



## **OBTC 2017 at Providence College June 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

### **1) Title, Abstract & Keywords**

#### **'IDEAL' Meets 'Real': Applying Concepts in the Classroom Using Reality TV**

In this session, we present a team-based class activity which aims to deepen comprehension of management concepts through application to a reality TV case study. To set the stage, we introduce the IDEAL framework, an andragogical tool for developing students' written communication skills, and explain its role in the exercise, which participants will get to experience first-hand. To conclude, we'll address possible concerns about using reality TV in the classroom, and discuss how to modify the activity for different topics and audiences. Participants are encouraged to contribute comments, feedback, and ideas for developing and personalizing the activity for their classroom.

**Keywords:** andragogical tool, application skills, reality TV case study, writing skills

## 2) Teaching Implications:

As Management and Organization Studies faculty, we are always striving to bring fresh ideas into our courses to teach students about concepts and theories in engaging, effective, and memorable ways. For this session, we bring together two methods that we have incorporated with some success. The first is the use of “reality TV” programs, particularly those set in workplaces, to explore management topics. From our experiences in the classroom, using video case studies better captures the complexity and “messiness” of management and organizational issues, especially interpersonal ones, compared with the typical written business/management case studies, which often come across as overly simplistic and “flat”. The second resource is the IDEAL framework (*please see Supplemental Materials A*), an andragogical tool we created to reinforce and enrich comprehension of course concepts, while developing students’ writing skills.

For our proposed session, we suggest that workplace-based reality TV shows that demonstrate (mostly) real drama can successfully engage management students so that they can effectively apply management concepts and theories to the case depicted. In the team-based activity outlined, we will first introduce the IDEAL framework which allows students to demonstrate their understanding of course material and guides them in applying this knowledge to the chosen case.

There are a number of reality shows currently airing that depict life in the workplace. These television shows, while dramatized, can offer students windows into real workplaces with real problems. When used in the classroom, they can help the students understand that the concepts and frameworks discussed in class can be applied to many types of situations—both in and out of the classroom. The more practice students have in applying Organizational Behavior theories, the easier they will find the transition from school to the workplace.

Although different reality TV shows can be used for case studies, we have found the program “Kitchen Nightmares”, with British celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay, to be both engaging and effective. In each episode, Chef Ramsay visits and works with the owners of struggling businesses that are on the brink of failure to make major changes. The context of this show—small, family-owned restaurants—is one that most students can relate to as customers, and even as employees. While Chef Ramsay plays up the drama of his role for the cameras, his position as a respected consultant and change

agent is analogous to the function many “real-life” consultants play in facilitating organizational change.

While using “reality TV” can be a very effective and fun pedagogical tool, if not framed appropriately, it can quickly stray into the realm of “edu-tainment”. We will consider some important limitations of this teaching resource, including ways to help students understand the perspective and goals of such programs, which have not been designed primarily for educational purposes.

The session is designed to be highly interactive, giving participants the chance to learn about the IDEAL framework and experience the activity as students would in the classroom. Discussion and contributions in the form of questions, suggestions, feedback, and ideas are encouraged.

The **learning objectives** for the proposed session include:

- Introduce participants to the IDEAL framework, including its benefits, uses and modifications.
- Demonstrate a team-based in-class activity that supports the use of the IDEAL framework, by applying it to a reality TV case study.
- Facilitate a discussion around the use of the IDEAL framework and the associated activity, including ways it can be modified or improved to fit one’s classroom.

After attending the proposed session, **our hope is that participants will:**

- Gain an understanding of the IDEAL framework—what it is, its benefits to students and instructors, and how it can be used.
- Understand some of the benefits (and limitations) of using reality TV in the classroom as an educational resource.
- Engage in one possible in-class experiential activity that combines the IDEAL framework with a reality TV case study.
- Share ideas, experiences, questions, feedback, and insights regarding the topics addressed.
- Meet other participants and have fun! 😊

