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| Students Learning With Communities: Professional Development Group Reflective Essay |
| Date Due: 1/12/14  Date Submitted: 1/12/14  Course Code: DT228  Daniel Tilley, Conor Murphy, Tariq Saleh Al-mulhim, Fahad. Alothman-nz, Liam Lalor |

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Skill Development

Overall we as a group feel that the Students Learning With Communities project was quite useful to our learning and professional skills development and that the learning objectives were met to certain degree, some more than others. Fortunately we as group had very little arguments or conflicts, the closest we had was when we were pitching ideas for our charity event and there were some disagreements over what we should do. However we were quickly able to come to a compromise which pleased everyone.

Of the five members in our team we all had different roles but these were not rigid roles confining any of us to certain tasks only, we used them mostly as guide for divvying up work. The roles were as follows; Daniel Tilley as Chairman, Conor Murphy as Monitor Evaluator, Tariq Saleh Al-mulhim as Research Investigator, Fahad Alothman-nz as Team Worker and Liam Lalor as Plant/’ideas man’.

Our organisational skills have definitely developed due to this project, we learned the importance of a plan and more importantly to stick to that plan and leave everything to the last minute.As a group we think it’s fair to say that our research skills have developed, from doing this assignment we learned to recognise who we should contact for certain information. To be honest our problem solving skills have not developed greatly as a result of this project. The only significant problem we had to solve was how to safely transport the money we raised from Co. Laois to DIT Kevin Street.

By far our communication skills have developed the most out of any of these key skills. We have learned when it is best to have meetings face-to-face rather than online such as when coming up with fundraising ideas. By communicating online mostly it was far more difficult to clearly convey oneself and this did in fact lead so misinterpretations. Finally we feel that our project management skills have also developed largely, we now see the many and sometimes tedious steps involved in creating idea and following through with it from start to finish. Sometimes great ideas are just that and nothing more; they might infeasible due to an abundance of reasons.

Team Work

Team Good As Gold consisted of initially six members however during the semester one of our members Patrick, dropped out and the team members then were; Daniel Tilley, Conor Murphy, Tariq Saleh Al-mulhim, Fahad Alothman-nz and Liam Lalor. In general we quite liked working as a team, we got along fairly well, we didn’t bicker much and the work load seemed much more manageable by divvying it up across the team. Overall the benefits of working as group seemed to far outweigh any downsides or any complications that could arise, well in this case anyway.

We all contributed to this project in some form or another, Daniel as the leader usually delegated the tasks unless someone volunteered, he set up a Facebook group as well so we could do some planning online and updated all of us on the progress up the project. Conor as the evaluator went through the various ideas pitched for the fundraiser, weighed up the pros and cons and determined whether it was really a feasible option for the group. Tariq worked alongside Conor in going through the options, Tariq contacted various people in his search for information. For example, when postulating on selling an original Christmas card with photographs of Dublin, Tariq got in contact with members of the Photography Society here in DIT. He did this to find out more about rules and regulations relating to taking photographs of various sites in Dublin and whether permission would to be got. Fahad as team worker helped all of us by consistently reminding of when the proposals were due and how many weeks we had left to write the essays. Finally Liam as the ideas man came up with the majority of the options for the fundraiser including the idea we finally went through with it the non-uniform day in Ballinakill primary school where his mother works.

Group Work and Planning

Although during the course the semester it felt as though we weren’t learning too much about group work and planning upon reflection it appears as though we learned more than we thought. We learned to divvy up the work to people most suited to the task, for example in the beginning Tariq struggled coming up with some ideas for the fundraiser so Liam took over as the ideas man. We learned to not to rely on one person too much, when Patrick left the course and as a result the group our individual workload increased but fortunately he was not charge of anything too crucial. If he had, we could have found ourselves in serious trouble. Unforeseen events like this happen and we learned that we shouldn’t let things like or conflicts slow us down and derail the entire plan. Speaking of which the group also learned the importance of planning early, planning in detail and planning realistically.

Changes/Improvements to assignment

If we were to repeat the assignment there would certainly be a few changes we would make as to how we went about the project. Firstly we would me meetings in real life than we previously had. Most of our meetings were on Facebook and as a result they undeniably was not as productive as they probably should have been, also with face-to-face meetings we all would have a better understanding of the current state of the project. Secondly we probably would try to communicate more whether that be online or offline and remind each of their tasks to do and the impending deadline. Finally we would probably try and come with another fundraising idea on top over the non-uniform day we ran to raise even more money for Wells For Zoë.

Overall we can’t think of many ways in which this project could be improved however we think that the academic essay could less of a focus on content such as Tuckman’s theory and that we learn more about Wells For Zoe so people have better understanding what the money they raise is going towards.

Civic Engagement

As extreme as it sounds we as a group feel civic engagement is critically important to all of humanity. Without civic engagement we are all just a group self-centred people who only look out for themselves and just happen to be in the same vicinity. Without communities the world would be in a far worse state than it is now, many people rely on communities for help whether that is educational help, financial help or physical help. Civic engagement promotes positive change for the community as whole. By helping others within our community we can see the help we are given more clearly.

For example in this project; Students Learning With Communities we learned of Wells for Zoe the charity which our fundraising would be donated to. This Irish charity mostly works in Northern Malawi providing access to safe, drinkable water. This here is an example of civic engagement not on a local or even national scale but on a global scale. By realising we are essential to their own health and well-being despite the vast distance we are given a deeper understanding how other far nations in the world do so for similarly. We as a group think that when you truly understand this you can have concept of the interwoven network of communities in the world and how crucial civic engagement is to this.