OBTC

Teaching Conference for Management Educators

OBTC 2016 at Walsh University
June 8th – 11th, 2016

Submission Template

SUBMISSION GUIDANCE

1) Title, Abstract & Keywords

Title:

Applying the social identity relations model of team performance to the classroom experience: How two instructors use the classroom, rather than teams, as the in-group to create a cohesive environment across diverse individuals

Abstract:

This session will describe the use of social identification, or the perception of "oneness" with a group, in the classroom to the extent that student cognition about their identification extends beyond team identification to create a more cohesive, productive classroom environment with higher quality outcomes and inputs, including intragroup cooperation, more helping behaviors, and a higher level of learning.

Keywords: social identity theory, communication, information sharing

In your abstract, please include a brief session description (not to exceed 100 words), and three to four keywords. If your proposal is accepted, this description will be printed in the conference program.

2) Format
    ___ Activity or exercise
    ___ Roundtable discussion (60 minute only)
    _x_ General discussion session

2a) For activities and exercises only, is yours best suited for

__x__ A traditional classroom
____ An online class
____ Either

2b) For activities and exercises only, is yours best suited for

____ Undergraduate students
____ Graduate students
__x__ Either

3) Time Requested:

____ 30 Minutes
__x__ 60 Minutes (*Roundtables must select 60 minutes*)
____ 90 Minutes

4) Planning Details:

Each room contains a white board with markers, computer (PC) with DVD capability and computer projector. Does your session require any other equipment?

The session does not require any other equipment.

5) Teaching Implications:

What is the contribution of your session to management pedagogy/andragogy? Specifically, please include your learning objectives, and describe what management and/or teaching topics are relevant to your session, and why. Also, include theoretical, disciplinary, or theoretical foundations that will help reviewers understand how your ideas fit within the broader field of management.

Management educators often spend countless hours developing effective methods for forming cohesive, highly functioning teams in the classroom and may utilize workgroup theories including Tubb's systems model, Fisher's theory of decision

emergence in groups, and McGrath's time, interaction, and performance (TIP) theory, among others, to focus on improving team outcomes (Poole & Van de Ven, 1996). Another theory has gained traction in both management and management education literature with respect to its applicability to improving group or team outcomes; namely Ashforth and Mael's (1989) social identity theory (SIT). Lembke and Wilson were perhaps the first to introduce the term "team identity" to the team performance literature by applying social identity theory to help explain team performance (1998). For example, they found that when team members' thoughts, feelings, and actions are aligned, team performance is enhanced. Furthermore, Jost et al. (2004) suggest that in-group favoritism (ingroup bias) occurs when people give preferential treatment to others who are perceived to be in the same ingroup. In addition, aggregating individual skills and resources in the hopes that teamwork will emerge is not enough; to achieve true teamwork, members must be actively motivated to share these skills and resources with one another (Stevens & Campion, 1994).

Applying these findings to the classroom serves as the foundation upon which the session authors argue that social identity theory can be used to create a meta-unit, the classroom as a whole, to set the stage for an environment in which all students are part of the in-group, and work collaboratively across teams and groups to develop high quality inputs (questions, resources, etc.) and high quality outcomes (case analyses, assignments, and projects). The authors of this session contend that the use of social identity theory, focusing on developing one in-group, facilitates a more cohesive and collaborative classroom environment in which multiple positive

outcomes are achieved, and will describe their methods used to create this environment as well as the high quality outcomes produced.

Furthermore, social identity theory also suggests that the motivation for thinking, feeling, and working as a cohesive unit is socially constructed; members in such units often develop a social identification which is feeling less like a distinct individual and more like a representative of a social group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which is another tenant of the session's authors' strategy to create a highly functioning classroom where individuals care about one another and engage in helping behaviors. Because SIT also suggests that individuals highly prefer others who are similar to themselves, we attempt to create an environment where students have knowledge at multiple levels regarding their peers, perhaps increasing the opportunity to find some sort of similarity and thus have the opportunity to construct a productive environment.

Session attendees may learn from the experiences of these two instructors and will be encouraged to share any experiences they have had with respect to developing their own cohesive classrooms where high quality outcomes have been experienced.

References

Ashforth, B. E. & Mael, B. (1989). Social identity theory and the organization. *The Academy of Management Review*, 14, 20-39.

Jost, J. T., Kay, A. C., & Thorisdottir, H. (Eds) (2009). Social and psychological bases of ideology and system justification. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lembke, S., & Wilson, M. G. ((1998). Putting the "team" into teamwork: Alternative theoretical contributions for contemporary management practice. *Human Relations*, 51, 155-210.

Stevens, M. J., & Campion, M. A. (1994). The knowledge, skill, and ability requirements for teamwork: Implications for human resources management. *Journal of Management*, 20, 503-530.

Tajfel, H. & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of inter-group behavior. In S. Worchel and L. W. Austin (Eds), Psychology of Intergroup Relations. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

Van de Ven, A., & Poole, M. S. (1996). Exploring development and change in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 20, 510-540.