### 3) Session Description and Plan:

#### Tentative Timeline for Proposed Session:

Requested time for session: 60 minutes

Session Activity	Description & Participant Involvement	Time Required
<b>Introduction &amp; Overview</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome participants and introduce ourselves.</li> <li>Provide participants with a session overview and agenda.</li> </ul>	4-5 mins.
<b>The IDEAL Framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain the IDEAL Framework.</li> <li>Offer brief examples to show how to apply the framework.</li> </ul>	7-8 mins.
<b>In-Class Activity Objective &amp; Instructions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain the main objectives of and give instructions for the in-class activity.</li> <li>Assign session participants to teams (<i>depending on number of participants, 3-6 members per team</i>).</li> <li>Give background to set up the reality TV show case study.</li> </ul>	4-5 mins.
<b>Activity Round #1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watch the first segment of the reality TV show case study (<i>approx. 6 mins.</i>)</li> <li>Teamwork: teams will discuss the segment amongst themselves, using the IDEAL framework to identify and apply management concepts to the case study.</li> <li>Discussion: Ask for team volunteers to share their findings with the rest of the session participants.</li> </ul>	11-13 mins.
<b>Activity Additional Rounds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeat the above step for one or two more rounds, depending on time available, by showing more segments of the reality TV case study and getting teams to report their responses.</li> </ul>	10-12 mins.
<b>Activity Debriefing &amp; Discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the learning objectives of the activity, sharing our experiences of using the activity in our classes and student reactions to it.</li> <li>Address some benefits and limitations of using reality TV programs as an educational resource in the classroom.</li> <li>Solicit feedback, thoughts, ideas, and questions from participants regarding the activity, such as how one might develop and personalize it for their own classrooms/courses.</li> </ul>	10-12 mins.
<b>Session Wrap-Up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conclude session by highlighting key take-aways of the activity, including the IDEAL Framework and using reality TV programs to engage students.</li> </ul>	4-5 mins.
<b>TOTAL TIME REQUIRED: Approximately 50-60 mins.</b>		

#### 4) Application to Conference theme:

With respect to the OBTC theme of *Navigating the Changing Currents*, we believe the follow ideas suggested in the Call for Proposals are most relevant to our session:

- ***Developing effective classroom experiences for our students in the changing academic environment.***

We have found using workplace-based reality TV programs in the classroom to be very effective at illustrating the “human side” of organizations and depicting management concepts in a way that students can easily relate. The popularity and accessibility of such programs enables students to apply their knowledge more readily to a somewhat familiar context, which in turn provides a better learning experience.

- ***Providing unique ideas for utilizing the changing and evolving technology to enhance the learning experience.***

The use of video case studies allows students to understand many aspects of organizations, such as emotions, team dynamics, relationships and communication, which can otherwise come across as flat in traditional written case studies.

- ***Creating a forum for demonstrating effective tools to be utilized in navigating higher education***

Along with the reality TV programs as a potentially engaging educational resource, the IDEAL framework has been extremely valuable in developing students’ written communication and analytical skills, which are necessary for a successful career in management. This andragogical tool provides benefits not only for students, but also for educators who would like to improve such abilities in their students, but are daunted by how to design, communicate, and evaluate writing assignments. This session will introduce participants to the IDEAL framework, and provide them with an engaging and effective classroom activity to incorporate it into their courses.

#### 5) Unique Contribution to OBTC:

We have submitted a paper on the IDEAL framework to the journal Management Teaching Review, and it is currently in the process of being reviewed. As of January

2017, we have completed the first round of revisions and resubmitted the paper for further feedback and/or a decision on publication. A presentation of the IDEAL framework was also given within the TLC (Teaching and Learning Conference) at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting (2014).

One of the authors has also presented on different aspects of using reality TV programs in the classroom as a pedagogical resource, specifically at Eastern Academy of Management annual meeting (2011) and the Northeast Popular/American Culture Association annual conference (2016).

However, the proposed session makes a unique intellectual contribution by combining the two topics—reality TV programs and the IDEAL framework—in an experiential classroom activity. We share details about both, and how they can be brought together to create a fun and engaging exercise that reinforces understanding of course content by allowing students to apply their knowledge to a ‘real world’ case study.

