with a partner

10 minutes – Large group sharing, Q&A and Conclusion

10) For Activities and Exercises:

Below, please find a “Class Commitments” document from a MBA course entitled *Team and Organizational Effectiveness* that was taught in the fall of 2014. During our session, we will provide participants with a blank document to fill out for one of their courses in which they might employ student-established class commitments.

11) Implications for Teaching or for Teachers:

Teachers will be presented a student-established course commitment process to increase students’ engagement, motivation, self-awareness, empathy, accountability and ability to engage in self-reflection and peer coaching through the establishment of course commitments at the beginning of the course and weekly reflection by students on their performance in meeting these commitments over the course of the semester. Using their classes’ student-established shared purpose, teachers will understand how facilitate additional student-directed learning opportunities, deepening their learning partnership with students.

Since the establishment and commitment to a shared purpose is seen as crucial to team and organizational success, this process provides teachers with an example of utilizing the classroom environment as a “studio laboratory” for working through challenges people actually face in the workplace (Parks, 2005).

We will explain and share our experience of employing this student-established course commitment process, students’ experiences of the process, lessons learned, challenges and recommendations.

Finally, session participants will work through what shared student commitments might look like in one of their courses.

12) Application to Conference theme:

We present a process that helps “creat[e] an active learning community where students connect their learning to the subject, themselves, and their fellow learners” that is based on the understanding that “learning is at its core a social activity.”

13) Unique Contribution to OBTC:

N/A.

14) References and/or Additional Materials:

Boud, D., Cohen, R., & Sampson, J. (Eds.). 2014. *Peer learning in higher education: Learning from and with each other*. Routledge.

Eriksen, M. 2007. “Personal leadership conundrum.” *Journal of Management*

Education, 31 (2), 263-277.

Fitzgibbons, D. E. & Ramsey, J. V. 2005. "Being in the classroom." *Journal of Management Education*, 29 (2), 333-356.

Gibson, Laura. (2011). *Student-Directed Learning: An Exercise in Student Engagement, College Teaching*, 59:3, 95-101, DOI: 10.1080/87567555.2010.550957

Knowles, M.S. 1975. *Self-directed learning: a guide for learners and teachers*. New York: Associated Press.

Kuh, G. D. & Zhao, C. 2004. "Adding value: Learning communities and student engagement." *Research in Higher Education*, 45 (2), 115-138.

Hiemstra, R. 1994. "Self-directed learning." In T. Husen & T. N. Postlethwaite (Eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Education* (2nd edition), Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Nayar, V. 2014. "A shared purpose drives collaboration." <https://hbr.org/2014/04/a-shared-purpose-drives-collaboration/>. Downloaded 1/19/15.

O'Neil, D. A. & Hopkins, M. M. 2002. "The teacher as coach approach: pedagogical choices for management educators." *Journal of Management Education*, 26 (4), 402-414.

Parks, S. D. 2005. *Leadership can be taught: A bold approach for a complex world*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Paterson, K., Grenny, J., McMillan, R., & Switzler, A. 2012. *Crucial conversation: Tools for talking when stakes are high*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Ramsey, J. V. & Couch, P. D. 1994. "Beyond self-directed learning: A partnership model of teaching and learning." *Journal of Management Education*, 18 (2), 139-161.

Umbach, D. Paul and Wawrzynski, R. Matthew. (2005). Faculty Do Matter: The Role of College Faculty in Student Learning and Engagement. *Research in Higher Education*, Vol. 46, No. 2, 153-184.

Example of Course Commitments

(MBA Course, Organizational & Team Effectiveness)

As a member of this course, I commit to...

Our Shared Purpose: “To transform ourselves as leaders, teammates, and human beings.”

Ways we will accomplish this are by:

- Being present
- Being adaptive and empathetic
- Listening to one another
- Being interactive
- Communicating with one another
- Being proactive
- Being decisive
- Being thought-provoking
- Prioritizing
- Being independent
- Being self aware and self reflective
- Being in control of our self
- Asking questions
- Being punctual
- Being flexible
- Being considerate of others' time and ideas
- Being prepared (e.g., complete course assignments and reading prior to their due date so you can meaningfully to contribute to your and your classmates' learning and development)

My individual commitment to enhance my learning and becoming this semester is: