



**OBTC 2016 at Walsh University**

**June 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**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.*

**Working Title:** “Uniting in Service” through an Ethic of Care in Teaching and Learning

### **Abstract:**

Though an ethic of care is generally overlooked in mainstream management theory and corporate responsibility textbooks (Hawk, 2011), it offers a valuable lens in rethinking management education. An ethic of care (Noddings, 2013) emphasizes the relational co-construction of knowledge in the classroom. We explore the value of enacting an ethic of care, and in particular learning team dialogues as a pedagogical tool, to promote learning and igniting passion in learners via caring for each other and caring about larger societal and environmental issues. This process is crucial to the development of future leaders capable of service in effecting positive change.

**Keywords:** Ethic of Care; Positive Organizational Scholarship; Transformative Learning

## 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?*

If possible, a flipchart and post it notes would be helpful for the interactive group exercises.

**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.*

**Theoretical Foundations:**

There is a growing focus in the management literature on care in organizations and the potential of an ethic of care to inform theorizing in this domain (Hamington & Sander-Staudt, 2011). Care is essential for human flourishing. Caring practices in organizations have the potential to contribute to individual well-being not only within the organization but also to impact well-being in the wider society. Despite its importance, there has been limited attention in the field of management paid to care in organizational settings (Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012).

An ethic of care (Noddings, 1984/2013) emphasizes our relational nature and growth-enhancing aspects of positive relations. Gittell and Douglass (2012) discuss care as practice in the organizational context, taking the perspective of the feminist ethics of

care literature (Gilligan, 1982; Held, 2006; Noddings, 2002, 2013; Tronto, 1993) to define caring:

Caring as a practice is about the quality of relations. Caring relations are characterized by trust and connectedness, a shared interest in mutual well-being, and identification with another's reality (Fine, 2007; Noddings, 2002). Caring relations are mutual, attentive, responsive to others' needs, and they embody a "sense of responsibility for the well-being of others, a concern for specific human relations, rather than abstract or rarefied principles" (Fine, 2007: 54). (Gittell & Douglass, 2012, p. 710)

Hamington (2011), in his conceptual application of an ethic of care to the organizational context, points out that care shifts considerations to "context, relationships, and ... acknowledges our interconnectedness and interdependence" (p. 246).

In the ethic of care literature, Noddings (1984/2013) makes a distinction between caring-for and caring-about. Noddings uses the term "*caring-for*" to describe "an encounter or a set of encounters characterized by direct attention and response. It requires the establishment of a caring relation, person-to-person contact of some sort" (Noddings, 2013, p. xiv). Because it is not possible to take direct concrete action in caring-for all with needs we perceive, there is an important second dimension of caring that she calls 'caring-about' (Noddings, 2002; 2013). "*Caring-about*" expresses some concern but does not guarantee a response to one who needs care (Noddings, 2013). Caring practice that embodies caring-about, sets up the conditions that enable others to administer the direct caring-for in that context.

Despite this growing attention to an ethic of care in management theory and practice, more work remains to be done, in particular with regard to the implications for management education. Hawk (2011) points out that areas such as stakeholder theory, knowledge management, accounting, and leadership are relevant to the relationality inherent in an ethic of care, and would benefit from education centered on this ethic. An ethic of care takes the view that knowledge is only produced through interactions with others (Burton & Dunn, 1996) and aims to "help individuals to survive, develop, and function in society so that they can care for themselves and others...and pursue some conception of the good life" (Engster, 2007, p. 28). Applying an ethic of care has been described as enabling a new approach to management education as a "progressive educative practice" that supports the creation of social, ecological and economic value (Kurucz, Colbert & Marcus (2014).

