Teaching Conference for Management Educators

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:

A Semester Long Service-Learning Project; Our Example

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.

In this session we will be sharing a semester long project that uses service-learning as its foundation and creates strong connections to the material from an undergraduate Management class. We wanted to do something different from the pure volunteering or consulting projects. Our goal was to provide our students with the opportunity to step outside their comfort zone and then to use that experience to bring to life concepts learned in class. We will discuss the challenges, keys to success, our results, and ideas for further improving the project.

3) Keywords:

Use three or four keywords to describe your session.

Management, Service-learning, Class Project

4) Format

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

5) Time Requested:

_x_ 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?

No, just a projector for our slides.

7) Learning Objectives or Goals for the Session:

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

We expect our participants will walk away:

1.- With ideas for including service-learning in their classes.
2.- With ideas for what it takes to make these type of projects work.
3.-Knowing how to maximize the learning opportunities for students from our analysis of the literature and our experience.

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.

In order to align with the Jesuit mission of our university, we designed a semester-long project using service-learning. The project involved authentic engagement with the community to help our students become “men and women for others” and reflection which is a key component of Ignatian pedagogy. Service-learning has many definitions, one that is used frequently in the literature can be found in Bringle and Hatcher (1996)

> We view service-learning as a credit bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. p 222

This project (the detailed description can be found in the appendix) can be useful beyond the religious university. Universities are being asked to provide different experiences inside and outside of the classroom, service-learning being one of these potential experiences (Tucker et al. 1998). It provides opportunities to learn the course material and gain an understanding of the community. The idea is that the students see the opportunity for service as something good to do and also something that can provide an opportunity to learn (Vega, 2007). Service-learning can meld the traditional learning objectives of a class and expand them to include civic engagement (Bringle and Hatcher, 1996). But being able to expand business education through service-learning requires that it be implemented effectively (Godfrey, Illes and Berry, 2005). We believe that our project is one such implementation.

McCarthy and Tucker (2002) describe three dimensions that make for effective service-learning. First, the service must be intertwined with the concepts from the course. Second, the service is done at a non-profit organization. Third, time is allotted for reflection and connection to learning. Our project covers all three dimensions. Our students were required to perform at least 15 hours of service at partner non-profit organizations. They then, analyze the experience in light of concepts discussed in class. There is a requirement of a paper detailing the experience and an open reflection to help process it. What we did was ask our students to identify a theory that helps them understand how the organization works. The idea then was to have them be able to move in an inductive way from the data they had collected through their hours of service to the topics that have been discussed in class. Then if appropriate provide recommendations for the organization.

This is different from the more traditional assignments that ask the students to act as consultants to the organization or that only require hours of service. We did this for two reasons, one, this being a junior-level undergraduate course, our students did not always make strong connections to the actual concerns of the organization, and, second, we wanted them to research and make connections between what they observed and the material from class.

A key concern for us was to make sure that the service is not seen as volunteerism. McCarthy and Tucker (1999) make a clear distinction in service-learning and volunteerism around the connection to the learning objectives of the course. In our course, an undergraduate Management class, hands-on understanding is required and service-learning provided the students with the opportunity to see an organization at work and to interact with different parts of it. The structure of the assignment was key to connect to the material and learning objectives.

Another concern was that service-learning not be seen as an internship. We did not want to have the students look at this as a job to add to a resume. We wanted them to realize the uniqueness of the setting they were in. In line with Zlotkowski (1996), we added a reflection component to our class. The students were required to write a final reflection in the class, most of them took the opportunity to write about their experiences at their volunteer organizations.

Our project followed the structure proposed by Robinson et al. (2010). We begin with the organizing phase, where the students figure out where they will complete the service hours, set up contracts, and structure their schedules. Then the execution phase, where they fulfill their hours of service. And, finally, the close/reflection phase, where the students connect the experience to material from class, go back collect more data, and in the end reflect on their experience. Using their concrete experience to engage in conceptualization and reflection. The requirement of connecting their experience to theories form class engages that third phase and avoids a potential disconnect between the project and the course content a potential issue discussed by Snell et al. (2014).

