Ethical Concerns in Dissemination as a Principle and Practice in Service-Learning: The University of St. La Salle Experience

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Background

*USLS – a Catholic Christian university in central Philippines; it is part of the De La Salle System of institutions in the Philippines

*S-L, or CSLP, on its second decade, is under the BALAYAN, the Social Action Office of the university
*S-L Program revitalized in 2012 and currently has at least 20 SL Faculty Champions in the Colleges of Arts & Sciences, Business & Accountancy, Education, Engineering & Technology, Medicine and Law.

*The first S-L program was started by the Communication Department under the College of Arts and Sciences in 2003 as an outcome of the ACFF Conference held in Chiangmai, Thailand in 2002.
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THE FGD

A Focus Group Discussion was conducted in February with half of S-L Champions participating.

*S-L experiences of FGD participants: mostly 2-3 years with a two faculty members – 5 and 10 years were
Subjects Handled

Gender and Law *Gender and Sexuality
*Development Economics *Health, Environment and Sanitation
*Community Communication *Office Management and Human Resource Development *Community Social Responsibility *Social Psychology
*Law-related Studies *Management *Chemical Engineering.
KEY OBJECTIVES

1. To look into dissemination methods and practices adopted by S-L faculty

2. To identify faculty concerns on dissemination-related issues, with focus on ethical matters
GUIDE QUESTIONS

Who disseminates
What are the means or channels
Who are the receivers of the messages
How is the information disseminated
Why disseminate
FINDINGS

1. NUMBER OF DISSEMINATORS. Almost all are engaged in dissemination.

2. TYPES OF INFO DISSEMINATED. Information disseminated: event or activity, partner organizations, findings of preliminary studies, evaluation outcome & testimonials and photo releases.
3. PURPOSES. Mostly for awareness and understanding of the public and also FOR GENERATION OF support; also to make other students, faculty and administrators open to S-L idea.

4. METHODS. Dissemination is done externally, internally and technologically/electronically. It is also done through inter-personal and group communication.
*Internally – reaches students, faculty, administrators, staff
*Externally – promotes partner organizations, LGUs
*Technologically – addresses netizens and social media clients
*Inter-personally – done through face-to-face and group activities
*Internally - Briefings, Reports, Letters, Bulletin Boards, Videos and Photos Tarpaulin/Streamers, Posters
*Externally - Media Press, Photo & Video Releases, Letters, Fora
*Technologically/Electronically – Emails, Websites, Facebook & Other Social Media
*Inter-personal & Group Communication - Convocations Special Events (Exhibits/Program Launches), Testimonials of Participants or Partners/Community Members & Trainings
5. ACTUAL PURPOSE OF DISSEMINATION.
Almost all S-L champions are engaged in dissemination for awareness with the aim of increasing understanding among target recipients. A lesser number said they disseminate also for support. The latter group tends to be the more experienced S-L faculty advocates.
6. INTERNAL TARGETS. Internally, almost all of the targets are students engaged in S-L and prospective S-L participants. Other faculty members, specifically the non-SL champions are also the targets of dissemination efforts along with the administrative officials.
7. EXTERNAL TARGETS,
Externally, local; government units and partner organizations are the main targets of dissemination. Local government units.
8. SMALL & LARGE GROUP TARGETS.
Inter-personal/Group Communication – Fora/Convocations Special Events (Exhibits/Program Launches), Testimonials of Participants/Partners/Community Members & Trainings
9. FREQUENCY & TIMING. Most of the dissemination efforts are conducted BEFORE although S-L champions also disseminate information DURING and AFTER the activity.

Dissemination is done between one and thrice for each program.
10. COMMON WAYS OF DISSEMINATION. Most common ways of dissemination information are
* Internally - Briefings, Reports, Letters, Bulletin Boards, Videos and Photos, Tarpaulin/Streamers, Posters
* Externally - Media Press, Photo & Video Releases, Letters, For a
*Technologically /Electronically – Emails, Websites, Facebook & Other Social Media
*Inter-personal/Group Communication – For a and Convocations
Special Events (Exhibits/Program Launches), Testimonials of Participants/Partners/Community Members & Trainings
11. DISSEMINATION FACILITATION.
   - Students, faculty friends, university units (External Relations, Balayan and Audio Visual Offices, community and media contacts, partner organizations and LGUs
12. NEED FOR ASSISTANCE. Almost all S-L champions acknowledge the need for help in the preparation and circulation for dissemination purposes.
13. FUND SUPPORT. All participants said they have no funds allocated for publicity and dissemination.

14. ETHICAL ISSUES. A number of ethical issues were identified by a number of S-L Champions.
- Use of photos of children and women, including those that show extreme cases of poverty and dire situation
- Privacy, especially of minors and victims of situations, like VAW and abuse
- Extent of posting information and photos in the social media
- Situations that may hurt sensibilities of community members/partners who feel S-L interventions are affront to their previous efforts
- Reporting of accounts that may affect image of partners
- Streamlining planning activities – particularly involving participatory planning, for pre-activity releases
- Handling of community issues that may have political implications
15. INTERVENTIONS RECOMMENDED.
- Introductory/ Refresher module on inter-personal, mass and social media reporting and writing and also speaking; ethics re-orientation
- Streamlining of dissemination activities by academic units for a designated office
- Setting up of monitoring and evaluation desk to continuously document and upgrade quality of dissemination activities
- Inclusion of publicity funds in the S-L budget of a unit
“Disseminators must encode the element of humanity in what they do and not just accuracy but also the values of honesty, fairness, empathy and vulnerability.”


Thank you * Xie xie * Salamat
References

Creating an Effective Dissemination Strategy: An Expanded Interactive Workbook for Education and Development Projects (n.d.), retrieved from www.innovagtions.ac.uk/btg/resources


Rees, Alexandra and Pell, Godfrey (2001). Bridging the Gap – Innovations Project

Silverman, Craig (2012, October). Journalism Ethics Are Rooted

Refresher module on inter-personal, mass and social media reporting and writing