Innovative use of service-learning to boost students' career readiness

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In-COMAV: teaching innovation group

It promotes the quality of Media & Communication studies:
• Learning in a community service process
• Producing a short film with social utility
• Providing a professionalizing pedagogical frame
• Promoting knowledge transfer
• Interdisciplinary work: students cooperate with professionals from different disciplines

Figures

50 students
12 professors
9 SL projects
5 institutions
3 schools
2.5 years

Topics covered

History
• Recovering the historical memory of a socially deprived district (×2)

Medicine
• Disseminating the treatment of neuropathic ulcers
• Discouraging self-medication
• Preventing athlete's foot

Culture & Language
• Visual dictionary of Catalan Sign Language
• Disseminating the contributions of a sestercentennial maritime institution
• Human towers (castells)
• Breaking the librarian stereotype

Keys to success

• Planning
• Attentiveness
• Multiple win
• Rigour
• Control

Innovative approach

• Encyclopaedic scope: projects can cover any topic
• Interdisciplinarity:
  — participating teachers belong to varied areas of knowledge
  — students may come from different degrees and work on a joint project (joint and separate evaluation rubrics)
  — methodology shatters the limits typically associated to specific courses and breaks down the classroom walls

Guidelines

What an SL project must have
• Interest from an academic perspective
• Development of specific and transversal competencies
• Social, political, cultural repercussion
• Condition as a project: teaching innovation, SL or knowledge transfer
• Mentoring (professors, preferably within the frame of a course during the academic year)
• Resources brought by the proponent

What an SL project is not
• Work without salary
• A platform for commercial benefit
• Unfair competition

Results

• Increased enthusiasm and motivation
• Social utility, applied learning
• Development of social, professional and role-oriented skills (aptitude for teamwork)
• Higher grades

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