### **Contribution to Management Pedagogy/Andragogy:**

Our contribution to management pedagogy will be to build on and help to advance our current understanding of how an ethic of care impacts teaching and learning. Rather than the typical focus on transfer of knowledge from “expert” to student, an ethic of care emphasizes creation of possibilities for the co-construction of knowledge by the teacher and learner together (Kurucz et al., 2014). Burton and Dunn (2005) point out that the caring perspective deviates from the traditional focus on application of abstract principles and favors a contextual approach emphasizing concrete relationships in management decision making. Therefore, this approach foregrounds dialogical and reflective processes in pedagogical approach, with the purpose of engaging “the whole person, integrating physical, emotional, spiritual, and cognitive learning” via the structuring of conversational learning in small groups and engagement of critical and integrative thinking skills in this process (Kurucz et al., 2014, p. 453). This approach prioritizes practical wisdom or ‘phronetic’ knowledge over technical and scientific knowledge and relies on the whole person to achieve the attentiveness, responsiveness, and respect required of an ethic of care (Noddings, 1984, Slote, 2007, Engster, 2007). Therefore, communicative competencies such as speaking, questioning, listening and reasoning are critical in an approach to management education that embodies an ethic of care (Hawk, 2011; Kurucz et al., 2014).

One pedagogical tool that can help to embody an ethic of care in management education is the use of learning team dialogues (Kurucz et al., 2014). These structured dialogues enable students to engage the competencies described above in building knowledge relationally with each other and with the instructor. When approached from the ethic of care perspective, these conversational learning dialogues may enable both “caring for” (in terms of students helping each other to develop skills) and “caring about” (in terms of broadening students’ perspectives to include valuing the contribution of business to societal and environmental flourishing).

### **Session Learning Objectives:**

**Our session will focus on the following three learning objectives:**

- To advance our understanding of how an ethic of care is relevant to management education
- To explore how caring for and caring about can have an impact on teaching and learning
- To develop ideas for how learning team dialogues can be used to embody an ethic of care in teaching and learning

**Relevance to Management Topics:**

An ethic of care is an approach to teaching and learning generally, and is therefore relevant to virtually any topic in management education. The emphasis on relational learning and the co-construction of knowledge through dialogue is applicable to many management courses, in particular those courses that involve discussions around Sustainability, Corporate Social Responsibility, Leadership, Organization Development, and Positive Organizational Scholarship. Learning team dialogues are particularly powerful with these topics as they enable students to connect with their own passion and help to raise consciousness about the importance of their own actions in the world. Caring about these topics is critical for learning and ultimately for their ability to act as leaders for positive change in the world, whether in their family, organization, community or broader society. It may also play a role in transformational learning both in the classroom and in enacting these competencies and decision making processes within organizations (Kurucz et al., 2014). Role modeling caring in teaching and learning methods is essential for setting up conditions where students can surface their own caring and start to connect with the meaning in these topics, potentially increasing their motivation to engage with the ideas in the course

**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.*

<b>Session Structure</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Time</b>
Introduction	Brief Overview of Theoretical Foundations Contribution of Session Learning Objectives of Session	5 min
Interactivity Activity 1: <i>Caring For in Teaching</i>	<i>Set up:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ideas about how an ethic of care could manifest in teaching</li></ul> <i>Learning Team Dialogue:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provocation and structured dialogue between participants</li></ul>	15 min
Reflection on Activity 1	<i>Generative Dialogue and Debrief:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Insights from experience of learning team dialogue</li><li>Connections between caring for and service to others in the classroom</li></ul>	10 min
Interactive Activity 2: <i>Caring About in Learning</i>	<i>Set up:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ideas about how an ethic of care could manifest in learning</li></ul> <i>Learning Team Dialogue:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provocation and structured dialogue between participants</li></ul>	15 min
Reflection on Activity 2	<i>Generative Dialogue and Debrief:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Insights from experience of learning team dialogue</li><li>Connections between caring about and service to others outside classroom i.e. broader social/environmental impact</li></ul>	10 min
Session Wrap	<i>Debrief:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Key Insights from session</li><li>Recap learning objectives and how met</li><li>Areas worth exploring further</li></ul>	5 min

**7) Application to Conference theme:**

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

An ethic of care in teaching is a reflection of service to others (i.e. 'caring for') by creating a caring climate in the classroom where students care for each other and discover meaning in the topic being discussed. An ethic of care in learning helps develop leadership capacity of students to serve others, in effect 'caring about' broader social and environmental issues.

**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?*

Not applicable – the proposal is not under review and we have not presented this elsewhere.



## 9) References

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