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

Submission Template

SUBMISSION GUIDANCE

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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.

Human Figures as an Effective Method of Teaching

Join us as we present an engaging session illustrating the concept of human figures in the classroom. Similar to the Village People physically representing the YMCA letters, human figures refer to the involvement of professors/students/participants to psychically depict printed figures (e.g., theoretical) often found in educational textbooks/journals (without the singing). We depict human figures not only as static representations, but fluid interpretations of such figures. In this session, we will demonstrate the concept of human figures using content theories of motivation (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Alderfer's ERG Theory) and process theories of motivation (Vroom's Expectancy Theory) as examples.

Keywords: experiential learning, human figures, motivation, student engagement

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.

Student engagement has been a critical focal point of educational research in the past 30 years (Smith, Sheppard, Johnson & Johnson, 2005). Engaged students acquire more knowledge and experience greater cognitive development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). It is invaluable in increasing retention and transfer of training (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2012). While students play the key role in student engagement, professors also play a critical role in designing lessons that will entice the students to engage (Astin, 1993; Smith, Johnson & Johnson, 1993; Woods, 1994).

Based on such premises, we believe implementing human figures by engaging students to readily depict theoretical/practical figures often portrayed in textbooks, such as those in organizational behavior, will be of great benefit to both students and instructors. Human figures refer to the physical involvement of students/participants to depict printed figures (e.g., theoretical, practical) often found in educational

textbooks/journals. By creating human figures, students are able to convert any theoretical abstractions into more tangible and simpler representations of any concepts involved by physically modeling it. Moreover, not only do students engage in physically constructing representations and concepts associated with the corresponding figures, but also participate in depicting any mechanisms associated with it through movement activities. In other words, we depict human figures not only as static representations, but fluid interpretations.

In using human figures, we envision instructors diverging into an experiential learning experience based on constructionism methodologies as "a continuing reconstruction of experience" (Dewey, 1959, p. 79). Experiential learning is a theory that has been developed by the insights of educational pioneers such as John Dewey and Carl Rogers (Kolb, 1984) and has gained wide attention and recognition in business schools and management classes (Finch, Peacock, Lazdowski, & Hwang, 2015; Kisfalvi & Oliver, 2015). Briefly speaking, experiential learning is "a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984; p. 38). The purpose is to create learning as a process that is continuous, holistic (inclusion of all senses), and synergetic (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). This is an important aspect of constructionism (Papert, 1991; Kafai & Resnick, 1996), where knowledge and experience are constructed. Overall, our grounding in experimental learning and constructivism describe the theoretical foundations for our use of human figures.

In this engaging activity, we envision the following learning objectives for participants:

- Participants will physically depict the figures of interest (in this case, motivational theories)
- Participants will collaborate on the active physical depiction of the human figures
- Participants will discuss the implications of using human figures in their respective 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.

Step 1: Introduction (5 minutes)
- During the introduction, we will introduce ourselves and let the participants know the objective of our session.

<u>Step 2: Discussion of current approaches to explain text figures to students (5 minutes)</u>
- We will ask participants to explain how they usually deal with explaining different theories accompanied by figures in different textbooks.

<u>Step 3: Introduction to the concept of "human figures" (5 minutes)</u>
- We will introduce the idea and theory behind human figures. We will also speak to the positive reception of this idea by our students.

<u>Step 4: Demonstration of the concept of human figures (5 minutes)</u>
- We first present a simple representation of a human figure using the communication process. With the help of a participant from the audience and a simple piece of paper, the instructor and the participant will actively and physically illustrate the communication process.

<u>Step 5: Extending the application of human figures (15 minutes)</u>
- Moving forward in terms of "complexity", we will demonstrate examples of how human figures can be implemented using figures portraying content theories of motivation (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Alderfer's ERG Theory) and process theories of motivation (Vroom's Expectancy Theory). Participants are expected to actively demonstrate such theories using human figures.

<u>Step 6: Reflection (5 minutes)</u>
- The participants will be asked to provide feedback about what they thought of the session as well as suggestions and new "concepts" or uses that could be added to make the instruction more complete.

<u>Step 7: Closure</u>
We will thank participants for their great participation and feedback throughout the session.

4) Application to Conference theme:
How does your session fit with the overall OBTC theme of *Navigating the Changing Currents*?

We believe the presented activity fits the overall OBTC theme due the theoretical nature of the activity. Instead of the often typical instructor-centered teaching approach, experiential learning (along with constructivism) "shifts" learning and involvement to students (Kisfalvi, V., & Oliver, 2015; Ramsey & Fitzgibbons, 2005). During this shift, the role of the instructor is redefined as an "ally" and "co-creator" of learning (Kisfalvi, V., & Oliver, 2015). Thus, we truly believe our activity falls within the scope of the conference.

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?

No, this work has not been presented before.

References:

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