



**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:

Reframing: A Tool to Develop Critical Thinking in Undergraduate Interns

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.

Educators are increasingly called upon to help students develop workplace skills that employers say are essential, but are often lacking in college graduates—critical thinking and problem solving. This session explores the use of reframing in an interdisciplinary internship seminar where undergraduates are engaged in “live cases” through their management internships. Using the Four Frames framework from Bolman & Deal’s (2013) Reframing Organizations, students develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills by analyzing complex organizational situations in their internships from multiple perspectives: structural, human resource, political and symbolic.

3) Keywords:

Use three or four keywords to describe your session.

reframing; internships; critical thinking; interdisciplinary

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?

Projector and screen for PowerPoint presentation

7) Learning Objectives or Goals for the Session:

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

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Appreciate the importance of developing critical thinking skills in undergraduate students
- Develop educational experiences that enable students to apply the concept of reframing to understanding the complex organizations in which they are interning

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.

Management: Bolman & Deal's concept of reframing organizes the broad spectrum of organizational theory into four areas that help managers and leaders understand organizations: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. This framework helps provide a comprehensive means for understanding organizational theory and behavior. The framework also provides a practical bridge between theory and practical applications, when used in an experiential learning course.

Teaching: This session will explore how to use reflection in an interdisciplinary experiential learning course to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills in students. Students will draw on situations in their own internship organizations and analyze them from multiple perspectives to present informed recommendations in class. Since the course is comprised of students interning in a number of functional areas, students are also able to bring various functional perspectives (e.g., marketing, finance, accounting, human resources, operations) to understanding complex organizational situations during case study discussions.

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.

0:00 – Introduction and overview of internship course structure and goals

Employer perspectives on critical workplace skills

0:10 – Overview of Bolman & Deal's concept of reframing organizations

0:25 – Overview of assignments and exercises that engage students with reframing

0:30 – Using the Four Frames, guide participants through a sample case study of an organizational issue viewed through different perspectives

0:50 – Conclusion and Q&A

10) For Activities and Exercises:

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

Attached.

11) Implications for Teaching or for Teachers:

What is the contribution of your session?

Teachers in higher education are increasingly called on to make curricula more relevant in terms of preparing graduates for the skills they will need to be successful in the workplace. In a 2013 study conducted by Hart Research Associates on behalf of the American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), survey results indicated that “more than three in four employers say they want colleges to place more emphasis on helping students develop five key learning outcomes, including: critical thinking, complex problem-solving, written and oral communication, and applied knowledge in real-world settings” (p.1).

Experiential learning courses (e.g., internships, service-learning) offer a platform for developing these skills in a meaningful way by allowing students to apply organizational theory to practice in real organizations. Integrating the Four Frames framework allows students to analyze complex problems and recognize that there can be more than one way to approach a problem or innovation.

12) Application to Conference theme:

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

The session's focus on developing students' critical thinking and problem solving skills during their internships illustrates a direct way to address the theme of "Connecting with the broader local and global community to inform and deepen student learning." Furthermore, given the reflective and interactive format of the internship seminar, the session demonstrates one way to create "...an active learning community where students connect their learning to the subject, themselves, and their fellow learners."

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 proposal has not been submitted to any other conferences to date. The session is unique in that educators are often challenged to find ways to bring concepts of organizational theory to life. Using reframing during students' internships is a unique way to apply theory to practice and develop critical thinking in real world settings for better workplace preparation.

14) References and/or Additional Materials:

Arum, R. & Roksa, J. (2011). *Academically adrift: Limited learning on college campuses*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2013). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Hart Research Associates. (2013). *It takes more than a major: Employer priorities for college learning and success*. The Association of American Colleges and Universities. https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/2013_EmployerSurvey.pdf

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:

Participants will be introduced to two different Four Frames assignments / exercises for use during an internship course. Below is a sample weekly assignment that has students analyze their organization from a structural, human resource, political, and symbolic

perspective. In addition, students engage in case studies of organizational issues. The specific case study topic to be used in this session will come from an organizational issue students identify during my Spring 2015 internship course. The Four Frames questions at the end of this document help guide both the organizational and case study analyses.

