

## Submission Template for the 2017 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:** Service-learning as a means to developing self-awareness, communication skills, and leadership capabilities.

**Abstract:** Come and discuss how volunteering in local organizations can build students' self-awareness, social responsibility, and communication skills while contributing meaningfully to their leadership development. This informal information period followed by small round table discussions will initiate idea creation for incorporating service-learning or volunteer work into your courses. Examples of service-learning and follow-up assignments will be provided, as will time for brainstorming how to develop these in your own classrooms.

**Keywords:** leadership development, social responsibility, service-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.*

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Participants will learn about the value of applied learning through service-learning.
2. Participants will learn how personal reflection of service-learning aids in student self-awareness and leadership development.
3. Participants will learn from specific examples of service-learning which will aid in creating their own ideas.
4. Participants will brainstorm their own ideas of implementing service-learning in their courses with the help of feedback from others in the session.

## **Management/Teaching Topics Relevant to My Session:**

**1. Leadership Development:** Examples of how to put students in leadership positions within volunteer opportunities will be provided. An explanation of how students increased their self-awareness regarding their own strengths and weaknesses through this volunteer work will also be provided.

**2. Listening and Communication Skills:** These volunteer opportunities as part of a course allow for the applied practice of communication skills including conflict management, diffusion of frustration, active listening, and the development of skills for communicating with those of different native languages, cultures, ages, or backgrounds (many kids in the afterschool programs were not native English speakers, were refugees from foreign countries, and were from a much lower income bracket than my college students' families so they were exposed to a much more global perspective).

**3. Social Responsibility and Service-Learning:** The main focus was to ignite within my students a passion for contributing meaningfully to their surrounding community with the skillsets they've been building during college. Additionally, students were taught about the mutual benefit of volunteering and social responsibility. They overwhelmingly described having "been changed" by these experiences, learning a lot about themselves, and learning a lot about other cultures which can hopefully lead to students' future social responsibility practices when in the workforce.

## **Theoretical Underpinnings and Existing Research on Service-Learning:**

Service-learning is "the integration of academic material, relevant service activities, and critical reflection in a reciprocal partnership that engages students, faculty, staff, and community members to achieve academic, civic, and personal [growth] learning objectives as well as to advance public purposes" (Bringle & Clayton, 2012, p.105). This definition is wordy but it does include most of the 'pieces' of the process that are important. The *emotional component* is one that is not included in the above quote. This is one that I can attest to anecdotally from reading my students reflection journal assignments and seeing their faces as they stop by my office to tell me a powerful story of something that happened at their service-learning (either difficult or very positive). This technique really does bring content to life for students and awakens them.

Increasing civic education (reciprocal learning between students and those they are working with during service-learning) in college-level curriculum has been promoted across numerous disciplines (The National Taskforce on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). Furthermore, Bringle, Reeb, Brown, and Ruiz (2016) state service-learning is useful for creating self-efficacy, learning about nonprofits and current social issues, as well as developing skills such as those related to communication, diversity, and consensus-building among many others. They also advocate for the expanded intentional focus on service-learning as a tool within higher education to help create citizens that contribute meaningfully to our society. Research also indicates service-learning increases management students' civic dispositions, critical thinking, and actual

learning of course content (e.g., Gallagher, 2011) as well as global awareness (Bhattacharya, & Scheraga, 2015).

### **References for Service-Learning:**

- Bhattacharya, M., & Scheraga, C. (2015). Introducing global cultural diversity awareness through service learning in human resource management education. *Business Education Innovation Journal*, 7, 51-58.
- Bringle, R.G., & Clayton, P.H. (2012). Civic education through service-learning: What, how, and why? In L. McIlrath, A. Lyons, & R. Munck (Eds.), *Higher education and civic engagement: Comparative perspectives* (pp. 101-124). New York, NY: Palgrave.
- Bringle, R.G., Reeb, R.N., Brown, M.A., & Ruiz, A.I. (2016). *Service Learning in Psychology: Enhancing undergraduate education for the public good*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Gallagher, S.H. (2011). Service Learning in Business Management Courses: Instructional, Institutional and Interdisciplinary Issues. *Journal of the Academy of Business Education*, 12, 101-117.
- The National Taskforce on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (2012). *A crucible moment: College learning and democracy's future*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

### **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.*

1. Informal overview of presenter's background as working in both the psychology and business domains. Explaining the value of service-learning for students: 5 minutes
2. Provide specific examples of organizations my students have done service learning with, offer actual assignments my students have created, and give quotes from some past students about what the experience meant to them: 10 minutes
3. Offer time to hear insights from others in the session who have used service-learning or volunteering in their classes: 5 minutes
4. Round table discussions where individuals talk through their ideas for incorporating service-learning in their own classrooms and receive feedback from others followed by a few minutes back as a large group to discuss interesting ideas that we can all learn from: 10 minutes

#### 4) Application to Conference theme:

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

I view the theme of *Navigating the Changing Currents* to be very well-aligned to my session topics of social responsibility and service-learning. The changing nature of work has gone from a past focus on obtaining specific knowledge to now being more skills-based, service-oriented, dynamic. The changing currents of the workplace also have shifted towards having a focus on caring about the world around us and using our skills to positively impact our community. I believe these things are more important in the workplace than ever before and our strategies in higher education must mirror these changes. It is clear that applied learning is more relevant to students and motivates them to develop their skillsets regarding communication, problem-solving, and leadership as this type of learning is more realistic than that done solely within a classroom's walls. The meaningful and applicable nature of service-learning requires students to constantly pull from what they are learning in their courses to succeed in the service-learning organization's environment. My students worked mostly with after school programs for school districts catering to mostly low income, underprivileged populations. They became mentors for kids ranging from elementary school age up through high school age, depending upon the program location and helped with recreational activities, homework time, craft time, and dissolving daily conflicts between the kids, etc. Playing the role of a mentor forces one to take a look at themselves, how they view the world, and what they want out of it. This is the essence of developing leadership and skillsets for ourselves as educators as well as for our students. Service-learning is a teaching strategy that seems to be more and more relevant towards the direction of how the world of work is changing.

#### 5) 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 presented a specific team project-based learning assignment I did with a local nonprofit at the International conference for the Teaching Society for Management Educators in Winchester, England during the summer of 2016. However, this session will be very different. The summer presentation at IOBTC was project-based and did not involve students working in the community itself, while this OBTC 2017 session is focused instead on the idea of consistent (weekly) volunteering for a course out in the community. This is very *applied* in nature and incorporates ideas, activities, and what I've learned from doing 2 semester long service-learning courses in which personal reflection and the consistency of volunteerism over four months allowed for students to develop their communication

and leadership skills as well as doing much more personal reflection which is essential to the development process. This proposal is not currently under review anywhere else and again, it will be different than anything I have presented before.