

A Case Study on Out-of-Classroom Learning Experiences

A higher education institution has launched a community project to enrich student learning experiences. The community project demonstrates how a tertiary education institution provides learning opportunities for our students out of the classrooms and to be engaged with the community. Through this arts and cultural project, students learn how to apply their knowledge and skills in journalistic reporting and video production to produce stories and documentaries to capture the valuable heritage of the Shatin district; and how to use their knowledge and skills to serve and better the society. The outreach experience benefits students' exposure by showcasing their production skills and communication talent, engaging with the community and building up their confidence in interacting with people from different walks of life and working in teams.

Purposes

This is a community project as well as a service learning project, which enables students of the School of Communication to utilize the professional knowledge and skills they learnt to produce printed and video stories promoting the cultural heritage of Shatin.

Background of emerging this good practice

The School of Communication was invited by the District Office of Shatin, Home Affairs Department of HKSAR Government after a tendering process, to join hands with its Shatin Arts and Culture Promotion Committee, to undertake a project together to promote Shatin arts and culture.

Implementation

The workflow of this project is as follows:

- August: Preparation Meeting (joined by teachers and supporting technical staff who are involved in the project)
- September: Student recruitment and selection, forming a team of student reporters
- Early October: Briefing and Introductory session to the students (let the student understand the aims and objective of the Project)
- Mid October – November: Training for the student reporters
- November – December: Interviewing and Visits to Cultural Heritages
- January: Production Period
- February: Release of the production; Debriefing and Evaluation

Timeframe

The timeframe of implementing this practice is:

- (a) From August to February of the following year (6 months).

Outcomes

The outcomes after implementing this practice are:

- Students gained real-life journalistic experience through the project by producing a video and a booklet themselves
- Students gained a better understanding of the Shatin community by visiting different Shatin Cultural Heritage sites and interviewing the people there
- Students acquired generic skills of learning how to work as a team, interpersonal and communication skills and problem-solving skills in the project. They also gained experience in social engagement while working with members of the Shatin Arts and Culture Promotion Committee, staff of the Shatin District Office and meeting people from different walks of life
- About 5,000 copies of booklet were published each year and were distributed to residents in the Shatin community
- A documentary video about Shatin Culture was also produced each year and uploaded onto a website which is accessible by the public
- Press conference was held each year to share the outcomes of the project with the public

Review and Continuous Improvement

The methods for the review and continuous improvements of implementing this project are as follows:

- I. Meetings were held each year:
 - (a) with the members of Shatin Arts & Culture Promotion Committee to evaluate the production and discuss the emphasis and selected topic for the next year
 - (b) with the students at various stages of the project:
 - Beginning: to brief them on the objectives of the Project, and expectations; and
 - Conclusion: to evaluate the production (video and booklet) with them, understand the difficulties they faced and any improvements needed for the next year

- (c) with the teachers and supporting technical officers:
 - Beginning: on resources allocation and training program design
 - Conclusion: evaluating the production process

II. Engagement with the participants concerned

- (a) Shatin residents in villages were invited to join the press conference to share the achievement of our projects
- (b) Secondary school students from Shatin District were invited to participate in our community visits and join the press conference to share the achievement of our projects

By engaging teachers, technical staff and students for collecting feedback on the project, the School of Communication purchases more cameras for the project and further sharpens the production skills of the students.

Resources

Manpower and facilities of SCOM were the most important factors for successful implementation. The Dean, staff and students who were involved in this project put their effort to improve the production and promotion.

Acknowledgement

The case is contributed by Dr. Clio Wu and Mr Brian So of School of Communication, The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong. For additional Information, please contact contact@hsu.edu.hk.