A Valuable Lesson: The potential benefits & pitfalls of real-world community projects.

This presentation shares the learnings from a real-world teaching project currently being conducted on the Bachelor of Fashion (Design and Technology) course at The Southern Institute of Technology. The project was designed to give fashion students studying costume some valuable real-life experience in the design and production process of creating costumes for a local theatre company.

A mutually beneficial collaboration was fostered between the Theatre Committee members and myself (the costume course tutor) in order to provide a platform for this real-life experience to occur. It was hoped that this collaboration would offer the fashion students concerned an enhanced experience designing and constructing costumes for real actors and a play set by the Theatre company, thereby enriching the learning outcomes of the costumes papers.

It was my intention that the fashion students would gain valuable insights into the world of costume through this collaboration and that experienced external guidance or feedback would be offered on the student's designs as they progressed regarding performance criteria, such as fit, wear-ability, visual effect, and characterisation according to the brief. However, the 'real-world' had other plans for this action-based research project…

So, although this presentation is based on a costume project involving experiential teaching and learning, it will also discuss the reality of what can go wrong, how to overcome certain hurdles and still succeed in a real-life situation.

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