



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

TITLE

Using tests in a positive manner to encourage student learning

ABSTRACT

Testing is often seen a necessary, but negative way to impact on student learning. The student takes a test, but opportunities for further learning are often ignored or simply skipped because the instructor doesn't return the tests for a week, by which time the student isn't interested in anything except the final grade. We think that there are more positive ways that test can encourage student learning. Our panel will present three alternative approaches in which testing becomes a significant part of the learning experience. We will then invite the audience to share their ideas and comment on the presentations.

KEYWORDS

Testing, learning, alternative approaches

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:

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

Our requested session is 45-60 minutes. Each author would tell his/her story (10 minutes each), then we would ask the audience to share their examples of testing for positive learning (15-30 minutes). We would also take comments and questions from the audience as an integral element of the session. If given a 30-minute session, we would each tell our stories (6-7 minutes each) with a short discussion with the audience (9-12 minutes).

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.

Testing of knowledge and skills is viewed by many students, as a necessary, but unfortunate, aspect of the college experience. Despite the literature that provides for the support for the “testing effect” in learning retention (cf., Rowland, 2014, for a recent meta-analysis), using testing as an effective learning tool in itself is often impaired by a number of negative factors, ranging from student anxiety (cf., Chapell, Blanding, Silverstein, Takahashi, Newman, Gubi, and McCann, 2005), to poor or inappropriate student study skills (cf., Culler & Holahan, 1980; Hartwig & Dunlosky, 2012; Karpicke, Butler, Roediger, 2009; Scouller, 1998), to instructor-related issues, such as test messages that may impact student motivation (von der Embse, Schultz, and Draughn, 2015).

This session seeks to explore innovative ways in which instructors can effectively use tests as a learning tool, yet reduce some of the impact of negative exam factors, such as anxiety issues, or support the development of positive factors, such as good study skills and critical reflection, especially with the common multiple choice format. Each of the hosts of this session has used a unique approach to helping students learn the course material more effectively while making significant variations of the multiple choice question testing format.

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.

This panel will present three approaches to testing and grading that can positively impact on student learning.

The first session host's approach to testing was inspired by a recent OBST-L discussion started by Scott Jeffrey about ways to ensure that students were doing the required reading of course materials (Scott, 2015). Like Scott, and the other participants on the listserv discussion, the first host faced several issues with a sophomore OB course, starting with the need to ensure that the students were reading the material before the class session. However, the class met three times per week for 50 minutes each session, so even the administering of a 10 minute in-class quiz was likely to result in the loss of almost one-half of a class session after distributing and collecting quizzes was taken into account.

Thus, the first host decided to give short multiple quizzes before discussing in class each chapter in the text. The quiz is on-line on the campus learning management system (Canvas). An option in Canvas allows a student to get feedback on their overall score, but not which questions were correct or incorrect. Another option allows the student to retake the quiz as many times as desired. So if the student does not get a 100%, they can try it again. By picking the questions carefully, the author signals students what he thinks is important. Likewise, the students were given the option to work together on the quizzes if they so chose, thus ameliorating issues regarding online cheating.

By administering the quiz before the start of the class, the instructor was then able to dedicate the first 10 minutes or so in class discussing the quiz questions and answers. Finally, for exams in the course, part of the exam is questions taken from the quizzes (and the final exam is cumulative). Student learning is enhanced because students are willing to work hard to get the right answers (they get a small amount of credit) on both the quizzes and exams. Learning is also enhanced because students often took quizzes multiple times to get the desired score (thus, in essence, practicing drilling and lowering overall quiz anxiety) and by being exposed to the concepts multiple times over the course of the semester (Fulkerson & Martin, 1981; Leeming, 2002).

The second session host has a course for which the Team Based Learning Model (see www.teambasedlearning.org) developed by Larry Michaelsen (Michaelsen, et al, 2003) was chosen. Team Based Learning (TBL) is a widely used model across about 200 disciplines and in over 100 countries. Five medical schools use TBL exclusively (Michaelsen, 2015). TBL involves giving “Readiness Assurance Tests” (RAT) before the instructor starts a chapter. It is a multiple choice test taken by individuals during class. When everyone has finished the test, teams of students retake the test. Scores from both are counted toward the final grade. Student learning occurs in the discussion by the group. Students who misunderstood a question now have an opportunity to learn from their peers. While this takes considerable class time for the RATs, the rest of the class is given over to application exercises rather than lectures on the material (except those items which many people missed on the quizzes). Positive learning for each student is primarily team based.

The third session host has devised a student-centered, oral, comprehensive final exam for use in the undergraduate strategy capstone course. In this two-hour session students ask the questions and the faculty member answers them. The faculty member does not ask any questions. To begin, each student compiles a list of 50 questions regarding course content. These become the basis for the meeting. In brief exit interviews, students report that the experience allows them to “own” the course, and that it replaces cramming with reflection. The course becomes more deeply relevant as class material is revisited in light of student concerns. They find contradictions between concepts, they relate concepts to cases and they use concepts to reflect on a semester long simulation exercise. They also relate individual interests and concerns to articles in the wider business press. Often, they pick up on issues that were briefly glossed over in class. They report that they “do just as much work” as preparing for a traditional exam. However, the stress level is considerably lessened, as they learn to control the content of the exam with their questions. Learning becomes a “two-way” street. Both professor and students learn of each other’s interests, experiences, enthusiasms, values and confusions as they dialogue about course material. As transparency between professor and student increases, teachable moments proliferate, and professors are able to “teach to where students really live”. Grading is based on student behavior in the session and on the question list generated by the student.

The hosts will keep the session format interactive, with ample opportunity for participants to ask questions and to hopefully share with each other their own innovative approaches to student testing.

Works Cited

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- Michaelson, L., personal correspondence, Dec 25, 2015.
- Rowland, C. A. (2014). "The effect of testing versus restudy on retention: A meta-analytic review of the testing effect." *Psychological Bulletin*, 140(6): 1432-1463.
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Von der Embse, N. P., Schultz, B. K., and Draughn, J. D. (2015). Readyng students to test: The influence of fear and efficacy appeals on anxiety and test performance. *School Psychology International*, 36(6): 620-637.

7) Application to Conference theme:

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

The proposal is about innovative ideas for making testing a positive learning experience

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?

While Team-Based Learning has been presented at OBTC and elsewhere, it has not been presented in this format and in this overall context (an innovative testing methodology) before, and the remainder of the work in this proposal has not been presented before.

This proposal is not under current review somewhere else.