Political Frame Paper / Presentation

Readings:

- Chapter 9 of Reframing Organizations by Bolman & Deal
- Political Frame Questions

Assignment:

After completing the assigned readings for this week, analyze your organization from a political perspective. Your analysis should include concepts most relevant to your particular organization. An in-depth analysis of 3-4 points would be preferred to a superficial analysis of a laundry list of concepts. Points of analysis might include:

- How do decisions get made? Who gets to make them and why?
- What resources are most valued in your organization? How are scarce resources allocated? On what basis?
- What types of power do people possess in the organization? Discuss the most relevant examples to help describe the political dynamics in your organization.
- What formal or informal coalitions exist?

In your conclusion, using the types of power described in the readings and Cialdini's principles of influence, describe what power or influence *you* have as an intern in your organization. If you feel that your power or influence in the organization is currently limited, describe how you could use Cialdini's principles to increase your influence during your internship. Be specific in your examples (i.e., "We have a small budget for an event we are planning. I know a restaurant owner who might be willing to sponsor the event and provide free food. My network could be an important resource for the organization.")

Your paper or presentation should move beyond description to include analysis. Below is an example of the difference between description and analysis:

Description: Decisions are typically made by people at the executive level.

Analysis: *Middle managers frequently feel alienated because decisions are typically made by people at the executive level, without any input from others in the organization.*

Format:

Paper: If you have been assigned to write a political frame analysis paper, your paper should be approximately 3 pages, double-spaced. Your paper will be evaluated on: the quality of your analysis, your application of the readings and concepts discussed in class, and the quality of your writing.

Presentation: If you have been assigned to give a political frame analysis presentation, your presentation should be 5 minutes long, with another 5 minutes for Q&A. You are strongly encouraged to use audio / visual best practices in your presentation. Your presentation will be evaluated on: the quality of your analysis, your application of the readings and concepts discussed in class, and the quality of your delivery.

Four Frames Questions to Guide Organizational and Case Study Analyses (Based on Bolman & Deal's framework):

Structural Frame Analysis Questions

Mission and Purpose:

- What is the organization's stated purpose or mission?
- How is this mission/purpose communicated to members and the public?
- Has the purpose/mission changed during the organization's history?

Goals and Objectives:

- What are the stated (explicit) goals of the organization? How do these support the mission / purpose of the organization? Who determined them? When and how were they established?
- How much agreement is there among members on the priority for each goal?
- What are the unstated (implicit) goals of the organization?
- How important are the unstated goals in determining day-to-day actions?

Roles:

- How are responsibilities allocated—formally by job description and position or informally by consensus or “tradition?”
- What roles are established? How complex is the role structure?
- Are roles well defined or ambiguous? How well do roles align with formal organizational positions?
- Which roles are linked into organizationally important relationships?
- What is the level of role interdependency? Which roles depend on others?

Policies:

- How are policies established—top down, bottom up, collaboratively among members of different organizational levels?
- How well do policies support stated organizational goals?
- How are policies communicated? (To new members? To current members?)
- How are policies changed? Who can initiate a policy change recommendation?
- Which policies do members regularly follow? Which are ignored?

Hierarchy/Authority:

- What does the hierarchy of authority look like? Tall or flat? Span of control? Centralized or decentralized?

- Is there a published organizational chart? How well does it represent actual authority / responsibility relationships?
- What is the main basis of authority (formal position/title, organizational role, tenure in organization, interpersonal relationships, expertise, etc.)?
- Are there obvious and meaningful differences in status among members?
- At what levels are operationally significant decisions made?

Specialization

- Are positions / responsibilities defined by narrow specializations?
- Do jobs involve individual use of a variety of skills and knowledge?
- Do members rotate duties or constantly perform the same work?
- What is the relationship between organizational size and specialization?

Coordination / Control:

- How effective are the formal vertical and lateral communications networks?
- How effective are the informal vertical and lateral communications networks?
- Are there task forces, committees, boundary spanner positions, matrix teams or other formal coordination relationships?
- How many meetings are held each day? Who attends? What is discussed? How are meetings conducted (published agenda, fixed time limit, verified record of results)?
- Are there any organizational newsletters or publications intended to facilitate coordination?

