FACTORS AFFECTING THE SUCCESS OF SERVICE-LEARNING: A REFLECTION ON INTRODUCING SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAMMES IN UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM

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PURPOSES OF THE PRESENTATION

1. Report what and how service-learning programmes are conducted in Macau

2. Specific institutional contexts of University of Macau (UM) in relation to the promotion of service-learning

3. Design of a service-learning programme as a case study

4. Reflection on the results

THE CURRENT STATE OF SERVICE-LEARNING IN UNIVERSITY OF MACAU

1. Co-curricular activities, professional internship (without supervision by faculty), field trips, visitation, and seminars given by industrial leaders

2. Coordinated and promoted Interest Clubs, Student Affairs Office, and local, national/international organizations

3. Less-structured programmes with diverse education purposes

4. Role of participants: ranging from 'passive attendance' to 'active organizer'

EXAMPLES

➢ Voluntary teaching in Guizhou 2012, China. (Co-organized by Chinese Educators Association Macau, and FED Students' Association, UM.

➢ Social services series organized by SAO, including cleaning beach, visits to orphan home and elderly home, blood donation etc.

➢ Seminars given by NGOs, such as 紫藤 (a service organization for sex workers in HK and Macau), Caritas Macau, and Macau Child Development Association (for Autism children), organized by Sociology Department

STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS

- Enhance students' knowledge through conversation and visitation

- Develop organization skills for a few

- Elicit prospective voluntary services

- Being an observer or a distant participant

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◆ Conceptual to most of participants

◆ Insufficient on the education of sentiment, sensitivity, and volition

◆ Limited following-up action (lack of ownership)

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS OF UM: IMPETUS TO CHANGE

- ✓ "Four-in-One" Education Model:
  - ✓ Professional --- Research & Internship --- Peer & Community --- General Education
- ✓ Adopting Residential College System
- ✓ Re-balancing the weight on professional and general education through programme re-structuring
- ✓ Evolve research and internship opportunities in various academic programmes

SERVICE LEARNING

It is defined by 1990 Community Service Act in the US: "service learning as a method of learning in which students render needed services in their communities for academic credit, using and enhancing existing skills with time to reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of the course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility." (Mooney & Edwards, 2001: 186)

UNI-DIMENSIONAL TABLE OF VARIOUS TYPES OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAMMES

Figure 1. Hierarchy of Community Based Learning (CBL)

CBL Options	Out-of-Class Activities	Volunteering	Service Add-ons	Internships	Service Learning	Service-Learning Advocacy
Social Action						X
Structured Reflection					X	X
Apply/Acquire Skills				X	X	X
Curricular Credit			X	X	X	X
Service Rendered		X	X	X	X	X
In Community	X	X	X	X	X	X

DESIGN OF A SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAMME: PRACTICUM IN SOCIOLOGY

A sociology course—"Practicum"

- An opportunity to overcome or fill in the gap between academic curriculum and practical social life

- To inform, enhance, and revise our sociological understanding to the real world

- Encourage critical reflection and develop generic skills (analytic and synthesizing skills, complex reading and writing skills, problem solving and conflict resolution abilities) through experiential learning

LOGISTICS

1. Form self-organizing group and select a topic

2. Develop a service activity proposal (with a suggestion of potential partner organizations)

3. Meeting with partner organizations and develop some form of mutual understanding and agreement

4. Implementation of service activities

5. Reflection Reports (individual and group)

TOPICS OF SERVICE

1. Education Campaign on AIDS Prevention and Discrimination against HIV Positive (sponsored by the Macau Government)

2. Promotion Campaign for the Concerns of Communication and Developmental Disorder among Children in Macau (partnered with MCDA)

3. Parents Education (partnered with Macau Association of Against Child Abuses)

4. Private Tuition Services to Children Residential Home (Fountain of Hope)

5. Campaign for the Protection of Animals (sponsored by East Asia College, UM)

RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

➢ From the general public in Macau, e.g. secondary school students and teachers

➢ From University of Macau

➢ From resident students in two residential colleges of UM

FINDINGS

✓ Reflection on team building

✓ Reflection on communication

✓ Reflection on workload

✓ Reflection on personal expectation and prior experiences of social services

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Discussion

Language and notions adopted by students

Enrichment of learning experiences

Practical knowledge of how social organizations operate

REFLECTIONS ON TEAM BUILDING

- "However, work in a group must have conflicts, some of the group members need to do part time job and therefore they appear less than the others, it results in dissatisfaction among group members." (Ken, 2013)