## 6) Supplementary Materials

### A. Overview of the 'IDEAL' Framework

The IDEAL framework is a pedagogical tool that helps to structure written work while demonstrating knowledge and comprehension of course content. The five components that comprise IDEAL articulate expectations for student writing at progressive levels of understanding: **Identify, Define, Explain, Apply, Leverage**. The acronym "IDEAL" makes it easy for students to remember, while capturing the essence of the learning process.

The first letter in the framework stands for "Identify". To meet this criterion, students must demonstrate the ability to recognize discipline-specific concepts in situ (i.e. in a case study, in their own experience, etc.) and articulate the correct and relevant terminology in their writing. The framework's next element requires students to appropriately "Define and Describe" the noted course material, revealing knowledge at a basic level. This step also facilitates teaching the proper use of in-text citations and referencing. Next, to satisfy the criterion of "Explain through Examples", students must provide a general example to further explain the course material, thereby illustrating a deeper level of understanding. This demands students to exhibit comprehension beyond memorization of textbook definitions or course notes. Having established a conceptual understanding, the fourth step requires students to "Apply" this knowledge. This entails application of course material to a specific context, such as a selected case study or students' personal lived experience. Regardless of the contextual details, students are asked to show their ability to connect course ideas or theories to a given scenario, thus conveying a more sophisticated comprehension than the framework's earlier steps and the beginnings of analysis. Finally, "Leverage" represents the model's most advanced level of learning. Students must build upon their conceptual understanding to analyze and evaluate the contextual example, and potentially formulate solutions or recommendations.

**Table: The IDEAL Framework**

IDEAL Framework Component		Connection to Bloom's Taxonomy	Application to Written Assignments
I →	IDENTIFY THE CONCEPT(S)	Level 1: <i>Remembering</i>	Students must use correct terminology for course concepts, ideas, and theories.
D →	DEFINE/ DESCRIBE	Level 2: <i>Understanding</i>	Students must briefly define or describe the identified terminology.
E →	EXPLAIN THROUGH EXAMPLES	Level 2: <i>Understanding</i>	Students must further explain the course concepts by connecting the abstract definition with a general, concrete example.
A →	APPLY TO A CASE OR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE	Level 3: <i>Applying</i>	Students must demonstrate deeper comprehension through applying the concepts, ideas, and/or theories to a given case study or situation, or to their own context or experience.
L →	LEVERAGE KNOWLEDGE	Level 4: <i>Analyzing</i> AND/OR Level 5: <i>Evaluating</i> AND/OR Level 6: <i>Creating</i>	Students must build on their knowledge to analyze and assess the contextual example, and if necessary, to formulate recommendations and solutions.

Drawing upon the classic model of Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) and Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Anderson et. al., 2000; Pohl, 2000), the first four components of the IDEAL framework focus on the "lower levels" of learning, including *remembering*, *understanding*, and *applying*, while the last component (i.e. "L") captures "higher order" learning skills of *analyzing*, *evaluating*, and *creating* (Table 1). Thus, depending on student level, course material, and learning objectives, the model offers flexibility with respect to which levels of Bloom's Taxonomy the instructor wishes to emphasize.

There are a number of andragogical benefits of utilizing the IDEAL framework in any management course. Specifically, the IDEAL framework, along with the in-class exercise described next, has the following advantages in that it:

- Communicates expectations for writing assignments clearly and concisely;
- Facilitates engagement with course concepts and ideas through the discussion of writing samples;



- Provides a clear structure that demystifies the writing process and increases student writing efficacy;
- Encourages progressive levels of student understanding of content, such as identifying, describing, explaining, applying, and leveraging knowledge, as per Bloom's Taxonomy;
- Decouples the use of writing assignments from excessive hours of grading by providing a rubric for evaluating written work;
- Offers flexibility, as the framework and associated rubrics can be modified for different course levels and assignment objectives.

Since student confidence around writing builds with repetition and practice, the IDEAL framework is not intended as a "one-shot" lesson or activity. Rather, it is meant to be used as a guide which students can refer to throughout the semester. As well, incorporating IDEAL into the curriculum offers an opportunity to begin a wider conversation around the importance of writing, both academically and professionally.