OBTC

Teaching Conference for Management Educators

OBTC 2017 at Providence College
June 14th – 17th, 2017

Submission Template

SUBMISSION GUIDANCE

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.

CRAFTING THE AESTHETIC WORKSPACE: AN EXPERIENTIAL ARTS-BASED EXERCISE

Join us as we use a poetry gallery exercise to discuss the Aesthetic-Workspace—a place where teachers and students can share artistic experience, trigger the "artist inside' and discover energies that can lead to new insight into themselves, each other and to the course material itself.

Keywords: arts, pedagogy, poetry, experiential learning

2) 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.

CRAFTING THE AESTHETIC WORKSPACE: AN EXPERIENTIAL ARTS-BASED EXERCISE

This workshop will provide participants with a chance to experience and reflect upon the aesthetic workspace (DeNora, 1995, 2000; Sutherland, 2012). The concept of Aesthtic Workspace is built on an integration of arts-based pedagogy and Cultural Sociology. Arts-based practitioners are increasingly relying on insights from cultural sociologists in developing approaches to teaching that enhance non-rational, pre-verbal competencies (e.g. reflexivity, embodied awareness, tapping into tacit knowing, intuitive knowing and imagination).

The workshop will engage participants in an experiential exercise, the Poetry Gallery, designed to sensitize them to the dynamic qualities of the Aesthetic Workspace. We will use the Gallery experience as a basis for discussing the pros and cons of the Aesthetic Workspace as it shows up in the literature.

From Cultural Workspace to Aesthetic Workspace: the history of an idea

Cultural Sociology has long been concerned with the connection between aesthetic experience and societal issues. Tia DeNora and her associates have extended this work through fine-grained studies of how identities are shaped through vital interactions between individuals and art objects/ events. Central to this study is an interest in the kinds of spaces in which art experience occurs. These have been referred to as cultural workspaces (DeNora, 2000, 1995)

In her work on the sociology of music, DNora makes the point that music doesn't stop with the performance, the recording, the distribution and the consumption of CD's, or even in the listening to the CD.

The "career" of an artwork, a particular symphony or pop tune, for example, is by no means "over" once concerts are given or LP's, CD's and singles are distributed to outlets, played on radio stations and purchased for home consumption. Nor after the critics have pronounced…(DeNora, 2000)

The "music" goes on inside the listener(s) head even after it falls silent. She makes the point that this "replaying" of music, as it goes on in us, has extra-musical effects. It makes us want to do things.

One of the most striking (and usually underplayed) points is that we do things to music and do things with music: …eat, fall asleep, dance, daydream, exercise, celebrate, commemorate, even procreate, to music. Things get done to music, moreover, as it plays out both in real time, and as it is played and replayed in memory and imagination. (Denora, 2000)

As music, and by extension all art that is vitally engaged, "gets into our heads" (and stays there long after it is heard), it begins to shape who we are, and how we imaginatively orient ourselves to the world. In DeNora's words, it is an "ordering device at the personal level…a means for creating, enhancing, sustaining, changing subjective, cognitive, bodily and self-conceptual states."

Therefore, the music doesn't stop when it is "over". Nor does the painting, the poem or the play. Art experienced as a process, shapes our identities, makes us want to move, to do things, to interact with others and to elaborate and enact social forms. The dynamism of art, therefore, plays itself on individual and societal levels.

This movement of artwork from public artifact to private experience to social consequence does not happen automatically. Such movement requires an environment where the art-form can be experienced free from ambient noise of the culture. Such environments are commonplace such

as the symphony hall, the art gallery or the playhouse. However, many such environments pass unnoticed—a teenager listening to pop songs in his or her room, for example (Lincoln, 2005). Cultural sociologists have sensitized us to the importance of these micro-environments in which the art can be experienced and where it can have its transformational effects.

It is in these spaces that the "cultural work" described above take place—that identities are transformed and individuals are shaped as agents capable of acting in the world in a specific way (DeNora, 1995; Sutherland, 2012). Cultural sociologists have coined the term, *cultural workspace* to denote this space.

