



**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:**

Comparing Three Approaches for Teaching Innovation: Design Thinking, Creative Problem Solving, and Theory U

### **2) Abstract:**

Our era's heightened interest in the topic of organizational and societal innovation has led to a proliferation of models and methods that might be adopted by those who wish to innovate, and consequently, by management educators who aim to foster student creativity and innovation. While design thinking has received abundant attention in the popular press, other methods, such as Creative Problem Solving (CPS) and Otto Scharmer's Theory U, can also prove useful in fostering student innovation. In this session, participants will gain an understanding of these three approaches, so that they might draw on each, as appropriate, in their teaching

### 3) Keywords:

*Use three or four keywords to describe your session.*

Innovation; creativity; creative problem solving; design thinking; Theory U

### 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?*

No

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

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

Participants will leave the session:

- Having gained an understanding of design thinking, Creative Problem Solving (CPS), and Theory U
- Having gained an critical understanding of the approaches' similarities and differences and possible shortcomings
- Having considered how they might apply each in their own teaching
- Having gained some concrete strategies for fostering creativity and innovation in their classes

## 8) Management or Teaching Topics:

Our era's heightened interest in the topic of organizational and societal innovation has led to a proliferation of models and methods that might be adopted by those who wish to innovate (Humantific, 2013; Puccio & Cabra, 2010). Three approaches that have gained significant attention—albeit from different audiences—are design thinking (Beckman & Barry, 2007; Brown, 2008; Dunne & Martin, 2008; Hassi & Laakso, 2011; Liedtka, 2013; Liedtka & Ogilvie, 2011; Martin, 2009), Creative Problem Solving (Isaksen & Treffinger, 2004; Puccio, Murdock & Mance, 2005; Puccio, Murdock & Mance, 2011), and Theory U (Gunnlaugson, 2011; Gunnlaugson, Baron & Cayer, 2014; Hassan, 2014; REOS Partners, n.d.; Scharmer, 2009).

Design thinking, which encourages managers to “approach management problems as designers approach design problem” (Dunne & Martin, 2006, p. 512), is often associated with the Stanford d.school, the design firm IDEO, and thinkers like Simon (1969), Buchanan (2001), Martin (2010), Liedtka (2013), and Kimbell (2011). According to its proponents design thinking is particularly suited for solving complex problems and challenging conventional ways of being and doing. CPS, a staged model to guide creative thinking, has been researched and adapted over 60 years. (Osborn 1953/1979; Basadur, Graen & Green, 1982; Isaksen & Treffinger, 1985; 2004; Puccio, Murdock & Mance, 2005; Puccio, Murdock & Mance, 2011). From the practitioner perspective, it is generally associated with the well-attended annual Creative Problem Solving Institute (CPSI) conference. Similarly to design thinking, creative problem solving involves navigating complexity and tolerating higher levels of ambiguity. Theory U, typically an approach for engaging groups in addressing larger complex social challenges, which originally was popularized by Otto Scharmer in his book *Theory U: Learning from the Theory as it Emerges* (2009), has been adopted and further popularized by the consulting group REOS Partner (Hassan, 2014; REOS Partners, n.d.) and has been explored, from an academic perspective by Leadership professor Gunnlaugson (2006; 2011) and in books like *Perspectives on Theory U* (Gunnlaugson, Baron, & Cayer, 2014).

Each of these approaches offers distinct advantages to management educators seeking to foster students' capacity to be creative and innovate. However, to date, little work has been done to build connections between them. With some notable exceptions

(Humantific, 2013; Puccio & Cabra, 2010), the writing emerging from each makes little or no reference to alternative approaches. This silo-ing can lead to narrow thinking on the part of educators—as well as practitioners and researchers—who might simply adopt the approach that most immediately resonates with them or that they first encounter, as opposed to considering which, among a range of approaches, might be best suited for a given circumstance.

In this session, participants will be introduced to each approach and will then work collaboratively to tease out the similarities and differences between them, and elucidate the strengths and weaknesses of each. In so doing, participants will gain new insights into how they might foster creativity and innovation 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.*

Time	Topic	Delivery mode/Activities
10 minutes	Introduction to those in the room	Participants will be asked about their experiences actively fostering creativity and innovation in their classes.  If the group is relatively small, everyone will offer an experience. If the group is large, two or three people will be asked to share their experiences.
15 minutes	Presenters will introduce design thinking, CPS, and Theory U, allocating five minutes to each.  Given that time will permit presenters to provide only a	Lecture

	high-level introduction to each approach, participants will receive handouts with more detailed information and bibliographies for each.	
20 minutes	<p>Participants will engage in a facilitated discussion around the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways are these approaches similar?</li> <li>• In what ways are these approaches different?</li> <li>• What are some of the shortcomings?</li> <li>• How might you use each in your classes?</li> </ul>	Facilitated discussion
10 minutes	In groups of 2-4, depending on the number of participants, participants will be asked to sketch out a diagram of how the three approaches relate to each other (5 minutes) and share their sketches (5 minutes)	Facilitated discussion and sketching activity.
5 minutes	Wrap-up and questions	

### **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?*

All of the above approaches—design thinking, CPS, and Theory U—have been the subject of sessions at previous OBTCs, but links have not yet been drawn between them. This session will enable those who are already engaged in fostering student creativity and innovation to expand their capacity to do so. It will introduce those educators who have not yet delved into creativity-focused approaches to three different approaches that they might use.

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

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

This session fits with the overall theme in two ways. One, when used in the classroom, all three of the approaches outlined above, require educators to abandon “stand and deliver” strategies and foster learning communities. By default, students who are engaged in navigating the creative process learn with and from each other.

Two, design thinking, CPS, and Theory U provide students with tools to create learning communities in their own work environments. These approaches provide them with the tools to facilitate participative learning among those they work with and manage.

## **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 and is not under review elsewhere. As the session’s co-presenters, we want to present specifically at OBTC because, although we possess expertise in each of the three approaches, we are at the early stages of thinking through how they might be linked. We therefore welcome the collaborative environment of OBTC, which would enable us to puzzle through with colleagues what we believe would be an important step in considering how management educators might foster creativity and innovation. We perceive the fact that different approaches have been siloed as limiting what we might achieve in our classes and we hope to work with OBTC colleagues to collectively advance teaching practice in the area of creativity and innovation.

## 14) References and/or Additional Materials:

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