Evaluation:

- Are evaluations based on performance (how job is done) or outcomes (results)?
- What are the evaluation criteria? Are they well known and actually used?
- How often is performance observed and appraised? How is feedback given?
- Are evaluations linked to formal rewards and penalties?
- Who evaluates whom? Is there peer or subordinate input to evaluations?
- What is the relationship between explicit goals and evaluation criteria?
- Do members perceive the evaluation system as fair and equitable?

Strategy:

- What are the organization's fundamental organizing principles?
- What planning/ programming methodologies are actually employed?
- How does the organization view its competition? Its customers?
- How are resources allocated? What budget method is used?
- What is the organization's vision of its future?

Size/Complexity:

- In comparison to its competitors, how large is the organization?
- Is it growing, shrinking or remaining static in size?
- How much structural and/or process diversity/complexity is there?
- How geographically dispersed is the organization?

Technology:

- What is the nature of the core technology?
- How much automation is employed now? Are enhancements planned?

- What is the nature of the managerial technology (information systems)?
- Is the organization “state of the art” in comparison to its competitors?

Human Resource Frame

Diversity

- How diverse are the social and educational backgrounds of members?
- What is the gender and racial/ethnic mixture? What is the range of ages?
- How diverse are members on the basis of skills and task abilities?
- What is the mix of “new” and long-time” members? Married and single?

Human Needs:

- Why do people work in this organization? What needs are satisfied by work?
- Is there a match between member needs and the way roles are enacted?
- Are managers/supervisors concerned about members’ need satisfaction?
- Are co-workers concerned about each other’s need satisfaction?
- What is the operative leadership/management philosophy regarding people?

Motivation:

- How do members feel about their work? About the organization?
- Are members enthusiastic about their work? About the organizational goals?
- What seems to motivate members? Does it differ by role/position?
- Do members appear to come to work happy? Do they leave satisfied?
- Do members take work home? Work overtime without compensation?

Satisfaction:

- What are the rates of tardiness, absenteeism, and turnover? Does it vary by position?
- Are there indications of sabotage, intentional negligence, and theft?
- What do members say about supervision, compensation, benefits, hours, work conditions, facilities (Herzberg’s “dissatisfiers”?)
- What do members say about challenge, empowerment, delegation, freedom of action, trust, recognition and opportunities to grow/advance (“satisfiers”)?
- How are member grievances handled? How frequently are grievances made?

Socialization:

- How are formal initial orientations conducted? By whom?
- What informal entry socialization activities are commonly practiced?
- Who prescribes group and organizational norms to new members?
- Is there a formally set “trial period” or probationary period for new members?
- What event or activity designates the end of entry socialization?
- Is a change in role/position accompanied by re-socialization activities?

Communication:

- How do members relate to each other? How are interpersonal conflicts handled?
- What does the communications pattern within the organization look like?
- What are the key barriers to communication? Do members listen effectively?
- What is the correspondence between verbal messages and non-verbal signals?

Participation:

- Do members feel empowered to act? Is initiative rewarded?
- Are decisions made at the level where the best information is available?
- What is the typical level of commitment? Does it differ by role/position?
- Do members feel able to influence their work and larger organizational issues?

Relationships:

- What kinds of small groups and informal cliques exist?
- On what basis do these groups form—tasks, demographic trait, level, location?
- How do members treat each other in these small groups? Treat “outsiders”?
- Is there an informal hierarchy of power and prestige?
- How does it relate to the formal structure?
- Do members “jab” or tease each other? In fun or with malice?
- Are there indications of sexual or racial harassment or bias?
- Do members socialize outside the workplace? On what occasions?
- What is the divorce rate? Is work blamed for divorce/family conflict?
- How do members see the relationship between work and family?

