

Assessment of Stone Soup Course Experience

This questionnaire is for faculty to describe and assess your experiences with “Stone Soup” Project assignments or activities. Your responses will be posted on the Indisputably blog and may be disseminated in other ways as well. Please describe specifics of your experience, but do not include information that could identify any student (except as noted below) or subject of a Stone Soup assignment or activity.

1. Faculty name: **Derrick Howard**
2. School: **Valparaiso University Law School**
3. Course: **Alternative Dispute Resolutions**
4. Semester: **Fall 2017**
5. Number of students in the course: **18**
6. Briefly describe the Stone Soup assignment or activity (e.g., interview or focus group class). If you assigned students to conduct an interview, summarize the type of subjects and focus of the interview. If you conducted a focus group class, describe the speakers and issues discussed.

The following were the goals of the assignment:

(1) learn from someone's experience in an actual negotiation, mediation and/or arbitration as that process related to an issue in the course; (2) practice interviewing skills including developing rapport and protecting confidentiality; and (3) reflect on how concepts we discussed in class may or may not apply in an actual case.

I instructed the students that they could interview someone who has been involved in a “significant” negotiation, mediation and/or arbitration within the last year. I informed students they could assess significance of the matter in question based on the length of time the interviewee invested to complete or resolve the matter. Finally, I told students they should particularly look for and note anything in the interview that seemed to deviate from theory – as well as to analyze things that seemed to fit.

7. Was the assignment required, one of several options, or for extra credit?

Extra credit.

8. If students were to write a paper, how long was the paper supposed to be (in double-spaced pages)?

The report was to be 7-10 double-spaced typed pages, with one-inch margins on each side, in Times New Roman 12 Font. About 1-2 pages should have addressed the insights the student believed he/she gained about negotiation, mediation and/or arbitration by conducting the interview.

9. When was the assignment due (or when did you conduct a Stone Soup activity)?

December 1, the last day of the classes for the semester.

10. What percentage of the grade was allocated to the assignment?

It was worth 5 points.

11. Did you discuss in class the results of students' work? If so, what did you and the students learn from this discussion? Was this a good use of class time?

No.

12. What did students learn that they wouldn't have learned without the Stone Soup assignment or activity?

I am currently grading all assignments, projects and the final exam, so I do not know what the student who participated in the Stone Soup Project believed he learned.

13. What worked well with the assignment or activity?

It seemed that getting students interested in the project went well. Initially, several students expressed interest. However, as the semester proceeded most of those students declined to complete the assignment based mainly on prioritization of other school-related obligations. I ended up with only one student who was interested. I discussed his interview experience and he indicated he viewed it as beneficial.

14. What would you do differently if you do it again?

I would require participation. I might also change the due date so as not to coincide with the date the final take home exam was due, as well as final projects.

15. What would you advise other faculty considering using a Stone Soup assignment or activity?

I would advise them to consider the changes I noted.