Empowering Students through Community Research Projects: The Study of Campus Deviant Behavior

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Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies Education, Year 4
Who are we? Why TDG Project?

- Social Sciences teacher and students

- Lawrence HO
  - researches on criminal justice ana policing, teaching ‘Hong Kong Studies’; ‘Perspective on Citizenship’; ‘Understanding Social Polices’;

  - supervise honor projects for the final year BALSE/ BEd (LS)/ BEd (GS) students in Department of Social Sciences

- Ricky, Dickson, YY, Hilary and Liz: BALSE Year 3 (now year 4) students

  - ALL are calibre students who got outstanding academic performance interested in Hong Kong studies. enthusiastic in community affairs
Idea to apply for a TDG

- Very insufficient training in Research Methods for undergraduate students: BUT they are all required to write dissertation in final year!

- Methods are trained by lecturing, NOT by real practice (and also impossible in mass classes)

- Lots of misconception among students on research (e.g. fieldwork = survey; survey = random sampling; interview = chat with people), Very Unlikely to rectify them without first hand exposure

- 200 hours practicum internship, with reflection, NO continuation and
Ideas to apply for TDG

- **nurture potential researchers** (graduate students) among the outstanding students in HKIEd
- in line with the principle of ‘empowering’ students through innovative pedagogy
- **build up confidence** for students by practices outside the classrooms
- **enhance communication skills** for students, in formal presentation; in interacting with the seniors; in English proficiency
- **bridge the Institute to the community**, as well as the practitioners; sharpen our image to the public
- **research outputs (publications) related to the community** -> knowledge transfer purpose
- **deliverables used as teaching materials** for the subsequent cohorts in teaching and learning
The Project Design

- Application
  - My 2nd TDG project
  - blessed from the Department Head
  - Accumulated the experience from KT projects completed in 2013 and 2014
- Recruitment and Selection of student researchers
  - CGPA requirement
  - clear briefing and expectation management

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Selection of Topic: Why Deviance in Campus?

- My research area: policing and criminal justice
- campus deviance: topical research area but still lot of dimensions awaiting exploiting
- academically valuable, high level of community engagement, possible to interact with the subjects, research feasibility
- ‘excitement and motivation’ - fieldwork data, stewardship from ex law enforcers
The Commencement

- **Empowerment of students**: ‘This is your project, NOT Dr Ho’s research’
- **Learnt by practices**: ‘You will definitely experience shortfall in outcomes when implementing your plan.
- **Initially supported**: by TWO part-time Research Assistants in administrative assistance, liaison and planning.
- **Setting of research questions by student researchers**: regular progress report and stewardship from PI and consultants
September 2014- June 2015

- **Monthly project meetings**: the PI, RAs, practitioner consultants, 5 student researchers

- **Confirmation of research question**: drugs, substance and alcoholic abuse among tertiary students

- **Fieldwork**: survey questionnaires in different campuses, in-depth qualitative interviews

- Ideas from consultants, **visit to the Hong Kong Police College, PTU headquarters**, several interaction sessions with the ex-police officers

- **Meetings** with academic advisor (Professor of Social Work) for research framework refinery

**Present primary findings in** Two territory-wide conferences: Hong Kong Sociological Association Annual Conference (Dec. 2014) and Hong Kong Political Science Association
Dilemma for student researchers

- ‘Are we too ambitious for setting the target to get 1000 questionnaires’?
- ‘Interview is easy, but seems I cannot write a lot from the information I obtained from respondents?’
- ‘How can I effectively set the interview questions?’
- ‘It seems that NO reference could be sought about the condition in Hong Kong, BUT at the same time there are TOO MANY literature about deviance, how can I deal with them effectively?’
- ‘I aspire to do a great job in this project, but seems it is easier said than done....after the start of semester...’
Frustration of the PI and Consultants

- Very very time consuming in liaison work - even setting of meeting schedule
- ‘empowerment’ vs ‘stewardship’ - how to strike a balance?
- dream, excellent outputs vs actual ability of students who are still undergraduates
- expectation from outsiders/consultants
- 1-year project duration - is it enough?
Tips to share for aspiring TDG applicants

- appropriately set the target
- a dedicated commitment to teaching and learning
- excellent if it could incorporate with your research areas and students’ interest
- more parties involved, more challenges to confront
- the budget

- blessing and support from your head, colleagues and collaborators
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