

## **Journal Entry #2: Pedagogy of the Oppressed Forward, Preface, and Chapter 1**

*How might we be a part of bringing change that is more just through our service?*

I feel like the main takeaway through this is the idea of humanization- as an oppressor it is easy to see yourself as human, and those that are oppressed as less-than-human, while as an oppressed person it seems the other way round, because how could someone so oppressive be human? The point I really take away from this is that liberation isn't about taking power, or enacting revenge upon your oppressors, it is about causing everyone, both oppressed and oppressor, to become more human themselves by seeing each other as human. This may have to come about through radical means, such as revolution, but it's important that it's more than just power changing hands, or else the previously oppressed could become oppressors themselves.

The way I see this connecting to service is that it is important not to view service as an act of goodwill towards the 'less-fortunate'. Instead, it is about recognizing those you are serving as human, and thus becoming more human yourself. It can't be based on the idea of othering, the thought that those in disadvantaged situations are completely separate and removed from us, but that we are all truly the same, and all deserve the same level of respect as humans. Service shouldn't be about an advantaged person helping a disadvantaged person, it should be about a human helping a human.

## **Journal #3: The Unheard Voices Chapter 4 - The Challenge of Short-Term Service Learning**

*How can you prevent some of the pitfalls of service learning occurring as you serve the agency you have chosen?*

I have been struggling with finding an organization to work with this semester, and honestly it does feel discouraging to be behind on that. But, in that regard, this reading was helpful in that it outlined some of the shortcomings and challenges that come with service learning, and thus, what I can do to avoid them. There were four main issues brought up in the reading: investment of time in working with short-term service learning students, incompatibility of short-term service learning with direct service, issues with timing and project management,

and community and campus calendar issues. To an extent, some of these issues are going to be unavoidable, but at least being aware of them gives me a better chance at mitigating the impact that they could have on my experience.

Starting at the top of the list, I know from experience at previous jobs that training is always a component that takes time, and that time will eat away at the brief duration I have with the organization. My two thoughts of how to avoid this are to either do something that doesn't require much training at all, such as playing piano for a group, or to do something project based, where I can be given the specifications early on and spend the rest of my time fulfilling them. My skills are especially disposed toward the latter option, and that is what I would ideally want to do. That does tie into the third issue though, where even a self-contained project will come with challenges. Completing the project well within the allotted time may be difficult, and doing something that is immediately beneficial to the organization will depend on their needs. The second issue is likely a little less applicable to me, as I likely won't be doing direct service, but if that is something I end up doing, then the fact that the semester is going to end is somewhat of an inevitable problem. That also relates to the final issue of scheduling, where spring is going to undoubtedly affect my time there. One potential solution would be to work remotely, as I could easily work from home in that case, even more so that I could during the rest of the semester.

There are still some people I need to reach out to, and the process may end up being delayed a little, but knowing these issues ahead of time will help me establish reasonable expectations for both parties. The most ideal thing for me would be to work remotely (or partially in-person, partially remote), as that is something which would easily accommodate my somewhat hectic schedule, and would allow me to make up for some lost time over spring break. I still have work to do before I can even worry about that part, but it is useful information to have in mind.

#### **Journal Entry #4: Understanding the Mission and Vision of your Organization**

Mission and Vision statements are a concise way of defining a company's role, and can inform important decisions by gauging whether or not they fulfill the mission or vision. The difference between the two is that mission is about what the company currently is, and vision is

about where it wants to go. The statements are also about highlighting the strengths or selling points of the business.

On TSEP's blog, I was able to find the following: "Our purpose is to promote economic and community development in Tiffin and rural Seneca County. Our mission is to facilitate development projects. Our vision is to create a Growing, Livable, Attractive, Supportive, and Strong Community." I feel like the phrase 'economic and community development' is pretty broad, but considering what TSEP does, it seems accurate. They involve themselves with the community in a lot of ways, all with that same mission. The vision statement is also interesting in that it seems to be a vision for Tiffin as a whole, not for TSEP itself. As a non-profit, I don't think they are as focused on expanding the company, unless it better serves the community.

I am interested in potentially pursuing entrepreneurship in the future, so having an understanding of mission and vision statements is definitely useful. I've been working with them in another class this semester, called Leadership and Entrepreneurship in the Arts, and will soon be creating a mock business plan as the final assignment. Having some first-hand experience with a company, and understanding how its mission and vision statements guide it has definitely been an informative experience.

### **Journal Entry #6: Budgets for Organizations**

TSEP was willing to show me a copy of their internal budget document, which shows some interesting information. It seems that the vast majority of their income comes from member dues and grants from the City of Tiffin. I know a lot of nonprofits accept donations from the community, but TSEP seems to be an exception in that regard, as it isn't a part of their budget at all. As for expenses, the biggest expense is, predictably, salaries and payroll taxes. The areas where the most money is allocated are marketing expenses, professional fees, and office supplies, along with a bunch of other smaller sums for various purposes. This all seems to make sense to me, as TSEP mostly assists the community with organization and networking, which can be done by the staff. Marketing also makes sense, as they do work to promote not only themselves, but Tiffin as a whole. It was interesting to see how the budget fit TSEP's needs, as I would expect it to look very different for a commercial company, or even just another non-profit.

### **Journal Entry #7: The People who work in the Organization and Your Mentor**

TSEP only has five professional employees: David Zak, President and CEO, Amy Reinhart, Director of Downtown Revitalization, Carol Owen-Kern, Business Services Consultant, Adam Gillmor, Development Coordinator, and Corrina Haynes, Operations Manager. Employees are found based on open searches, where they open a position and accept applications. Just a few days ago, they announced a search for a new CEO, and are currently accepting applications. Applications go through a search committee within the board of trustees.

My mentor is Amy Reinhart, and I have also been working with Tony Consolo from Diverse Technology Solutions, who helps with some of TSEP's IT requirements. As Director of Downtown Revitalization, Amy coordinates volunteers and committees within the downtown area, such as the Downtown Design Committee. While TSEP assists the entire city and surrounding region as a whole, Amy is specifically in charge of operations in downtown Tiffin. My project is to build an organization system for downtown cleanup days, one of the volunteering opportunities she helps coordinate.