



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

Submission Template

SUBMISSION GUIDANCE

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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.

Just because we can doesn't mean we should: Ethics in experiential teaching and learning

In-class teaching practices embedded within experiential learning theories (ELT) can result in transformative learning for students. However, in-class activities also come with learning risks associated with emotional engagement. In this session, we share several critical incidents that challenge the “always awesome, all the time” narrative about experiential engagement, facilitating a robust conversation about the ethics of ELT-based teaching and learning. After discussion of the competencies required to facilitate in-class learning experiences, we engage session participants in conversation about power, relationships, deception, risk, and choice, and consider what our ethical obligations are to students we bring on the experiential learning road.

Keywords: ethics of experiential learning; trust & deception in learning; student choice; instructor power

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.

There is surprisingly little formal (or even informal) structured guidance and vetting in in-class experiential teaching and opportunities and practices that serve students' learning while taking into account their wellbeing. Professional societies, accreditation standards, and a survey of AACSB-accredited schools' ethics in teaching policies and statements indicate generalized tenets of good practice when using experiential learning, but nothing that could be construed as real guidance for affectively-charged, in-class experiences where students may not understand the implications of an activity, be comfortable with self-disclosing, or be able to deal with unexpected or surfaced emotions that simulations are designed to evoke (Lund Dean & Forray, 2016). Our initial research into exploring what guidance is out there has led us to define some macro concepts important to understanding what matters when taking students through an experiential

exercise, including power, relationships, deception, risk, and choice. Sometimes, too, a policy statement prescribing an ethical behavior directly undermines our goals for learning activities. For example, the University of Nebraska's Office of Graduate Studies offers ethical principles relating to teaching. Among them are "respect autonomy" (allow students to make independent decisions and be in charge of their own learning) and an exhortation to be honest. But in required courses, and required in-class activities, students are arguably not able to opt-out or make an independent decision whether to participate. And, sometimes our course activities require some level of ambiguity or even deception (e.g., Taras & Steel, 2007; Bolman & Deal, 1979) to accomplish learning objectives. Thus, blanket policies may be unhelpful in considering ethical aspects of in-class experiences we want our students to have.

We have been curious as to why, too, research respondents and designs are subjected to such rigorous evaluation and respondent opt-out choice remains a required element of accepted research, while no such standards or choicefulness is embedded in teaching practices that could be very challenging for students. Professional ethics with respect to research and our obligations to respondents are well known and permeate research practice; in our research to find similar ethical guidelines for teaching practice we have found almost nothing specific that guides in-class teaching practice that involves the affective engagement and risks of experiential learning.

Extant research about the ethics of experiential learning almost exclusively focus on field-based or practicum learning, rather than in-class simulations, activities, or student sharing requirements (e.g., Meisel, 2008). And, we have not been able to find discussion that challenges the presumed competence (e.g., as in Kahneman's, (2011) illusion of competence) of instructors who utilize experiential learning practices—how do we gain expertise in facilitating and more importantly debriefing in-class experiences that help ensure learning? How do we vet out these activities and our handling of them to minimize potential disengagement of students (e.g., Lund Dean & Jolly, 2012)? We would like to deepen this conversation with OBTC participants who frequently utilize in-class activities that are recognized as potentially contributive to learning but for which students must affectively engage for that learning to occur.

Session learning objectives:

1. Exploration of ethical boundaries and examples experienced in teaching practice
 - a. Facilitator sharing of catalyst examples from their own in-class teaching practice about where ethical considerations are at play;
 - b. Facilitator sharing of current principles and statements of best practices as a jumping off point for conversation. Examples include ethical practice statements from the National Society for Experiential Education (<http://www.nsee.org/guiding-principles>), our own broadly-based survey research on experiential educator principles in AACSB-accredited institutions, exemplars from prior research (e.g., Keith-Spiegel et al.,

- 2002), and ethical practice statements from other professional societies like law, medicine, counseling, and social work.
- c. Share our findings about key considerations including power, relationships, deception, risk, and choice.
 - d. Engage our session participants in a conversation about what ethical boundaries they may have run across during in-class activity facilitation, and what ethical dilemmas in facilitating affectively-charged in-class exercises may have been presented to them.
2. Generation of structures or principles that could assist experiential educators in thinking through potential downsides, implications, or unintended consequences of experiential educational practices in the classroom
- a. Explore with session participants what specific ethical principles in practice would look like, and how we would know we were sufficiently prepared to facilitate a potentially difficult, or emotional, or personally risky experience for students.
 - b. Create a resource of experiential educators as sounding boards for participants to help them think through potential activities for trouble spots.

Our contribution to pedagogical practice for the OBTC is to open this conversation, share what generalized principles and guidelines already exist, and push the conversation forward in our unique frame. OBTC sessions usually represent the very cutting edge of teaching and learning practice, so we expect both experienced instructors as well as relative newcomers to have a rich array of examples to share.

Although we might be tempted to dismiss such concerns as yet another problem associated with our “coddled” risk-averse students (Lukianoff & Haight, 2015), the bedrock constructs of choice and care in teaching and learning merit much more conversation.

References

Bolman, L. G. and Deal, T. E. (1979). "A Simple But Powerful Power Simulation." *Exchange: the Organizational Behavior Teaching Journal*, 4, 38-42.

Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Keith-Speigel et al. (2002), *The Ethics of Teaching: A Casebook* (2nd). Erlbaum & Associates, New Jersey.

Lukianoff, G. and Haight, J. (2015, September). The Coddling of the American Mind. *The Atlantic*. Available at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/09/the-coddling-of-the-american-mind/399356/> .

Lund Dean, K. and Forray, J.M. (2016). "Malevolent, Callous, or Selfish"? Experiential Teaching and the Ethics of Student Deception. *Journal of Management Education*, 40(2), 115-120.

Lund Dean, K. and Jolly, J.J. (2012). Student identity, disengagement, and learning. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 11(2), 228-243.

Meisel, J. S. (2008). The ethics of observing: Confronting the harm of experiential learning. *Teaching Sociology*, 36(3), 196-210.

Taras, D. and Steel, P. (2007). We provoked business students to unionize: Using deception to prove an IR point. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 45(1), 178-198.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln (n.d.). Ethical Teaching Behaviors. Office of Graduate Studies, available at <http://www.unl.edu/gtahandbook/ethical-teaching-behaviors>

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.*

We would like a 60 minute session for facilitating this conversation and allowing take-aways for each participant.

Activity	Time allotted	Time elapsed
Introductions & catalyst conversation: critical incidents in experiential activities where ethics was an issue	15 min	15 min
Brief overview of current statements of ethical practice in experiential education: what's there and what's not	10 min	25 min
Breakout groups: participant issues seen/heard/experienced.	15 min	40 min

What happened? Why did it happen that way?		
Whole group: debrief and sharing. Where are the themes? What might we consider as best practices for the issues identified?	15 min	55 min
Final comments and identification of a community for safe sharing of ethical issues	5 min	60 min

4) Application to Conference theme:

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

In considering the student as an agent of choice, empowerment, and learning partnership, we are helping our management educator community Navigate the Changing Current of evolving best practices. OBTC participants are fearless innovators, often driving those changing currents themselves. We believe this engaged conversation is critically important to consider how we are caring for our students while enacting learning outcomes, and to consider how we proactively can ensure best experiential teaching and learning practices.

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?

We have not presented this conversation or set of issues at other meetings.