

**Leadership as if the Planet Mattered:  
What Skills Will Help Future Leaders  
Address Climate Change?**

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

**1) Title of Proposal:**

Leadership as if the Planet Mattered:  
What Skills Will Help Future Leaders Address Climate Change?

**2) Abstract**

Educating leaders who understand climate change and its organizational and societal impacts is a topic that certainly belongs in the management curriculum, yet integrating it with traditional leadership topics can be challenging. In this session, participants will evaluate a classroom- tested set of five leadership skills for planetary sustainability: is this set pertinent? complete? How does it compare with what is taught traditionally? Second, we will consider how to integrate such skills into management courses and the curriculum. Do they belong in leadership? OB? Strategy? What are the intellectual and political challenges of introducing them at your university?

### **3) Keywords:**

*Climate change, leadership, sustainability, critical management theory*

### **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?*

Need computer with overhead to show slides (I will bring slides on a USB).

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

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

Participants will learn (and also critique):

- 1) What are five key skills that leaders need when working with climate change?  
This skill set is based on an integration of my several years of experience teaching graduate and undergraduate courses on leadership and sustainability in a large, urban, business school.

They will also discuss (and may teach me more than I teach them):

- 2) Where do these skills fit into a traditional management curriculum?
- 3) How can I integrate these skills into the curriculum at my home institution?

## **8) 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.*

From an intellectual and curricular standpoint, the session evokes leadership, sustainability, and strategic thinking. The five leadership skills I will discuss include developing scientific and media literacy, risk management, managing internally, stakeholder interaction, and systemic/world advocacy.

From a political standpoint internally to any given institution, the session will promote discussion of the challenges of stand-alone electives (easily cut, not so easily filled) versus integration into mainstream management topics (hard to change).

## **9) 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. Introduction: my goals for the session *3 minutes*

I am planning a book entitled "Leadership as if the planet mattered" that will be based on the theory presented in this session. I hope to develop theory that best meets the needs of the participants, and I seek their feedback to that end.

2. Individual participants write down what they imagine leadership skills for sustainability are (whether or not they teach them). *4 minutes*
3. I introduce the idea that psychological skills differ from other types of skills (such as strategic thinking) and ask them to reconsider their list based on this distinction... *3 minutes*
4. I introduce the set of five leadership skills with slides. *15 minutes*
5. Participants in groups critique the skill set for content *20 minutes*  
Is the content pertinent? Is it complete? Is it teachable? Is it the best we can do to promote leadership as if the planet mattered?

6. All participants discuss *15 minutes*:
- Where do these skills fit into a traditional management curriculum?
  - Is a critical management theory perspective important for introducing these?
  - How can I integrate these skills into the curriculum at my home institution?

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

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

NA

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

*What is the contribution of your session?*

Will help teachers inspire leaders who can meet the challenges of climate change and energy for the next generations.

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

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

The aspect of the theme that resonates best with the presentation is “developing aspirations for global citizenship.” The fifth skill of the sustainable leaders model involves developing world influence, which is a brash but necessary thought for tomorrow’s business leaders if the “world” is to “solve” the climate change problem...

## **13) 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?*

I have not presented this work before. This will be the first time the 5 skills theory

of sustainability leadership is presented.

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

Anderson, Ray C. 2009. *Business Lessons from a Radical Industrialist*. (St. Martins Griffin).

Burch, S. L. and Harris, S. E. 2014. *Understanding Climate Change: Science, Policy, and Practice*. (University of Toronto Press).

Kurucz, E. C., Colbert, B. A., and Wheeler, D. 2013. *Reconstructing Value: Leadership Skills for a Sustainable World*. (University of Toronto Press.)

Young, S. T. and Dhanda, K.K. 2013. *Sustainability: Essentials for Business*. (Sage).