SERVICE-LEARNING AND ITS USE IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT FOR BUSINESS & SOCIAL ENTERPRISE STUDENTS

14 September 2016
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NYGH Service-Learning Seminar
Overview

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- Overseas Immersion Programme in Hong Kong
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Introduction

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Use of service-learning in NP

- Adoption of service-learning as a signature pedagogy in March 2016
- By 2018, a total of 50 such modules will be delivered to the entire cohort of close to 4,500 students.
- Office of Service-Learning set up in August 2016
Definition of Service-Learning as used in NP

Service-learning is a “course-based, credit-bearing, educational experience in which students:

a) participate in mutually-identified and organized service activities that benefit the community, and

b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility”.

(adapted from Bringle & Hatcher, 1995)
Profile of participants

- Year-2 students in the Business & Social Enterprise course
- Aged 17-21 years old
- Entry ‘O’-level aggregate score of 11-12; some through discretionary intakes
- Usually first or second choice
- Those who come in as first choice have a passion to serve the community
- At the point of the service-learning experience, students have a good understanding of local social issues, how social enterprises serve in addressing these issues, and some business-related knowledge
Project Management module – Overview

- Semester 2.1 module
- 4 credit units
- Continuous assessment i.e. no final examination
Project Management module – Learning Objectives

On completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. Acquire problem-solving, communication and organisational skills and a sense of social responsibility through a service-learning project.
2. Acquire practical skills in project management by implementing a service-learning project that meets the needs of a community.
3. Apply project management concepts to real-world experiences.
4. Develop a project management plan, consisting of the charter, work breakdown structure, time estimates, budget, risk assessment, and control system.
5. Monitor and assess the progress of project, and revise project plans.
Project Management module – Assessment Components

- Group presentation: 30%
- Reflections: 40%
- Portfolio: 20%
- Attitude and Engagement: 10%
Overseas Immersion Programme

- First trip held in 2014; three trips thus far
- Location: Hong Kong, Tuen Mun
- Period: June
- Duration: 28 days
- 3 accompanying lecturers
- Host partner: Lingnan University
Host Partner

- Lingnan University
  - Liberal arts university
  - Office of Service-Learning
Programme

- Lectures on service-learning and global citizenship
- Lectures/visits to various social enterprises including New Life Farm, WEDO Global, Diamond Cab, Fantastic Kitchen, Eldpathy, Crossroads Foundation
- Visits to various cultural, heritage and tourism sites including History Museum, Avenue of Stars, Peak, Wetland Park, Ocean Park, Mong Kok
Project Management Projects

- Upcycling workshop
- City Hunt
- Diamond Leisure
City Hunt

- Beneficiaries: 15 primary school students
- To organise a one-day city hunt activity for about 15 secondary 1 students. Students are mainly from low income families in Tin Shui Wai. To provide opportunities to practise and boost their confidence in speaking English.
Upcycling Workshop

- Beneficiaries: 15 Secondary 1 students & elderly
- To organise a 2-3 hours workshop for 15 secondary 1 students to promote environmental consciousness and to practise English; and for the sec 1 students to facilitate a simple session with 30 elderly the next day
Diamond Leisure

- Beneficiaries: 8 wheelchair bound elderly
- To organise 2 evening sessions (2 hours) for about 4 wheelchair bound elderly per session
Key Pre-trip activities

- Project Management lessons (2 hours per week)
- Choosing of projects
- Initial and Final student briefings
- Parents Briefing
- Movie – Little Big Master
- Student presentations on history, geography, economy, culture, language and social issues of Hong Kong
- Student leaders’ Skype meeting with Lingnan
- Leaders briefing
Extracts of students’ reflections

- The most important thing that it has taught you is that everything that you do, be it school work or volunteer work, it should come from the heart. Getting the grades is important but if there is not heart in what you do, it would just be a waste of time.

- I know how meeting the elderly in Hong Kong and learning of active ageing has impacted me greatly. How will I act towards the elderly when I see them now? Will I offer them my seat? Will I help them to carry their groceries? How about Grandma? She can sure be real naggy, but will I try to be more patient with her? How about Amma? Will you try to find more time to go back and visit her?
Extracts of students’ reflections

- They may have acknowledged themselves being different from others, but what we should do is to change their mindset, by first treating them the same way like all others. If we treat them differently, like stereotyping against them, then we are also agreeing on their differences. Thus, we should treat them equally, just like everyone else, in order for them to gain the confidence to be someone special in their own ways.
■ One significant thing you should learn from the experience is that, you shouldn’t treat people with special needs differently from what you treat a normal person. People with special needs will tend to open up more if you treat them like a normal person. Treating them differently and specially will only make them shut themselves away from you and it would only make things more difficult than it actually is. Also, people with special needs tend to have deeper thinking and more lovable so they are no different from normal people.
Extracts of students’ reflections

- Remember how the Gong Gong put on his reading glasses to look at the polaroid we gave him? Do you remember when he said that that night was the best night he’s had in years? Again, a simple sentence taught us that moments and memories are precious. One more thing that they taught us is that older people are not at all burdens. They are precious gems to our lives.
Extracts of students’ reflections

- You got to learn so many things and challenges that rewarded you with new friendships, responsibility, perseverance, a sense of achievement, satisfaction, new skill sets like people skills, communication skills, service-learning skills and I could go on forever.

- The elderly that I’ve met in Hong Kong really reminded me of my own grandparents, and it left me feeling guilty of not treating them the way I treated the elderly there. I really love my grandparents, but I do not put in the extra effort to show them, and that is what I regret most after this trip.
I am glad you noticed that you forgot about the grades as time passes. You realized that you are actually implementing this project because you genuinely want to help fulfill the identified needs of the community you are serving. It is good that you were reminded of your purpose for joining this course. I hope you bear this in mind when you return to Singapore and do not stop volunteering just because you are busy with assignments. Continue to have the heart to serve and help those in need. Never forget.
As a result of my service-learning experience, this has changed the way I always act as before I went to Hong Kong. I was a person with little to no feelings and only care about myself. However, after the trip, I feel that both I and my friends are important, including their feelings, therefore in the future I will be less anti-social and be nicer to people surrounding me. In group work, I would also be more participative in order to strengthen the bonds between my group members and me.
## Some numbers

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<th>Component of measurement</th>
<th>Deviation</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Academic Knowledge (of project management)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Communication Skills</td>
<td>1.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Social Competence</td>
<td>0.83</td>
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<td>4 Organisational Skills</td>
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<td>5 Problem Solving Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Social Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Cultural Awareness</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>0.85</td>
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Concluding thoughts

- Unique mix of various elements that make this service-learning experience impactful
  - *Culture immersion*
  - *Project Management*
  - *Service-Learning*
- Resource intensive, so is it worth it?
- Reflection