



Teaching Conference for  
Management Educators

**IOBTC 2016 at  
University of Winchester  
July 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**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 IOBTC  
International Teaching Conference for Management Educators**

**1) Title of Proposal:**

THIN SLICES: THE ART & SCIENCE OF CONVERSATION

**2) Abstract:**

*Please include a brief session description (not to exceed 100 words). If your proposal is accepted, this description will be printed in the conference program.*

Participants and facilitators will collectively explore the role of conversation in leadership development in undergraduate and graduate classroom settings. This session is an inquiry into how each of us can make a difference with our presence. Conversation, even in its most pedestrian forms, offers rich opportunities for those interested in gaining a better understanding of the impact of their presence and experimenting with leadership behaviors. Additionally, this session will explore how we as faculty use conversation in both formal and informal ways throughout the design and delivery of our courses, including how we can be more aware of our own conversation behaviors, as well as how we can use conversation as an effective learning and developmental tool with our students. In the seminar, we will explore conversation as means of data gathering about one's impact and presence through a variety of Gestalt exercises and practicums, reflection, and discussions.

**3) Keywords:**

*Use three or four keywords to describe your session.*

communication ; leadership ; Gestalt ; awareness

**4) Format**

Activity or exercise

General discussion session

## 5) Time Requested:

- 20 Minutes  
 30 Minutes  
 60 Minutes

## 6) Planning Details:

*Does your session have any special requirements for space or materials?*

Movable chairs for large and small group conversation. Participants will spend time standing in quartets and small groups. Special equipment is not required.

## 7) Learning Objectives or Goals for the Session:

*What are 2-4 specific learning outcomes that participants will get from your session?*

This activity is best suited for a traditional classroom and may be used with both undergraduate and graduate students.

## Management or Teaching Topics:

*Describe what management and/or teaching topics are relevant to your session, and why. Please include theoretical, disciplinary, or theoretical foundations that will help reviewers understand how your ideas fit within the broader field of management.*

Communication is the process by which information and meaning get transferred from a sender to a receiver. The typical management textbook presents interpersonal communication as being the sender's ability to get the message across and the receiver's performance as an active listener. Textbooks typically focus on the words conveyed in communication, yet only 7% of a person's understanding of others is attributed to words, where 38% is attributed to verbal tone and 55% to facial expressions ([Mehrabian, 1972](#)). The implications are noteworthy: leaders are never *NOT* communicating, even when the focus is primarily on the spoken word. The rich detail provided by face-to-face conversations provides multifaceted data relevant to both the current moment and the future.

According to a rich body of social psychology and organizational behaviors literatures, spanning decades and contexts, the phenomena of accurate outcome prediction based on observation of "thin slices" of human communication behavior is well documented (i.e., Curhan & Pentland, 2007; Gottman & Bakeman, 1979). Studies, including diverse contexts such as the success of marriages, teacher ratings of high school teachers and university professors, contract negotiations, and hiring decision-making-- with some

observations as brief as *six seconds* in length—make the case that even five minutes of conversation is fertile ground for raising self-awareness, improving one’s presence, and engaging in leadership behaviors.

In this session, facilitators will guide participants through practicum exercises drawn from the Gestalt body of theory and practice to raise self-awareness and experiment with new behaviors. The facilitators will share theories related to conversations, drawing from social psychology, organizational behavior, and Gestalt theory. Reflection and group discussion will offer a means of integrating and translating the theory and tools shared in the session into tangible classroom tools.

## **8) Session Description and Plan:**

*What will you actually do in this session? What activities will you facilitate, how long will they take, and how will participants be involved? 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. Include a timeline for your session.*

1. Group Introductions & Topic Intro 15:00  
Who is in the room, a brief introduction to the session, launch experiment 1.
  
2. Experiment 1: Quartet Conversations & Debrief 15:00  
Two pairs make a quartet. Each pair has a turn as observers and a turn in conversation. Debrief in quartets about awareness of self in the exercise, receiving feedback.
  
3. Mini Lecture: Thin Slices of Conversation 7:00  
Research from organizational behavior, social psychology, and psychology which has studied conversations to predict outcomes. What is the impact for the classroom and educator?
  
4. Experiment 2: Integrating Findings & Insights 15:00  
New pairs create quartets, experimentation with information from the lecture and feedback from experiment 1. Debrief in quartets.
  
5. Closing 8:00  
One sentence about what has shifted for each participant as a result of this session.

## **9) For Activities and Exercises:**

*Attach any materials needed to run the activity and debriefing questions. Evidence for effectiveness may also be included.*

## **10) Implications for Teaching or for Teachers:**

*What is the contribution of your session?*

This workshop contributes to management andragogy by focusing on the plethora of detail provided by fact-to face communication, including meaning conveyed through word, body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice ([Curhan & Pentland, 2007](#); [Gottman & Bakeman, 1979](#)). Are we as management educators aware of our impact, even in short interactions? Are we harnessing the power of simple learning devices, like conversation, to help raise student awareness and support their personal and professional development?

## **11) Application to Conference Theme:**

How does your session fit with the overall IOBTC theme of *Elevating Aspirations*?

*When we explore our presence and impact through the lens and vehicle of conversation, a whole host of opportunities become visible for our development, crossing boundaries of the professional, academic, personal, and status roles. In focusing on the "bite sized" interaction of a conversation, this session provides conceptual and experiential learning so that participants can better understand their own interactions with colleagues and students, as well as offering a simple tool to take back to the classroom, to develop students' curiosity and heighten students' sense of awareness and efficacy in their personal and professional development.*

## **12) Unique Contribution to IOBTC:**

*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 IOBTC conference?*

This proposal is being submitted to both OBTC and IOBTC. Our hope is to introduce the workshop at the OBTC meeting and to revise it for IOBTC based on reviewer and participant feedback, and our learning from our OBTC experience.

### **13) References and/or Additional Materials:**

Curhan, J. R., & Pentland, A. (2007). Thin slices of negotiation: predicting outcomes from conversational dynamics within the first 5 minutes. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 92*(3), 802-811.

Gottman, J. M., & Bakeman, R. (1979). The sequential analysis of observational data. *Social interaction analysis: Methodological issues, 185-206.*

Mehrabian, A. (1972). *Silent Messages: Implicit Communication of Emotions and Attitudes.* United States: Wadsworth Publishing Company.