

Assessment of Stone Soup Course Experience

This questionnaire is for faculty who have used a “Stone Soup” Project assignment or activity to describe and assess their experience with it. Your response will be posted on the Indisputably blog and may be disseminated in other ways as well. It would help if you would describe specifics of your experience, but do not include information that could identify any student or subject of a Stone Soup assignment or activity.

1. Faculty name: **Douglas Yarn**
2. School: **Georgia State University**
3. Course: **Mediation Seminar**
4. Semester: **Fall 2017**
5. Number of students in the course: **11**
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.

Interview after an observation of mediation: Subject should be an experienced lawyer-mediator; focus of the interview was on analytical techniques used by the mediator particularly in the observed mediation; more specifically, the intention was to gain insight on the use of case prediction by mediators.

I approached this as a class-wide research project. I assigned a volunteer mediator to each student. Students then arranged for the observation and interview. Each student presented a summary of their experience during the last class. One student has been assigned to aggregate all the papers as the whole-class project.

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

Required.

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

No page limit.

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

By end of the exam period.

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

N/A

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?

Yes. Different mediators in different contexts use familiar techniques similar to those the students learned in their training and that these techniques are effective in assisting disputants in resolving their disputes; however, many if not most of the observed mediators engage in highly evaluative techniques at times and that these techniques are both expected, if not valued, by the participants, and appear to be very effective in promoting settlement. This all raised some good in-class discussion, and I would say it was a very good use of class time.

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

In this course, students are trained to mediate and mostly observe and participate in court-connected landlord-tenant mediations. Most of the mediators they observed and interviewed in this project were mediating private voluntary mediations involving often sophisticated parties both represented by counsel. So, they were exposed to a different category of cases and for the most part a different type or style of mediation.

13. What worked well with the assignment or activity?

Students seemed to like it, but I haven't gotten student reviews on it yet.

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

I'd line up the mediators months in advance. The biggest problem was scheduling.