- "Sometime, it is very angry with the member who did not put a lot of effort, he/she seems to be very busy with their own [personal] tasks... some members did not do things properly but just facing to the computer and showed reluctant to involve other tasks. It risked the preparation of an activity." (Janet, 2013)

- "In the process we have not spent much time to communicated among group members, as mentioned that is difficult to gather all the members to participate the meeting. And those members who have jointed the meeting would tell the others what we need to do next. There are many things we have done which all group members knew but we did not inform and tell the association... and thus various occasions of misunderstandings were happened." (May, 2013)

- "However, I think here is no a fixed position [role] for us but what we did complementary for each other. There always something that one member not finished and the other one will help to follow it. The role to back up our group members also important to know everything what we going to do and already done." (May, 2013)

- "I am good at communication since I am a quite out-going person and regard for others. Honestly, our group leader is a good organizer but sometimes lacks of sense of communication, which means he is more emphasis on the result rather than the relationship between group members." (Tina, 2013)

REFLECTIONS ON COMMUNICATION

- "I have to admit that we have not made the organization and communication in detail among group members and with the [partner] association. ...but it is difficult to gather the all members and coordinated with the association." (May, 2013)

- "Thus, my part in the group building is to coordinate with my group leader and other group members as much as possible, it could let all the activities can achieve our goals and carried out smoothly. Also, my part of the group building is to communicate with them. The most important element that makes every group work can run successfully is communication." (Jane, 2013)

REFLECTION ON WORKLOAD

- "The weaknesses performed in conducting the project are that I have not participated in their discussion meetings frequently. At the second semester, I found a part-time job because my parents put a force on me that I should find a part-time job. I usually worked at night and the meetings were also held at night and I cannot easily ask for leaving work. I just followed what my group members asked me to do. I only knew how the project was going on in our postings of Facebook." (Roy, 2013)

- "Actually, our group was confused at the beginning of the project. We do not know what we can do and underestimate our group's ability… we either plan too much detail in every step or sometime we just think of impractical solutions." (Ken, 2013)

- "While the group project started off, division of labor is unavoidable because it is the more effective and reasonable way to assign responsibility… Because of that [division of labour], less interaction [among members] and integration [of divided duties] is the main problem in the sense of isolation among individual members." (Mark, 2013)

REFLECTION ON PERSONAL EXPECTATION AND PRIOR EXPERIENCES OF SOCIAL SERVICES

- "We decided to choose animal protection as our topic, because two of members are pet owners but also the more and more serious animal abuse and animal abandonment issues in Macau society." (Catherine, 2013)

- "Also, I am good at observation and thinking … For instance, at the beginning, when the first time I came to the organization, I usually keep on asking why the organization exists. Is that the family dysfunctional so that the role of the organization seems as the parents of the children?" (Jane, 2013)

- "When other groups have made their decision already and chosen their partner organizations, we look at our group and still worry about everything and do not dare to step out. To be honest, I am very worry about that and lose confidence." (Ken, 2013)

- "Also, I am a good listener and very obey to other group members' opinion. I think I know clearly that what I should do in the group that I know that my talent is not a good leader but a good follower, so I only need to obey the messages provided by leaders and believe other members abilities…The weaknesses of me is that when the group have conflicts, I cannot help to solve it immediately" (Ken, 2013)

- "As the tutorial class was last for three month, many emergency shows up and I do not have any experience to handle it. Thus I can only leave it to the staff of the organization to handle." (Susan, 2013)

- "I attended the residential home and met with the children about 25 times in three months. I think that I have sufficient time to get along with the children and observe the operation of the association. Also, I had tutorial experience of primary school students before and was familiar with certain tutorial operation. I knew how to explain the questions and techniques of homework for primary school students in a simple way." (Zoe, 2013)

DISCUSSION

Language and Notions: "alienation", "action", "meaning", and "paradox of rationalization"…

- More one-sided and pessimistic interpretations on sociological notions (how "agency", "efficacy", "empowerment" can be encouraged?)

Enrichment of learning experiences

- 92% of students in the course have no similar service experience before, only two to three (8%) students participated a few one-off service activity or gained relevant knowledge from previous part-time job experience.

Practical knowledge about the operation of social organization.

END OF PRESENTATION

QUESTIONS ARE WELCOME!!!