



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

Submission Template

SUBMISSION GUIDANCE

- * Remove all identifying properties from this document **
- * All files must be saved in PDF format **
- *Please include ALL supplementary text at the end of this document**
- *Only one document should be submitted**

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.

Title: The Half Life of Management Theory

What is the half-life of theory? In our courses we teach a large amount of theory that was developed in the 1950s, 60s, etc when typical organizational members participating in the studies were far more homogeneous, carrying different values with regards to work and when technologies did not permeate their experiences in and with work. At what point do we shelve those theories as quaint elements of the past until they are either retested or replaced? Come join a discussion about the appropriate half-life of our course content.

Course content; theory; history;

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.

With each year, the volume of content that we can include in our classes continues to grow, text books pack in more and more, and we get to pursue issues in less depth. A recent column in December 17, 2016 The Economist suggests “Management theory is becoming a compendium of dead ideas.” Is it time for us as educators to winnow down content and theories that were generated in trying to understand a population of workers that no longer exists? Are we hidebound and missing out on opportunities to include material that is more relevant to and descriptive of the world of organizations that our students will really encounter? This goes beyond a discussion of the “history of management thought” to the theories that have long been considered essential to our teaching. Many of the “old” theories were grand in scope, explaining what appear to be large aspects of organizational behavior, and we dutifully continue to teach them as among the great truths of our discipline. Many of the “new” theories that appear in journals are often narrow in scope, focusing in on statistical significance, but perhaps not practical significance. We know that replication research finds no support or home. How do we determine what should be in the new canon that best prepares our students for the realities of organizational life and behavior in the 21st Century? In this session, I would facilitate a discussion of these issues with the goal of participants challenging their

assumptions and opening themselves to alternative learning opportunities in their classes.

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.

After a brief introduction of the issue of this idea that theory should be seen as having a half-life absent replication in changing populations of workers, I would facilitate an open discussion of the topic to question our assumptions and sacred cows. I think that 60 minutes would allow for that discussion to develop to a level where we are beneath the superficial aspects and into the meat of the issue.

4) Application to Conference theme:

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

I believe that this directly addresses the idea of navigating changing currents, particularly in "generating dialogues on important topics related to the changing demands of higher education that need to be navigated". Someone once said that only dead fish go with the flow, yet, while we have long discussed better teaching methodologies, rarely have we questioned whether the content we are teaching retains validity in a changed world.

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 not presented nor proposed this work anywhere else.