It is perhaps this dynamism that has captured the attention of management scholars looking for ever-more engaging ways to develop non-rational capacities their students: intuition (Maranville, 2011), insight into organizational dynamics (Irgens, 2014), creativity and empathy (Katz-Buonincontro, 2015), ethical sensitivity (Cranston & Kusanovich, 2013), pattern recognition (Sutherland, 2012), and envisioning (Maranville, 2011). They have adapted the cultural workspace idea into a form that is specifically targeted to their goals in management education. They have termed these environments as the *aesthetic workspace* (Sutherland, 2012)

This workshop creates such an aesthetic workspace for participants in the conference. Participants will engage in a Poetry Gallery exercise which is designed to elicit and intensify the experience of poetry. In over 100 workshops we have found the workshop to stimulate imagination and to galvanize attention to a variety of societal and management issues. Participants will browse the gallery, share their responses to a favorite poem and reflect on the Gallery as a poetic workspace. We ask that participants bring their experience to the table and to use it to help us all understand the idea of cultural work in terms of management.

REFERENCES

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Cranston, J. and Kusanovich K. (2013) The Drama in School Leadership: An Arts-Based Approach to Understanding the Ethical Dimensions of Decision Making for Educational Leaders. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education.* 8(1) 28-55.

DeNora, T. (2000) *Music in Everyday Life.* Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, UK.

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Irgens, E. (2014) Art, science and the challenge of management education. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 30, 86-94.

Katz-Buonincontro, J. (2015) Decorative Integration or Relevant Learning? A Literature Review of Studio Arts-Based Management Education with Recommendations for Teaching. *Journal of Management Education,* 39(1) 81-115.

Lincoln, S (2005) Feeling the noise: Teenagers, bedrooms and music. *Leisure Studies*, 24(4) 399-414.

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Sutherland, I. Arts-based methods in leadership development: Affording aesthetic workspaces, reflexivity and memories with momentum. *Management Learning* 44(1) 25-43.

3) 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.

If possible a 90 minute block of time would be best to allow a true experience of poetry to unfold.

We will design the setting beforehand. Approximately 70 poems will be displayed gallery-like with enlarged fonts on multi-colored paper. Musical accompaniment will be provided. Activities may include:

Browsing the Gallery—participants will spend approximately 15 minutes walking through the Gallery to the accompaniment of music.

Choosing a favorite poem: Participants will choose a poem that particularly spoke to them.

Sharing in Dyads—they will share the poem and their reasons for choosing it with one other participant.

Sharing in the group: Individuals will share poem in the group and receive brief feedback

Free-writing exercise

Sharing the results of the free-write.

A short lecture on the Aesthetic Workspace

Discussion and debriefing of the experience in terms of the Aesthetic Workspace.

Specific activities will depend on the number of participants who attend. A larger group—more than 15 or so—may require some of the steps to be shortened or left out. The final design will ultimately be determined by the time limit.

4) Application to Conference theme:

How does your session fit with the overall OBTC theme of *Navigating the Changing Currents*?

Overall, the Aesthetic Workspace is intended to give students access to "non-rational" skills and abilities that are required more and more in today's turbulent organizational environments—intuition, interpretation of organizational culture, imagination, deeper personal insight are just a few.

The Gallery has been used in more than 100 classroom and management training experiences throughout the US and Europe. Our research has revealed that students are able through the artistic experience to "customize" course material to their own experience.

The Gallery is a social technology for surfacing and intensifying poetic metaphor—a cognitive and communicative resource on emotional, social and intellectual levels.

The exercise has been valuable in spurring discussion of course material in the light of personal experiences of students and professors.
We have found participating in the Gallery to change the way we see our careers—we have come to see ourselves more as a coach than an authority, the student more as an apprentice or partner.

5) Unique Contribution to OBTC: We have done the Gallery a number of times at the OBTC. Usually we target discussion to the theme of the conference unless participants want to go in another direction. This presentation will be different because we are using it to cast light on the larger concept of Aesthetic Workspace—an idea that embraces many of the performing and visual arts.

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?