Westerman, J. W. (2002). Fit in the classroom: Predictors of student performance and satisfaction in management education. *Journal of Management Education*, 21, 1-15.

Williams, E. A., & Duray, R. (2006). Teamwork orientation, group cohesiveness, and student learning: A study of the use of teams in online distance education. *Journal of Management Education*, 30, 3, 592-616.

6) Session Description and Plan:

What will you actually do in this session? If appropriate, please include a timeline estimating the activities will you facilitate: how long will they take, and how will participants be involved? Please remember that 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.

The authors of this session will briefly describe social identity theory and relevant research as it applies to enhancing team performance, followed by outlining how SIT has been used to enhance team and group processes and outcomes in organizations. The majority of the session will be spent describing how each author has created a learning

environment in each of their classrooms that follows the tenants of SIT and observational data in which long-lasting bonds have been formed between individuals in the class, project quality, and noted helping behaviors between individuals.

Specifically, each instructor will outline methods and strategies he and she each use in (and outside) the classroom that seem to have positively impacted the students to more easily identify with their peers in the classroom, and to form strong relationships with many peers, rather than simply becoming a very cohesive sub-group or team. For example, one instructor has implemented an exercise during the first week of class in which students interview each other in pairs and obtain personal information such as hobbies, goals and aspirations, favorite foods, and other interesting demographic information along with relevant "regular information" including major, hometown, and so on. Each student then introduces their "person" to the class, which seems to quickly facilitate a different degree of relationships between those who may have never know how similar he or she was to another peer (this technique was presented at OBTC 2011 by Robert Harrington during a session that one author attended). Building on this level of information sharing, then, the instructor continues to use this as a base to move forward and continue to touch base with students with respect to their athletic team involvement, student organization activities, student work experiences, and so on.

Similar to this approach, the second instructor introduces a bingo game during the first week of class wherein the students identify unique and different aspects of their fellow classmates. This tool provides a resource to "dig deeper" and allows students to connect with one another in a more rich and meaningful way. The bingo system

incorporates a game learning environment and allows students to take a more active interest in their peers while having fun.

Another technique used by one of the authors (which works well in classes with less than 30 students) is to create two large groups (men versus women, or an arbitrary split) when assigning a complicated case, or an assignment that requires multiple levels of work. This has resulted in students continue to stay engaged with peers outside of their own small group or team that they sit with, and has seemed to create more of a positive solid identification among students in that they are part of a larger whole working towards an outcome, rather than simply on a small team attempting to outdo the other teams.

The second author's methods include also extending the learning environment outside the traditional borders of the classroom. Outsides activities, field trips, and even changing up the space – i.e., even moving a facilitated discussion to a coffee shop or student lounge, works wonders in breaking down barriers and allowing students to connect with others in a more meaningful way. The instructor also encourages other activities to take place in the learning environment like sharing favorite "hang out "spots on campus, "food days", bringing photos to class, celebration days, and days designated as favorite snack day or candy day, One very necessary component of facilitating this type of environment is to continue this approach throughout the entire class and not just during "icebreaker" activities. Therefore, continued activities and follow up are critical. For example, following up after spring break to reconnect and identify any significant activities or changes in a student's life, trips, or major events is essential in maintaining the integrity of the "in group" so that although not every student had the same

happenings, they can perhaps feel connected through the simple act of this communication and information sharing.

Finally, as with all great sessions at OBTC, it's all about the exchange of ideas, and because the authors' "first week" activities has facilitated creating a different foundation for their classes in that they attempts to create an entire "in group" within the classroom, it will be important to make certain we incorporate session attendee's participation by perhaps brainstorming at the beginning of the session, and continuing the conversation after we briefly describe our rationale for using SIT when we attempt to create the most cohesive, productive classroom possible.

7) Application to Conference theme:
How does your session fit with the overall OBTC theme of *United in Service*?

Our session addresses the sub-theme of "Creating a climate where students unite and serve each other" as well as the sub-theme of "Appreciating the diversity in our classrooms and our world and leveraging it to create a unified front as we serve our communities". The desired outcome of the session would be to provide attendees with a framework which they might be able to use in their own classrooms, whether undergraduate, graduate, or perhaps even online.

The way in which we address the first sub-theme is by outlining strategy that we use in our classrooms which have resulted in positive outcomes, including increased intragroup communication and helping behaviors, social connections between students which extend beyond the classroom, and in our experience, a higher degree of learning as evidenced by higher quality projects and increased network strength between dissimilar individuals.

The way in which we address the second sub-theme is by providing students with the opportunity to not simply interact with their small groups, but to become more comfortable with interacting and developing close relationships with many others in the class. It is our hope, of course, that our students who gain experience working with multiple constituencies in the classroom will carry that learning on with them, to other classes and eventually to the workplace.

8) 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 is a unique contribution to OBTC that has not been presented previously nor is it under current review elsewhere.