

**OBTC 2016 at Walsh University**

**June 8th – 11th, 2016**

Submission Template

SUBMISSION GUIDANCE

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| **Submission Template for the**  **2016 OBTC Teaching Conference for Management Educators** |

1. Title, Abstract & Keywords

*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.*

**The Use of Fishbowls to Improve the**

**Quantity and Quality of Student Contribution**

I had tried everything I could think of to get students to come to class ready and willing to engage —contribution points, cold calling, ranting and raving. Nothing seemed to help, until I tried fishbowls and found some success. I’ll show you what a fishbowl is in case you haven’t seen one in action, share the results of my experiment, and provide some ideas on you might integrate them into your larger sections.

Key words: Contribution, Student Preparation

1. Format

X Activity or exercise

Roundtable discussion (60 minute only)

General discussion session

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

A traditional classroom

An online class

X Either

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

Undergraduate students

Graduate students

X Either, but I’ve only studied this at the undergraduate level

1. Time Requested:

X 30 Minutes

60 Minutes (*Roundtables must select 60 minutes*)

90 Minutes

1. 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?*

No special equipment although movable chairs would be helpful to the demonstration.

1. 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.*

Fishbowls seem to come and go as technique of importance to pedagogical researchers. It was described in Mel Silberman’s 1996 book on active learning strategies. Dutt designated it a mechanism to motivate students to participate (1997). Others have focused less on the fishbowl as a tool of engagement and more on the content it can be used to demonstrate (Hensley, 2002; McFadzean and McKenzie, 2001; Miller, 1991). In this session I want to focus on the fishbowl and its positive effect on the quantity and quality of student contribution. I would also like participants to be able to take away an understanding of how the dynamics that occur within the fishbowl can be used to identify a variety of organizational behavior phenomena.

The learning objectives of this session are three. At the end of the session, participants will be able to

1. Describe what a fishbowl is and how it might be used in their class, both traditional and online formats
2. Discuss the results of research that suggest the use of fishbowls can increase the quantity and quality of student contribution to class discussion.
3. Identify other outcomes for which fishbowls could be appropriate, e.g., providing an example from which to analyze group processes, allowing students greater control over their learning, creating a context to evaluate communication.

Simply, a fishbowl discussion occurs when a subset of students asked to discuss among themselves a topic or assignment. The fishbowl group can be placed around a table in the front of the classroom or be left in classroom chat space to “talk amongst themselves.” The remaining students watch, listen, and take notes, readying themselves for the debrief and after-talk.

I conducted a study in which students were given assignments and preparation questions for class sessions over the course of a term. In the syllabus, students were told whether the discussion of that assignment would take place in a cold call or fishbowl format. These modalities were rotated throughout the term to counter time effects. Students were randomly cold called or assigned to the fishbowl. Analysis of the videotaped discussions showed a significant increase in the quality (using Bloom’s taxonomy) of student comments and quantity of participants in the open dialogue following the initial discussion. One of my favorite comments from a student who, when asked her opinion of the fishbowl, said, “Honestly, I think it’s pointless. Beside that it makes students come to class more prepared.”

Fishbowls have also been used as a way to apply class material. I will set up a fishbowl and have two pairs of students negotiate to resolution or impasse. The class then analyzes the process. McFadzean and McKenzie describe the use of fishbowls in analyzing group processes. In the fishbowl is a group assigned a group-ranking task, like Lost at Sea. The outer group is analyzing the in group’s persuasion tactics and intra-group dynamics. Many other possibilities exist and I hope to explore some of them with the participants in this session.

References:

Dutt, K. M. (1997). The fishbowl motivates students to participate. *College Teaching*, *45*(4), 143-143

Hensley, L. G. (2002). Teaching group process and leadership: The two-way fishbowl model. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, *27*(3), 273-286.

McFadzean, E., & McKenzie, J. (2001). Facilitating virtual learning groups: A practical approach. *Journal of Management Development*, *20*(6), 470-494

Miller, J. A. (1991). Experiencing management: A comprehensive," hands-on" model for the introductory undergraduate management course. *Journal of Management Education*, *15*(2), 151-169

1. 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.*

1. Welcome
2. Short fishbowl demonstration if sufficient participants are present (10). If not, a verbal explanation will suffice
3. Review of how I used fishbowls with focus on student contribution
4. Identification of content that fishbowls can be used to exemplify, including brainstorming with participants
5. Application to Conference theme:

How does your session fit with the overall OBTC theme of *United in Service*?

Fishbowls are successful, in part, because students must unite in discussion to serve the larger community of their classroom colleagues, to be the vehicle through which others can learn. All students must be willing to participate in this learning environment, understanding the necessary dependencies that are created and utilizing those dependencies to serve the educational requirements of the community. This is an opportunity to demonstrate to students how others can learn from them.

1. 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 elsewhere.