In our first iterations of the project we faced some resistance from our students to doing service-learning, in line with the results of McCarthy & Tucker (1999). We handled that by making sure that the students view their hours of service akin to fieldwork, the idea is that the service was a vehicle for them to collect data for the paper. This changed the students' focus and allowed them to see the service in a different light. Interestingly, McCarthy and Tucker (2002) showed that participation in a service-learning project increases the intention to do more community service. This result aligns with anecdotal results we have collected where our students have continued to volunteer at their organization or have chosen to find other avenues to make an impact.

Additional benefits of our project beyond the course content learning were things like improved time management, improved communication skills, increased ability to manage change, and increased cultural awareness, in line with results by Govenkar and Rishi (2007), McCarthy & Tucker (1999), Tucker et al (1998), and Zlotkowski (1996).

A key element to our success was the cooperation of the Center for Service and Action (CSA). A campus organization that has contacts in the world of non profits and arranged for the students' placements. The placements were challenging as we needed all the students of a team to be assigned to the same organization, we wanted the students to have opportunities to interact with the inner workings of the organizations, and the students needed to have personnel from the organization available for interviews. CSA also provided contracts that the students and organization signed committing to the 15 hours, they also followed up with the progress of the student, and procured evaluations from the organizations. They helped us bridge the start up costs that derail many potential projects (Govenkar & Rishi, 2007)

We still see opportunities for improvement in the project. Robinson et al. (2010) describe the use of interim presentations to keep track of the progress the students are making. We can envision using short presentations where one member of the team describes a progress report as a useful way to keep the teams on track and avoid any last minute problems. We had some problems with team members not doing their service hours until the very last opportunity and these progress reports might have helped avoid that.

Another potential improvement would be to strengthen the reflection component of the project. While we have an individual open reflection at the end of the semester, we could have added a more guided reflection prompt and more opportunities for the students to reflect. We could also have included an opportunity to discuss experiences during a class period so that the students can also learn form each other. Of course these suggestions have to be balanced with the professor's workload and the time required to cover class material.

In conclusion, our project is presented as an instance of service-learning connected to an undergraduate management class. We believe that this project bridges the opportunity for service with the content related learning objectives. The structure provided ways to manage some of the key obstacles of service-learning.

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.*

We plan on reviewing the key elements of the project; the different things that helped make it a success and opportunities for improvement. We will like to dedicate a good portion of the session for an open discussion. We would like to learn how others use service-learning projects in their classes and to answer any further questions on our specific implementation.

Time	Total Time	Activity
10 min	10 min	Description of project
10 min	20 min	Overview of implementation specifics
10 min	30 min	Open discussion

10) For Activities and Exercises:

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

11) Implications for Teaching or for Teachers:

What is the contribution of your session?

As Godfrey, Illes and Berry (2005) discusses there can be different combinations of service-learning opportunities; some that might emphasize service, others learning, or both. We strived to create a project that focused on both, creating an opportunity to have an experience beyond the classroom that might take the student out of her comfort zone, and leveraging that experience and connect it to the material covered in class. We found, what we consider, an excellent solution. There is, still, room for improvement but we believe that we can provide value for our fellow teachers by sharing this specific solution and keys to implementing it. Participants will walk away with information from a rich discussion on service-learning and a particular implementation of it. In our experience, there is a steep learning curve for service-learning projects and we would like to provide our community what we have gained from our experience so that they can learn from our mistakes and leverage on our experiences.

12) Application to Conference theme:

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

The goal of our project is precisely, learning in community, it seems like a seamless fit to the conference theme. We wanted our students to learn about management, yes, but also learn about their community and what their role can be in it. Service-learning is at its core learning in community. Our project along with our community partners provide our students the opportunity to learn in community, about themselves, others whose realities might be different from theirs, their relationship to their extended communities, and also key class concepts in real life.

In our session we hope to also share with our own community of practice and build our strengths, learning from each other. It is in itself another instance of learning in 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?

This work has been especially prepared for OBTC.

