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

Submission Template

1) Title of Proposal:

Creating Conditions for Collaborative Learning in Student Teams

2) Abstract:

I will describe strategies and demonstrate an activity that I use in my teams-based management skills course to create conditions which encourage idea-sharing and collaborative decision-making as opposed to an assembly-line style of production in the execution of team projects. Strategies include project requirements that make collaboration essential and support for constructive team dialogue. I will also engage session participants in a demonstration of a modified nominal group technique that I use and teach in the class. The technique serves to demonstrate the value of generating and reviewing a large number of ideas, as well as how this can be done in an inclusive and relatively time-efficient manner.

3) Keywords:

Group process, collaborative decision-making, team learning

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:

I will need several easels with paper and/or enough white-board space for small groups to generate lists of ideas.

7) Learning Objectives or Goals for the Session:

- *Participants will be introduced to some helpful articles/resources that support collaborative learning in teams (Harvey,1988: Roberts, 1988: Senge, 1990; Druskat & Wolf, 2001; Frederick, 2008).*
- *Participants will learn about several strategies I use to encourage team collaboration as opposed to assembly-line production, and will have the opportunity to learn about strategies that other participants utilize as well.*
- *Participants will review how to facilitate and show their students how to facilitate a simplified nominal group technique (Delbecq & VandeVen, 1971).*

8) Management or Teaching Topics:

The material relates to both creative and collaborative problem-solving, in the sense of teaching methods that help people generate, share, and critique/edit ideas. Emotional and social intelligence are also involved to the extent that people are reluctant to critique other's ideas or lack the skills to do so constructively.

9) Session Description and Plan:

First 30 minutes: Discuss issues of assembly-line versus collaborative problem-solving in teams as well as reading and thinking that convey the meaning and value of the latter. Present and discuss one of the actual team project assignments I use (Appendix I) and a handout that provides suggestions for language students can use to critique each other's ideas (Appendix II). Discuss how students respond to the assignments, and discuss other participants' ideas for promoting collaborative process in team project execution.

Next 60 minutes: Introduce the Group Process Guidelines (Appendix III) I use for the modified nominal groups (7-10 minutes) and give participants a task to complete in small groups using the guidelines. (30 minutes).

Last 25 minutes: Debrief the exercise and discuss how students typically respond. Discuss how the exercise connects with project requirements and learning tools reviewed earlier, and discuss other session participants' variations of this or similar exercises.

10) For Activities and Exercises:

See attached.

11) Implications for Teaching or for Teachers:

The session provides ideas for teachers who use teams in class and would like to encourage them to more fully collaborate and engage in group learning as they execute team projects. While I expect that many if not most OBTC-ers are familiar with and have used variations of the nominal group technique, it may still be useful to see a simplified version that can be taught quickly and used by in-class teams.

12) Application to Conference theme:

This is all about methods to generate more learning in student teams.

13) Unique Contribution to OBTC:

This presentation will be unique to OBTC 2015

14) References and/or Additional Materials:

Delbecq A. L. & VandeVen A. H, (1971). A Group Process Model for Problem Identification and Program Planning, *Journal Of Applied Behavioral Science VII*, July/August, 466 -91.

Druskat, V.U., & Wolf, S.B. (2001). Building the emotional Intelligence of groups. *Harvard Business Review,* March, 81-90.

Frederick, T. A. (2008). Facilitating Better Teamwork: Analyzing the Challenges and Strategies of Classroom-based Collaboration. *Business Communication Quarterly,* 71(4) 439-455.

Harvey, J. (1988). *The Abilene Paradox and Other Meditations on Management.* Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books.

Holmer, L. (2001). Will we teach leadership of skilled incompetence? The challenge of student project teams. *Journal of Management Education, 25*(5): 590-605.

O'Connor, D., & Yballe, L. (2007). Team leadership: Critical steps to great projects. *Journal of Management Education, 31*(2): 292-312.

Roberts, C., (1998) Can we talk? "Journal of Quality and Participation, July/August, 24-28.

Senge, P. 1990. *The Art and Management of the Learning Organization,* Ch. 12, "Team learning," New York, Doubleday.

VIRTUAL TEAM PROJECT #1

THE TEAM THAT WASN'T

CASE

The Team That Wasn't

TASK OBJECTIVE

Develop a five minute, well-justified presentation using principles and concepts introduced in class, from text chapters 1, 2, and 9, and from the additional assigned readings to diagnose the problems in the case. All exchange and assembly of ideas should be conducted electronically. You may wish to meet in person to finalize the details of and practice your class presentation. For your presentation, assume that you are a consulting team hired by the company to diagnose the situation. Note you are not asked to provide recommendations.

TASK REQUIREMENTS

1) Use principles and concepts from class, Chapters 1, 2, and 9, and the "Abilene Paradox" and "Emotional Intelligence of Groups" readings to identify the behaviors, personal attributes, and skill deficiencies that most significantly contribute to the dysfunctionality of the team in the case. These may involve any of the individuals or the team as a whole.
2) Present your findings clearly in a **5 minute** report.
3) Provide the instructor with: 1) a detailed outline (essentially a script, in bullet form) of the content of the report; and, 2) and copies of your PowerPoint slides.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. Principles/concepts used precisely and in context (No "stretching").
2. Assessments consistently supported by reference to specific facts from the case.
3. Case facts interpreted correctly.
4. Diagnosis captures a good range of the most significant issues that pertain to concepts addressed in the designated chapters, readings, and class material.
5. Presentation time limit adhered to and time well utilized to address task requirements.
6. Professionalism (consistent with presumed role as organizational consultants) of presentation, including pace, clarity, and appropriate use of visual aids.
7. Completeness/consistency of presentation outline. Note this is essentially a bullet-style script of the points you make in your presentation, and must accurately reflect the actual content of your presentation in its final state. This outline should follow your PowerPoint slides and provide details of your comments in relation to those.

Appendix II

USING INQUIRY AND DIALOGUE SKILLS TO IMPROVE TEAM
PRESENTATIONS

Note you have four essential analytical standards for your assessment and presentation:

1. Are the concepts used correctly and precisely?
2. Have you selected topics that generate significant insights about the case?
3. Do you have specific examples for each concept and do the examples reflect the concept precisely?
4. Do you complete the task precisely as assigned?

Some examples of language you can use to inquire into and improve the ideas your team chooses and acts on are:

1. I have a different understanding of what X concept means—I understand it to mean _____.   What is your/others' understanding?

2. Can you help me understand how this example reflects concept X?

3. I assume that the instructions are asking us to do X. Do others have different assumptions?

4. I don't follow how you are using the term "Y" here. Can you help me understand your thinking on this point?

5. I think situation X from the case may present a better example of concept Y. I say this because I assume that Y means…….

Ground Rules for Dialogue

Slow down
Let go of being right
Explore assumptions
Explore data
Be willing to be influenced

Appendix III

Group Process Guidelines

Take time to save time

1. Clarify task assignment (Ask each person for his/her thoughts).

2. Individual reflection and silent writing.

3. Select recorder and presenter. All members serve as facilitators.

4. Round robin brainstorming--each person gives one single idea in turn, keep going around until all ideas are exhausted.

> NO DISCUSSION OR EVALUATION
> UNTIL ALL IDEAS ARE ON THE TABLE!

5. Discussion/evaluation/selection-- may use voting or consensus-- no need to bury differences.

6. Summary and presentation--may include reservations and differences of opinion.