

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.

Teaching for Transformation: A Discussion about Deep Teaching and Learning

When you're at your best, do you aim to foster profound and lasting learning experiences? Do you aim to transform your student's lives through your teaching? If so, this session is for you. We will discuss transformative/ transformational teaching and learning. Our goal is to consider what behaviors and practices enable or constrain deep, enduring learning. We will avail ourselves of research on this topic and aim to harness the collective wisdom of the group to share experiences about what factors seem to make deep, lasting transformation possible.

Keywords: teaching, learning, transformation, transformational, transformative

2) Teaching Implications:

What is the contribution of your session to management pedagogy/andragogy? Please include your learning objectives, and describe what management and/or teaching topics are relevant to your session, and why. Also, include disciplinary, or theoretical foundations that will help reviewers understand how your ideas fit within the broader field of management.

Transformational/transformational teaching and learning are robust topics in adult learning and higher education circles where matters of pedagogy/andragogy often receive greater attention. There is an annual conference focusing on transformational learning, The American Association for Adult and Continuing Education publishes the scholarly (Sage title) Journal of Transformative Learning, and discussion tracks on this topic in higher education conferences. There is also a Journal of Transformative Education. We believe it is of service to deepen the focus on this topic among management educators and scholars.

Our primary learning objective is to harness the wisdom of session attendees to collectively consider how transformative/transformational teaching and learning is made more possible or hindered through guided reflection based on the attendee experiences as educators and learners. We have two key "inputs" to support this objective: scholarly foundation about these concepts and the accumulated wisdom of the session leaders who all have transformational aims in their teaching and have studied this topic with varying degree of formality. This includes session leaders' efforts to stimulate dialogue on this topic in other forums, which have generated insights that can be used to spark and extend conversation in this session.

A secondary but important aim of the session is to foster dialogue among educators with transformational/transformative aims. We will invite session participants to remain in shared dialogue and experimentation throughout the coming year.

We root our inquiry in two scholarly definitions: Slavich and Zimbardo's (2012) definition of transformational teaching which they define as "the expressed or unexpressed goal to *increase students' mastery of key course concepts while transforming their learning-related attitudes, values, beliefs, and skills.*" We rely on Mezirow's (1995) definition of transformative learning which more specifically describes the nature of transformation:

"Learning becomes transformative when a distorted, inauthentic, or otherwise unjustified assumption is replaced with a new or transformed point of view (meaning scheme) or habit of mind (meaning perspective), resulting in a more differentiated, complex, inclusive, reflective meaning structure as a guide to action."

This definition suggests that while all learning involves change (e.g., learning a new mathematical formula may replace old and less appropriate ways of solving problems in a more differentiated and complex way), "transformation" is something more. As we see it, transformation has to do with learners coming to experience themselves in new ways, such that they leave a class profoundly different than they were when they went into it. We concur with Mezirow that transformation needs to be more than a single emotional experience. It must endure and shift in point of view or habit of mind. It must also be personally meaningful.

Slavich and Zimbardo's definition suggests that transformative teaching could, perhaps be empirically assessed but we acknowledge the subjectivity of experience and allow for an individual's sense of what has or has not been transformative to be the ultimate indicator of whether or not transformation has occurred for any student in any situation.

Why is this important? Creating profound, enduring, learning and change can be powerfully satisfying and memorable for both learners and educators. If we do not focus on it we risk overlooking opportunities for deeper impact and less skillfully attending to instances where transformation occurs.

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 participants.

The aim of this session is to actively involve participants in shared inquiry about how to achieve deeper, more enduring states of learning and what behaviors and practices might enable or constrain that. We will use a series of prompts to ask participants to reflect on occasions when they have either facilitated or experienced deeper, more transformational learning. We will briefly share a scholarly definition of transformational learning to anchor our conversation. We have two design contingencies in place depending on the interests./needs and size of the group. The session will be led by four possible facilitators. So, if the group size is large, we can easily split

the group in half or into four small groups to have more focused discussion and then report out to the group. Further, we will have some prepared thoughts ready about the themes from prior dialogues on this topic about what factors seem to support or oppose transformational teaching and learning. We can use this data in one of two ways: as an upfront input to spark or generate dialogue, or as a means of synthesis and comparison to process insights generated by the group. We anticipate 15 minutes to share the insights from previous dialogue about this topic, about 5 minutes for conceptual introduction and the bulk of the discussion guided by a series of reflective prompts that we would hope each session attendee would respond to about enabling conditions and obstacles to transformative teaching/learning. We would also query the group as we began to ascertain what specific questions and learning goals members of the group may have and these could be used as added or modified prompts to guide discussion. Finally, we would explore creating a community of scholars who would wish to advance transformative teaching in academe through (e.g.) remaining in dialog through a listserv, sharing best practices, defining and collaborating on research topics, offering follow-on symposia or workshops at OBTC or other conferences.

Unlike a session that is primarily intended to deliver content to the group, this session is truly intended as a dialogue. Therefore we would, respectfully, request the maximum time allotment possible as deeper dialogue and time for reflection will be supported by greater time flexibility.

4) Application to Conference theme:

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

Our session helps address the question: amidst profound changes to the world and the management classroom how can deep/profound learning occur? What behaviors and practices enable or constrain this? How can this be achieved as we navigate change?

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?

Three of the four presenters have presented extensively at OBTC before though none of us have ever presented on this topic. This dialogue will be unique to OBTC but builds on conversation held on this topic at two previous conferences in the last year (the Academy of Management and the International Association of Management, Spirituality and Religion). Many of the facilitators are long-time OBTC attendees and we believe that many educators within the OBTC community have transformational aims and accumulated wisdom about how to foster such states. Yet, this session also has the benefit of building on robust dialogue from these earlier conferences which allows the themes, challenges, and data generated from these prior dialogues to be used as a resource to enrich the session.