14) References and/or Additional Materials:

References:

Bringle, R. & Hatcher, J. (1996). Implementing Service Learning in Higher Education. Journal of Higher Education. 67 (2) 221-239

Godfrey, P.; Illes, L & Berry, G. (2005). Creating Breadth in Business Education Through Service-Learning. Academy of Management Learning and Education 4(3) 309-323

Govenkar, M & Rishi, M (2007). Service Learning: Bringing Real-World Education into the B-School Classroom. Journal of Education for Business 83(1) 3-10

McCarthy, A & Tucker, M. (1999). Student Attitudes Toward Service Learning: Implications for Implementation. Journal of Management Education 23(5) 554-573

McCarthy, A & Tucker, M (2002a). Encouraging Community Service Through Service Learning. Journal of Management Education, 26 (6). 629-647.

Robinson, D; Sherwood, A. & DePaolo, C. (2010). Service-Learning by Doing. How a Student-run Consulting Company finds Relevance and Purpose in a Business Strategy Capstone Course. Journal of Management Education 34(1) 88-112

Snell, R; Chan M.; Ma, C; Chan, C. (2014). A Road Map for Empowering Undergraduates to Practice Service Leadership Through Service-Learning in Teams. Published on line August 2014.

Tucker, M. L. , McCarthy, A. M., Hoxmeier, J. A., & Lenk, M. M. (1998). Community service learning increases communication skills across the business curriculum. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 61, 89-100

Vega, G (2007). Teaching Business Ethics Through Service Learning Metaprojects. Journal of Management Education 31 (5) 647-678

Zlotkowski, E. (1996). Opportunity for All: Linking Service-Learning and Business Education. Journal of Business Ethics 15(5) 5-19

Project Description:

MGMT 355: Principles of Management & Organizational Behavior

Group Project: Diagnosing a Not-For-Profit Organization

ASSIGNMENT: During the course, we shall learn many management theories that help us understand how people work together in organizations. An effective manager is able to make sense of the organizational environment and diagnose what works, what needs to be changed, what are the sources of success/failure. Furthermore, an effective manager looks at new developments in organizational theory to find inspiration to understand and improve his/her organization. This assignment gives you the opportunity to experience this first hand.

The key ingredient in this project is for you to experience organizational life, to see the organization from the point of view of the people that work there. In order to make this happen we will combine the university's culture of service and non-traditional organizational research methods. Your group will be responsible for selecting a non-profit organization from the options presented by the Center for Service and Action and engaging in participant observation. Participant observation entails doing actual work in the organization under analysis. It is imperative that while you do the work you keep a critical eye to your own experience and that of others in the organization. Each member of the team is expected to log at least 15 hours of on-site work during the semester. You are expected as a group to write a paper and prepare a presentation for the class.

The goal of this assignment is to connect the theories we have learned in class with the reality of organizational life. You will have the opportunity to experience first hand the inner workings of an organization and then diagnose the organization using a specific theory that we will discuss in class.

Once you begin to learn about your chosen organization select a topic that you believe will help you understand the firm better and that might provide you with the opportunity to make recommendations as to how to improve the organization. Explore the class's topics and then propose a single, focused theory within that you will research, describe, and illustrate. Your group or representatives of your group will meet with me for approval of the topic.

In order to collect additional data, you will also want to interview different members of the organization, maybe even the customers. These interviews should help you round the knowledge you gained from your observations. You will need to prepare an interview guide and review it with me before your scheduled time. Record your interviews.

Your paper should include the following sections and format:

1. Title and introduction.
2. Description of the organization, its purpose, and the work that you did to collect your data.
3. The theory you used to guide your analysis. Why did you choose it?
4. Analysis of the organization through the lens of your theory.
5. Potential recommendations based on your theory and analysis on how to

improve the way the organization works. How would you go about implementing them?

6. A conclusions section where the implications of your study are discussed. Does it make a difference that it was a not-for-profit organization? How useful was the theory you chose in helping you to understand the way the organization worked?
7. The paper should be between 8 and 16 pages long. Pages should be numbered except for the title page, which is not counted.
8. The paper is double spaced, 12-point type in a standard style with 1 inch margins top and bottom and 1¼ inches left and right.
9. Use headings to separate and identify each section.
10. References used in APA format.
11. You might find useful to work with the learning resource center http://www.lmu.edu/Page556.aspx, making sure that the paper has a logical flow and that is clearly explains your work.

Your presentation should be approximately 10 minutes long. Not all members need to talk it is your personal preference, but all need to be present. The order of the presentations will be randomly selected. You will present in the lecture room during the week of Apr. 21st to Apr. 25th.

