



## **OBTC 2016 at Walsh University June 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

### **Submission Template**

#### **SUBMISSION GUIDANCE**

- \* Remove all identifying properties from this document \**
- \* All files must be saved in PDF format \**
- \*Please include ALL supplementary text at the end of this document\**
- \*Only one document should be submitted\**

## 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.*

Listening is Essential: An Exercise

In this session I will have attendees participate in an exercise I use in the Organizational Behavior classroom that illustrates the importance of active listening and non-verbal communication. Attendees will participate in the activity as both a speaker and listener, with discussion after each experience. I will then talk about difference ways to run the activity, leaving time for attendees to talk about their own experience teaching students about listening and non-verbal communication.

**Keywords:** active listening, listening, non-verbal communication, experiential exercise

### 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?*

This should be sufficient as long as there are places for people to sit or stand as they do the actual activity.

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.*

**Learning Objectives:**

Appreciate the importance of active listening and non-verbal communication

Learn an exercise for illustrating active listening skills

Identify important elements of non-verbal communication

Reflect on impact of listening and non-verbal communication on successful communication

Listening has been recognized as an important skill in businesses. In a recent paper by Brink & Costigan (2015) a review of the existing literature suggested that listening was

the most crucial oral communication skill, more important than presenting and conversing. Despite this, Brink & Costigan (2015) found that when examining Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business accredited business programs in their sample listening goals were actually the least used of the three types, with just 11% of programs having even one listening goal. Thus while listening skills are crucial they are severely under focused on in management program goals and thus likely to also not receive enough attention in the management classroom.

This presentation looks to offer attendees an experiential exercise they can use in the management or organizational behavior classroom to help students appreciate the importance of listening, as well as how non-verbal communication plays an important role. In two interaction between a speaker and a listener students learn the value that listening, specifically active listening, and non-verbal communication have on successful communication. In time 1 the listener is instructed to engage in no non-verbal behaviors (as best as possible) and to avoid any verbal statements or questions to the student who is the speaker, who is asked to describe a memory with restrictions placed on the words they can use to describe it. At time 2 the listener is instructed to engage in active listening and to feel free to use non-verbal behaviors toward the speaker who describes a different memory but has similar word restrictions as time 1. The interactions go much better in time 2, and students see how much listening and non-verbal communication enriches and improves communication and understanding.

I have used this exercise in the Introductory Organizational Behavior classroom and will speak to how it could be modified to fit other class settings, too. The exercise is used as an introductory exercise to the unit on listening and non-verbal communication. It helps the student to see the importance of these parts of communication.

## References

Brink, K. E. & Costigan, R. D. (2015). Oral communication skills: Are the priorities of the workplace and AACSB accredited business programs aligned? *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 14(2), 205–221.

## 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.*

## 10-15 minutes- Active Listening and Nonverbal Communication Exercise

Attendees will be divided into 2 groups. One group will start as a speaker and one group as a listener. The speakers will get an information sheet on a topic they are supposed to tell the listener about with restrictions in the words and way they describe it. The listeners will get a sheet that explains to them behaviors they should do as the listener. The sheets for time 1 and time 2 for both roles are found in the appendix. Essentially the set up is that at both times the speaker has to withhold crucial information on the topics unless they are asked by the listener.

In time 1 the listener is supposed to avoid asking any questions and try to avoid engaging in non-verbal communication such as nodding ones heads or making direct eye contact. After a 2 minute interaction the group as a whole has a discussion about how the interaction went. This includes reactions of both the speaker and listener. This is often a frustrating interaction for both roles.

For time 2 the roles switch. And while the speaker has similar restrictions the listener is instructed to engage in active listening and engage in non-verbal communication. After a 2 minute interaction the group as a whole has a discussion about how the interaction went and contrast it with the time 1 interaction. This tends to illustrate to students the importance of listening and non-verbal communication for successful communication.

#### **8-10 minutes- Discussion of Exercise and Ways it Could be Modified**

I will do a brief PowerPoint presentation discussing where the exercise is situated in my Organizational Behavior class and various different ways the exercise could be modified based on class needs.

#### **5- remaining time minutes- Audience Questions**

I will open up the session for questions about the exercise as well as discussion of other effective exercises attendees have used to teach students about active listening and non-verbal communication.

### **7) Application to Conference theme:**

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

An important part of service to any group or individual is understanding what help they need. Listening is crucial to such an understanding. Too often people hear what they want to hear or what they think someone wants without truly listening to what the person is saying. Listening is especially important when interacting with people from diverse backgrounds, as people can have very different expectations, non-

verbal behaviors, and ways of communicating information. Skill in active listening and an understanding of non-verbal communication is crucial for successful interactions among diverse people.

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?*

I have not presented this work elsewhere at an academic conference, I have only used the activity in my Organizational Behavior undergraduate classroom.

## Appendix 1: Information Sheets for All Roles

### Listening Exercise Time 1

Your Role: **Speaker**

Your instructions:

To your partner, who is the Listener, tell an approximately 2 minute long story of your favorite vacation that you have taken in the past, telling it in a way that conforms to the following rules:

1. Do not directly mention it was a vacation or use the actual word “vacation.”
2. Do not mention the exact name of the city/place the vacation took place.
3. If the listener asks you directly about the information in points 1 and 2 you ARE allowed to mention it at that point but you cannot bring it up on your own.

Now take a few minutes to think about your favorite vacation and what you plan to say during the 2 minutes.

## Listening Exercise Time 1

Your Role: **Listener**

Your instructions:

To your partner, who is the Speaker, it is your job to listen to the 2 minute long story they will be telling, making sure that how you listen conforms to the following rules:

1. Do not ask any questions, stay silent while you listen.
2. To the best of your ability avoid smiling or showing emotional/physical reactions to the story.
3. If the speaker asks you a question give as short and noncommittal a response as you can.

Now take a few minutes to think about how you will behave and engage in listening during the 2 minutes of listening.



## Listening Exercise Time 2

Your Role: **Speaker**

Your instructions:

To your partner, who is the Listener, tell an approximately 2 minute long story of your favorite childhood memory, telling it in a way that conforms to the following rules:

1. Do not mention that you were a child or your age during the story.
2. Do not mention the year the event took place.
3. If the listener asks you directly about the information in points 1 and 2 you ARE allowed to mention it at that point but you cannot bring it up on your own.

Now take a few minutes to think about your favorite childhood memory and what you plan to say during the 2 minutes.

## Listening Exercise Time 2

Your Role: **Listener**

Your instructions:

To your partner, who is the Speaker, it is your job to listen to the 2 minute long story they will be telling, making sure that how you listen conforms to the following rules:

1. Paraphrase back to the speaker what they say to help verify their message.
2. Ask questions based on what is said to gain clarification.
3. Use body language, gestures, facial expressions and head movement to express support, sympathy and/agreement with the speaker as appropriate.

Now take a few minutes to think about how you will behave and engage in listening during the 2 minutes of listening.