

Performing Arts, Service Learning Reflection Paper

I thought that the performing arts learning project was a very valuable experience. I definitely learned a lot about myself and also the dynamics of a group that consists of high achievers. I don't like to think of myself as a control freak, but in reality I sort of am. Throughout my career as a student I was notorious for doing most or all of group projects because I like things done a certain way. I have never been afraid of doing more work than other group members and often enjoy being the lead on projects. This experience forced me to hand over the reins to my teammates and trust them.

I do however think that my group did not capitalize on the inherent strength of our group members. I blame this partly on the fact that I missed class for a funeral. For instance, _____ is a great public speaker! In his case brief he was funny, entertaining, and most importantly he was engaging! My group really did ourselves a disservice when we cut him as a presenter. Also, _____ is a great researcher and due to her busy schedule of interviews we did not use her at all! I really think that we let certain group members be the most vocal and controlling to the detriment of the group.

I also developed a passion for research through this project. I spent hours and hours more than I should have on the project but I sort of enjoyed the time. I am very passionate about saving for retirement and helping everyone to be financially stable and independent. I also understand why being a professor would be such a rewarding career. It was great to know that we were passing on knowledge that would positively impact other people's lives. It also gave me a new respect for how difficult preparing class materials and teaching can be.

It was also very interesting to sit at the back of the classroom while the other group was presenting. I think most people never step back to see what image they are projecting to other people. It also made it so very apparent who was well rehearsed and who wasn't. As students we get used to "winging" presentations and I never realized how obvious it is if you do not truly know the material.

I also wasn't ready for such an interactive presentation. Generally in the business school everyone abides by some unspoken rules. For instance, you always wait until the end of a presentation to ask questions and you never undermine or heckle the presenter. I was shocked that the performing art students were so willing to jump in and ask a question mid sentence and quite frankly I was shocked that they heckled the first group! I can not imagine how the business school professor would react if we did something like that when a speaker comes in, we would be reprimanded I'm sure. On the other hand it was a good experience because we will not always be working clients in the business world and it is important to learn how to interact with all types of people.

One more thing I kept thinking about during the project was why our group did not work better together. I have a few theories, first I think as mentioned previously we are normally the ones that step up and take leadership roles so there is some unwillingness to let go of control. Second, I think one area in which the business school fails us is teaching us HOW to work in groups effectively. It is so engrained in our business school culture to be competitive that I find myself occasionally not wanting to help someone out of sheer competitiveness. I always use the example of class enrollment. My best friend is an elementary education major and when she enrolls in classes she gets all excited about taking

classes with her friends and how fun they are going to be. With my business school friends even enrolling in classes turns into a competition about which classes you are taking, as if taking a class like tax a semester earlier makes you smarter. I think that healthy competition is good and necessary in business and accounting, but it seems like we never learn where to draw the line between healthy competition and just competing to compete. Because of this when group projects are assigned often a few members take control of the project and just do it. I can not think of more than maybe one group project where this had not been the case. I think that being able to work in a group is very important to the success of our future careers and yet there is no emphasis placed on learning how to do this. I also think that the school has cultivated an atmosphere where you are expected to be extremely competitive but also where you never give negative feedback to anyone for fear of offending someone. For instance, I think that [redacted] is an extremely intelligent person but I don't really feel like he is one of the strongest presenters. I was shocked when my group elected or decided (I was not at this meeting) to have him be one of the five main speakers. To be honest I am a very comfortable speaking in public but I'm not sure that I am even one of the best public speakers in our group. This inability to give honest feedback to our peers hinders to ability of a project to be the best it can be.

I hope that this paper doesn't sound too negative because I think the project was great! I think in the end that my team really pulled together and presented a very professional and informative presentation. As a general rule I am very self reflective and like to see areas where improvements could have been made and unfortunately I found several. They are definitely things that I will keep in mind in the future and hopefully I will learn to overcome some of these obstacles.