Your grade will be assigned based on:

- The data collected.
- Whether the theory chosen is a logical proposition coming from the data collected.
- Whether the analysis matches the data and theory.
- Whether appropriate recommendations were proposed, and how well they match the organization and their challenges.
- Whether the appropriate conclusions were drawn from the analysis and that the possible implications were proposed.
- Whether the format and references are correct.
- How the presentation showcased your findings and how you handle questions from the class.

RECOMMENDATION: While you are not required to research beyond what is covered in your book, I recommend that you look at some articles that might give you some ideas particularly with respect to what the important variables are and potential recommendations. Harvard Business Review is particularly useful. The journal can be accessed electronically through our library website.

SCHEDULE: The following schedule should help your group create your own work plan to manage the project.

Submit the names of the group members	**Jan 28th**
Identify one group representative who will be responsible for communicating with me.	**Feb 4th**
Sign contract with chosen non-profit and the center for service and action.	**Before Feb 20th**
Submit topic selection.	**March 19th**
Review interview guide with professor	**April 9th**
Submit final paper	**April 21st**
Present to class	**Week of Apr 21st – 25th**

RULES OF CONDUCT:

When you go to your selected organization remember that you are representing this class and LMU. What you do there not only reflects on you but on all of us. The organizations the Center for Service and Action has selected for us have a long tradition of good working relationships with the university and its students. Let's keep it that way. Be respectful, be responsible if you agree on a schedule keep to it.

You will have a supervisor/liaison person in the organization who will report the hours you have logged to the Center for Service and Action.

When you schedule interviews be sure to be there on time. People are busy and are making room in their schedule to see you, be mindful of that. Be prepared, do not show up and hope that your interviewee will know what to do. You should prepare questions and a list of what you want to obtain from the interview keep it in mind while conducting the interview. We will cover some interviewing techniques in class in order to improve your skills in this area.

SURVIVING GROUP PROJECTS:

Working in groups, as we will learn in class, is not an easy task. It is not easy to get agreements among the members or to live up to commitments. It is not easy to trust others when your grade is at stake.

It is not unusual to see some groups have problems getting their projects completed on time or feeling that the work was distributed unfairly. A common complaint is that one of the members is a free rider who does minimal work assuming others will pick up the slack. Other times the problem is that one of the members is a do-it-all who is convinced only he/she can do the project well.

It is a major goal of the group project to make sure that everyone participates in the research and learning experience. Another goal of the group is to give you the experience of your own organization, in this case your group. There are many valuable learning opportunities in the process of distributing labor, figuring out leadership, authority, and so forth within your group. Apply some of the principles you will learn in class. Here are some tips:

- A key element for success will be to have a clear set of expectations, regularly assess how the group is working, and a willingness to act if there are problems. Have group discussions about the process of group work as soon as possible, reaching consensus takes time but when people chose what to do they are more motivated to do it. Monitor the process of the team. Make sure that all members feel a sense of fairness.
- Logistics are always challenging. The size of the group should help reduce the potential for conflicts but it helps if someone takes charge of schedules.

- Conflict is sometimes more difficult to deal with when the other person is your friend or fraternity brother. If you think that you might not work well with your friend even though you love to hang out together avoid problems and join different teams.
- Group conflict many times involves choice of site and theory. Plan ahead and propose different alternatives. This is a semester long project you need to find something that excites everyone. Find ways to

create integrative projects that include issues and questions that satisfy the interest of different members.

- The project schedule is designed to be frontloaded. After the project is due you will have two weeks before the final. Do not fall behind schedule. Try to set early deadlines that will give you some flexibility.
- Structure the tasks. Break the work needed to complete the project into tasks (you might want to do it for sections of the project at a time). Divide the work between the team members, set short deadlines to monitor progress, compliment work that has been completed, and acknowledge work that is falling behind and create a contingency plan.
- Monitor the process of the team. Make sure that all members feel a sense of fairness.
- Communicate. Let group members communicate, if someone does not seem interested ask them about their thoughts. If something is going wrong you need to discuss it, ignoring it will only get worse. Have regular meetings.
- Do not hesitate to ask for help.