Education & Training:

- What kinds of training and education are provided or supported?
- Where is most training conducted? In-house, off-site, on-site, self-directed?
- Do supervisors or task experts coach/teach others on the job?
- Are job rotation / job enrichment practiced?
- Is a task team/self-managed work team approach followed?
- Is a professional/personal development plan prepared for members?
- Is training and continuing education part of the evaluation process?
- What is the level of basic literacy (reading/writing) in the organization?
- What is the level of technical/computer literacy in the organization?

Safety & Health:

- What are the major safety/health risks in the work setting?
- Is there a risk assessment program?
- Are there prevention programs? Do they appear effective?
- If required, do members regularly use/wear safety equipment?
- Is there a corporate fitness program? A health awareness program?
- Is there a health care plan? Does it cover all members? Family members?
- How do members feel about worker compensation disability claims?
- What are the drinking patterns? Do many people smoke?
- Does the organization enforce a no-smoking policy in the work place?

Career Development:

- Is there an established career progression within the organization?
- Are most senior members “home grown” or brought in from “outside”?
- Is there an apprenticeship program? A management development program?
- Do members expect to stay with the organization “for a career?”
- How frequently do members move geographically within the organization?
- Is geographic mobility a usual “price” for promotion?

Rewards & Incentives:

- Is there a profit sharing program in effect?
- Is there a quality awards program in effect?
- Is there a suggestion awards program in effect?
- Do members receive bonuses for personal productivity or by formula for all?
- Are promotions linked to achievement or to longevity?

Political Frame**Power and Influence:**

- Who are the recognized “persons of power”?
- Does their power apply across issues/situations or is it restricted?
- How centralized do power and strategic control seem to be?
- What is the primary basis for usable power (actual influence or actions)? Position? Tenure? Expertise? Charisma? Respect/Trust? Information? Fear? etc.
- What is the relationship between formal authority and actual influence?
- How do persons of power relate to powerless / lower power persons?
- Do members feel they have access to persons of power? Do they feel they are able to influence the power holders?

Symbols of Power and Status:

- What are the most obvious symbols of power? Titles? Dress? Parking spaces? Assistants? etc.
- Where are members located physically within the organization? Does the location and allocation of space match the distribution of power?
- Who can enter whose space without knocking?
- Who can call a meeting? Who can end a meeting?
- Where do people sit during meetings?

Decision Making:

- Where in the organization is decision discretion the greatest?
- Who can make decisions without checking with someone else?
- What is the normal routing of documents on issues needing decision?
- Who has formal veto authority? Who has informal veto authority?
- Who is seeking more decision authority? Who is avoiding making decisions?

Competition – Internal:

- Are there groups or subdivisions within the organization that are competitors?
- Around what issues do most internal competitions take place—resource allocation? Space? Budget priority? Promotions?
- Is internal competition viewed as healthy or dysfunctional?
- Is internal competition overt or covert?

Conflict and Conflict Resolution:

- What issues produce conflict within the organization?
- In which parts of the organization are conflicts most likely to occur? Why?
- What is the most commonly applied conflict resolution strategy?

- How is conflict viewed in the organization? As a growth process? As a threat?
- What forms of influence / power are used most often in conflict situations?
- Are leaders effective in conflict management / creative solution finding?

Coalitions and Networks:

- Are there obvious coalitions operating in the organization?
- On what basis are these coalitions formed? Task? Interpersonal? Issue?
- How stable are these coalitions? Are they exclusive or open to new allies?
- Do members make regular use of networking, internally and externally?
- Does management encourage development of lateral internal networks?

Bargaining and Negotiations:

- Is there much overt bargaining or negotiation around organizational issues and policy decisions, or do issues get decided in the “back room?”
- Are put-downs and innuendoes commonplace? Do members celebrate internal “victories?”
- Is there a “win-win” philosophy based on collaborative problem solving?
- Are creativity, innovation, deviance from norms/status quo, dreaming and visioning rewarded?

Power Sharing / Empowerment:

- Are members encouraged, formally and informally, to exercise initiative?
- Do members feel empowered or powerless with regards to their work?
- Do senior members seek out and listen to the opinions of junior members?
- Who actually controls the flow of work in the organization?
- Are there employee-ownership/stock purchases?
- Is the organization unionized? How active is the union?

