



Teaching Conference for
Management Educators

OBTC 2016 at Walsh University

June 8th – 11th, 2016

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

1) Title, Abstract & Keywords

United We Win

Are you tired of hearing about problems in student groups? Do you anticipate a collective groan in your classes when students learn there is group work in the class? If your answer is “yes,” join us to learn a new approach to turn student groans into grins. This lively interactive session features a fun, in-class game that helps students begin learning a number of key team skills. It focuses particularly the critical understanding that working in teams means you all win or lose together – united.

Keywords: teamwork, interactive game, integrative, team skills

2) Format

- ☒ 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
- ☐ Either

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

- ☒ Undergraduate students
- ☐ Graduate students
- ☐ Either

3) Time Requested:

- ☐ 30 Minutes
- ☒ 60 Minutes (*Roundtables must select 60 minutes*)
- ☐ 90 Minutes

4) Planning Details:

We need a room with moveable table and chairs so that participants can gather around tables.

5) Teaching Implications:

Students often groan when they learn that a course involves working in teams. One major cause is prior experience of social loafing (Aggarwal & O'Brien, 2008; Pfaff & Huddleston, 2003), where they have had to do the work of another student to avoid a low grade on the assignment or received a lower grade because another student didn't

perform as expected. Of course there are a number of other reasons, including a lack of common goals and mutual support, poor communication practices, and concerns for psychological safety, and role clarity (Pang, Tong, & Wong, 2011; Ruiz Ulloa & Adams, 2004). In general, a lack of team skills (Buckenmyer, 2000; Figl, 2010) is the basis for most, if not all, of these problems.

Research has shown that teaching team skills improves team performance (Delise, Allen Gorman, Brooks, Rentsch, & Steele-Johnson, 2010; Prichard, Bizo, & Stratford, 2006), hence it behooves faculty to provide a way for students to learn these skills. Unfortunately most classes, especially those at the upper level, assume that students already possess these skills and jump right into the group assignments. With the prevalence of group work in classes today, it follows that students need to learn how to work in teams early in their coursework, in an introductory level class. Most principles of management and organizational behavior classes include modules on teamwork, so such classes are a good fit for team skills training.

Students often fail to appreciate that the focus needs to be on what the team can produce and not necessarily what they as individuals need to produce. One way to help students appreciate the value of teamwork and begin to learn team skills is through a fun, team-based, low-stakes activity in class where only true collaboration by all team members is the winning strategy.

This session is focused on just such an activity – a variant of the board game “Pandemic.” In the game, major diseases have broken out in various parts of the world. The team members adopt the different roles (e.g. a dispatcher, a medic, a scientist, a researcher and an operations expert in the original game). They need to communicate information and coordinate activities efficiently in order to avoid having the human race eradicated by one or more of the diseases.

Pandemic addresses almost all of the above mentioned areas that team research has shown to affect attitudes to teamwork as well as team performance. All team members must contribute for the team to win. Roles are clearly defined. Communication must be effective. Players must support one another through a variety of activities. The game is fun and can be debriefed to facilitate the learning of valuable team-skills to help students be more successful in their group assignments and in life.

6) Session Description and Plan:

Element	Minutes
Introduction of premise that students too often do not understand how to work in teams	5
Presentation of a few often used methods to solve the problem	5
The Pandemic game: introduction and play	30
Debrief Discuss suggestions from participants for possible modifications to improve learning and adapt it to other classes/environments	20

7) Application to Conference theme:

The game itself is a perfect fit for the conference theme. Its premise is to serve humankind by finding the solution to a pandemic disease by having players work together. If they are not united, then all will fail. Specifically, this proposed session answers the conference call for sessions in the area of “Creating a climate where students unite and serve each other to fulfill a common goal” in that it demonstrates an engaging, experiential approach to teaching students how to come together and work as a team to complete group projects.

8) Unique Contribution to OBTC:

This work is unique to OBTC; it has not been presented by us before at any conference and is not under review anywhere else.

References

- Aggarwal, P., & O'Brien, C. L. (2008). Social loafing on group projects: Structural antecedents and effect on student satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 30(3), 255-264. doi:10.1177/0273475308322283
- Buckenmyer, J. A. (2000). Using teams for class activities: Making course/classroom teams work. *Journal of Education for Business*, 76(2), 98-107.
- Delise, L. A., Allen Gorman, C., Brooks, A. M., Rentsch, J. R., & Steele-Johnson, D. (2010). The effects of team training on team outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 22(4), 53-80.
- Figl, K. (2010). A systematic review of developing team competencies in information systems education. *Journal of Information Systems Education*, 21(3), 323-338.
- Pang, E., Tong, C., & Wong, A. (2011). Key determinants of student satisfaction when undertaking group work. *American Journal of Business Education*, 4(10), 93-104.
- Pfaff, E., & Huddleston, P. (2003). Does it matter if I hate teamwork? What impacts student attitudes toward teamwork. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 25(1), 37-45.
- Prichard, J. S., Bizo, L. A., & Stratford, R. J. (2006). The educational impact of team-skills training: Preparing students to work in groups. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 76(1), 119-140. doi:10.1348/000709904X24564
- Ruiz Ulloa, B. C., & Adams, S. G. (2004). Attitude toward teamwork and effective teaming. *Team Performance Management: An International Journal*, 10(7/8), 145-151.