OBTC

Teaching Conference for Management Educators

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.

Title: The Science, Not the Art: A Social Psychological Approach to Strengthening Management Student Speaking

Abstract: Communication and impression management are critical in the business environment, yet management students' opportunity to practice business public speaking is lacking. Even if an opportunity is offered to develop these skills, few students learn the science behind business public speaking, encouraging the idea that it is an art form that is innate or can be improved merely through practice. By offering the social psychological science of presenting oneself to others—whether it be at a meeting with five colleagues, in a board room with twenty, or at a large event with hundreds—students can learn how to best engage others.

Keywords: social psychology, business communication, impression management, public speaking

2) Format
    ___ **Activity or exercise**
    _X_ **Roundtable discussion (60 minute only)**
    ___ **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?

No equipment is required for this roundtable discussion. I will bring copies of relevant handouts.

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.

We know that the most effective medium of communication in business is face-to-face (vs. phone, e-mail, text message, etc.), thus it is imperative to their career success that Management students learn to speak effectively in front of others and best manage the impression others have of them. After all, the average employee is said to spend approximately 40% of their time at work engaged in activities related to persuading, influencing, and convincing others to share their attention, time, energy, knowledge, skills, and abilities (Pink, 2012). But despite the importance of this skill, most Management educators approach the development of the skillset through traditional means by incorporating a single presentation—individual or team—into their syllabus. In the workplace, students will spend much of their time communicating and managing the impressions others have of them, yet many educators—including myself—spend comparatively little time on this skill development.

The social psychological approach—the science, not the art—argues against the often projected idea that public speaking skills are an art that one is "born with" or just "gets good at" through practice. Learning the scientific approach increases student self-efficacy and decreases student fear of public speaking, thus improving the impression they portray to others. A few examples from this scientific approach include the spotlight effect

(Gilovich, Medvec, & Savitsky, 2000), Brooks (2014) work on reappraising anxiety and fear as excitement, the role of uptalk (Linneman, 2012), the role of word choice in communication (Bryan, Adams, & Monin, 2013), contextual moderators (Grant & Hofmann, 2011), and the science behind the purpose and appropriate use of eye contact (Lamer, Reeves, & Weisbuch, 2015). This research does not stem from traditional business communication literature, but instead comes from other relevant literatures including social psychology, neuroscience, and specific organizational behavior topics (e.g. negotiation).

This roundtable is relevant for any educator of Management. My goal is to form a community atmosphere among participants so that we, together, can learn how to best educate our students in the science of this very social activity. While the topic does focus on impression management skill development and public speaking, this is not a session for designing an entire course on Business Communication. Instead, this roundtable offers Management educators a new approach to integrating the teaching of business public speaking with assignments and activities into a variety of Management courses.

Specifically, participants in this roundtable discussion will
1. Learn the social psychological approach—the science, not the art—of teaching business communication, impression management, and public speaking to Management students.
2. Recognize and discuss the importance of developing this skillset in students.
3. Be exposed to a plethora of relevant research from numerous areas of study (e.g. organizational behavior, social psychology, neuroscience) related to the scientific side of this skill development.
4. Address the challenges (e.g. time constraints, class size) of including developmental exercises aimed at the improvement of this skillset.
5. Develop specific practice activities to engage Management students in the development of this skillset throughout a course term (as opposed to a single presentation assignment).

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.

- (5 minutes) Introduction and explanation of the issue.
- (10 minutes) Open discussion about participants' current inclusion of business communication, impression management skill development, and public speaking in the classroom.
- (10 minutes) Explanation of "the science, not the art" of business communication, impression management skill development, and public speaking. For over a year, I have been conducting extensive research in these topics both within and outside of Management literature, paying particular attention to the social psychological and neuroscience arguments and findings. With handouts, I will share my research with participants and answer any questions from the group.
- (20 minutes) Open discussion about how we as professors can adjust our course curriculum to better accommodate effective business communication, impression management, and public speaking skill development, all based on the findings from the research previously presented.
- (10 minutes) Participants will be asked to partner with someone at the table who teaches a similar class that they teach and together develop at least one relevant, specific activity that incorporates this research. Partners will then share their activity with the group.
- (5 minutes) Closing remarks.

7) Application to Conference theme:

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

Our focus as professors goes beyond conveying technical knowledge to our students; we are called to be partners to our students in their educational journey to reach their highest potential as a contributing professional. Adopting the scientific approach to communication, impression management, and public speaking encourages both professors and students to "think beyond" the textbook as they broaden their understanding of the student learning experience, a major theme of the 2016 conference. Developing communication and self-management skills requires not only direction from professors but also peer feedback among students, thus additionally creating a climate where students unite to serve each other to fulfill a common goal, another theme of this year's conference.

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?

A very early version of this idea was presented at the 2015 Lilly Conference on College Teaching. The reaction to the ideas was overwhelmingly positive, and many attendees wanted to discuss this idea further. Since then, I have developed the argument into a much larger, more mature project. While I plan to share my research during this roundtable, the majority of the time will be spent cultivating discussion around this topic. From past experience, I am confident that this issue will spark much discussion, brainstorming, and innovation, and it will ultimately encourage participants to think differently about how they incorporate student public speaking opportunities into their course curriculum.

Submission References:

- Brooks, A.W. (2014). Get excited: Reappraising pre-performance anxiety as excitement. *Journal of Experimental Psychology, 143(3)*, 1144-1158.
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- Grant, A.M. & Hofmann, D.A. (2011). Outsourcing inspiration: The performance effects of ideological meessages from leaders and beneficiaries. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 116,* 173-187.
- Lamer, S.A., Reeves, S.L., & Weisbuch, M. (2015). The nonverbal environment of self-esteem: Interactive effects of facial-expression and eye-gaze on perceivers' self-evaluations. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 56*, 130-138.
- Linneman, T.J. (2012). Gender in *Jeopardy!* Intonation variation on a television game show. *Gender & Society, 27*, 82-105.
- Pink, D.H. (2012). To sell is human: The surprising truth about moving others. Riverhead Books: New York.