Arenas:

- Who sets the organizational agendas? Who has access to corporate audiences?
- Who decides what “games” will be played, who the contestants will be, and what interests will be pursued in this organization?
- Is organizational effectiveness secondary to individual preferences and interests (i.e., perks and rewards)?
- Is there effective bottom-up political action?
- What are the most common hidden agendas among members? How do these help or hinder organizational mission and goals?

Symbolic Frame

History:

What is the organization’s actual history? How old is it? Did it emerge from another company?

- Is there a published history of the organization?
- Is the organization’s history an important part of the new employee orientations?
- Is the history portrayed on walls through pictures, plaques, maps, etc.?

Meaning:

- What does the architecture/physical layout say about the organization?
- How does the building make you feel?
- How is office space arranged? How is the parking lot arranged?
- What kinds of cars do people drive? How do they dress for work?
- How do people look and act when they arrive at work? How do they look and act when they leave?

Values and Ethics:

- What are the core values of the organization? How are they displayed?
- Are explicit (publicly declared) values the same as the operative (implicit/rewarded) values? Are “words” and “actions” consistent?
- Do values seem to make sense given the organization’s goals and stated purpose?
- How widely known and shared are these values? Do they have meaning for members? Do they appear to arouse emotions?
- Is ethical behavior rewarded? Do members believe in telling the truth?
- Do members joke about “beating the system,” stealing from the company, or similar violations of rules or ethical standards?
- Does the organization covertly check employee use of company telephones, computers, etc. for personal use?

Symbols

- What are the most potent symbols of the organization? What do they seem to represent to members? To the customers/public? Where are these symbols displayed?
- Do members wear a “uniform?” Is there a dress code, explicit or implicit? Does it differ by role / position?
- Do members earn titles or credentials that serve as symbols of achievement?
- Are there any symbols that members ridicule or make fun of?

Heroes / Heroines

- Is there a visionary hero or heroine “at the helm” of the organization? Is this hero or heroine a past or present leader in the organization?
- What is he or she like? Does this hero represent and embody the core values?
- What emotion(s) do they inspire in members? Are their pictures on the walls?
- Are they anointed and celebrated formally? How does one become a hero?

Myths / Stories

- Are central and supporting heroes/heroines portrayed in well-known stories?
- What organizational stories/myths are told regularly?
- What are these stories about? How much credibility do they possess?
- Are they part of the “whole” organization or unique to a portion/subculture?
- Do most common stories reinforce or refute the explicit/public values, goals or purposes of the organization?
- Who are the storytellers? What status do they possess?

Culture

- What metaphor best symbolizes the organization's dominant culture (tough but fair? risky bet-your-career? work hard / play hard? Quality first?)?
- What metaphors are used frequently in everyday language at work?
- Do subcultures exist? How cohesive are subcultures? What do subcultures form around? Function? Length of tenure? Gender? Race?
- How do the various sub-cultures interact? Cooperative co-existence? Conflict? Mutual tolerance? Friendly competition?
- Do members find more meaning in subcultures than in the corporate culture?
- Is there a unique set of values for each subculture? Are there common unifying values across subcultures?

Play and Humor

- How would you characterize the work environment – serious or playful or both?
- How often do members play? Where does play occur? What forms does it take?
- Who plays? Are there members who are exempted from play?
- What jokes and puns are used as membership symbols ("in-jokes")?

Rituals / Ceremonies

- What social rituals are most common? Greetings / exit sequences / work patterns?
- How deeply ingrained are work rituals? How resistant to change?
- Do rituals reflect implicit/operative values and goals?
- What do rituals symbolize?
- What are the key management rituals? Meetings? Planned sessions or organization-wide addresses? Memos?
- Are there hazing rituals for new members being socialized into the culture?
- How often are ceremonies held? Who attends? Do members attend willingly?
- What emotions do ceremonies evoke?
- What symbols are recognized or exchanged during ceremonies or other activities?

Artifacts

- What do people in the organization collect to symbolize their work and/or membership in the organization?
- What obsolete values, beliefs, goals, activities, processes, methods, equipment, or other items are retained by the organization or individual members?