



# HOW CAN I DESIGN MORE INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE LIVE BRIEFS

AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT BY  
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2024





# ● Context

Personal / professional context

I'm a neurodivergent (late diagnosis) academic,  
And currently a Lecturer in professional development

Student centered

Values & Value driven

Agile

Innovating in existing space  
Fiercely advocating for students  
Agitating for change  
Eco systems

Biggest shift I want to see

A shift in the power balance between industry and students





# ● Context

Life briefs are not a new mode of experiential learning

BUT

There are many practices that I am interested in challenging.

My work and research has been around hacking and redesigning existing frameworks and challenging accepted practice that happens both at UAL and in general, across the sector

The main mechanism or case study in this instance is the redesigning of a brief called Home





# ● Context

Life briefs are not a new mode of experiential learning



A project given to students that involves working on a **real-world task** or problem presented by an external entity, typically an industry partner, organization, or client.



‘**learning** is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of **experience**’ (Kolb, 1984, p. 38).





- Context

Life briefs are not a new mode of experiential learning

Resilience





# ● Context

Life briefs are not a new mode of experiential learning

Privilege

Resilience

‘systemic issues that might impact an individual’s ability to be, or become, resilient.’ (Breslin, 2023).





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Life briefs are not a new mode of experiential learning

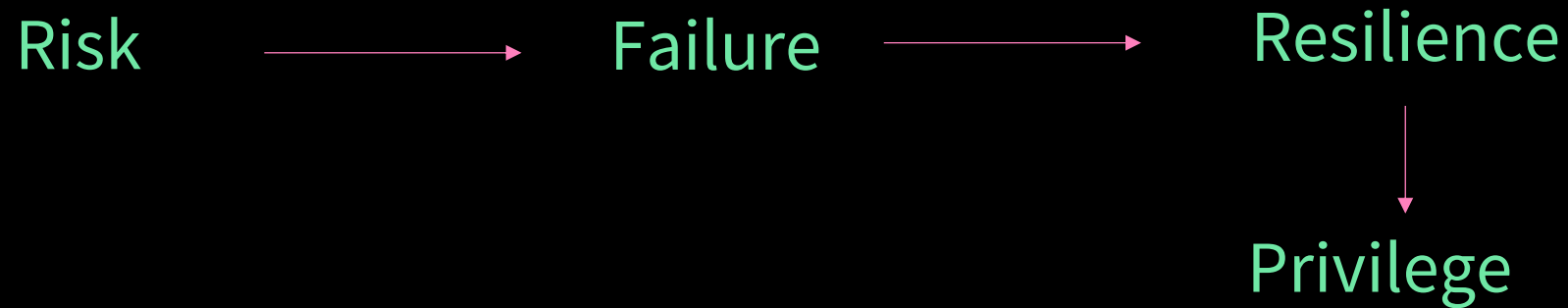
Risk      →      Failure      →      Resilience





# ● Context

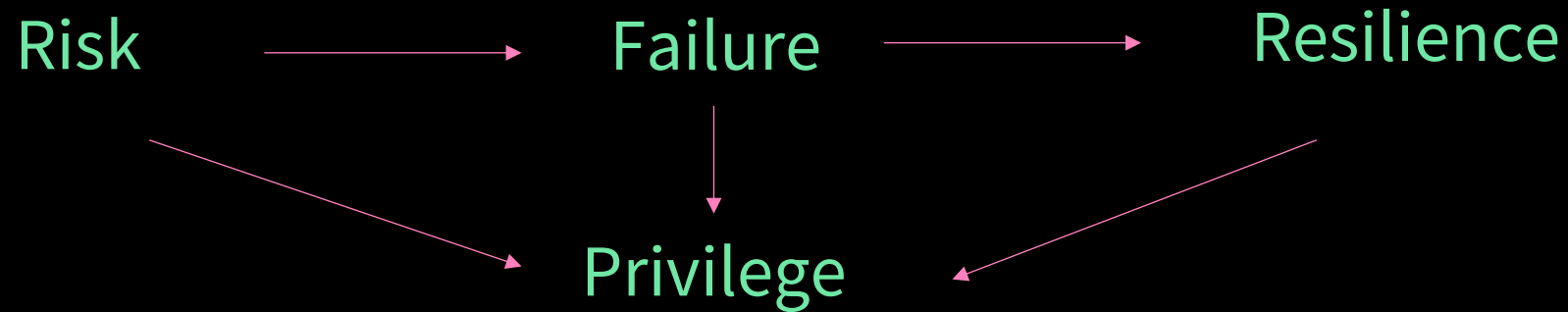
Life briefs are not a new mode of experiential learning





# ● Context

Life briefs are not a new mode of experiential learning





# ● Context

Life briefs can weight bare

and build

Risk

Failure

Resilience

Through experiential learning







# Research methods

A multi pronged approach

- Focus group
- Auto Ethnographic
- Naturalistic observation
- Activist
- Comparative analysis







# Designing a more accessible live brief

- Criteria for applications
- Self – selecting barriers
- Increase no. of students
- Move to more in person
- Make it feel like home
- Environment
- Foster openness
- Bursaries for participation
- Transparent finances







## Designing a more accessible live brief

- Introduce a buddy system
- Integrate more design time
- Refreshments
- Padlet
- Removing bias from process
- Detailed info in advance
- Weekly email check ins
- Reminding emails are open







# The shape of the live brief

7 week delivery project 20 students

- Aimed at those with barriers and little experience
- Self selecting barriers
- Collaboration with industry
- Paid attendance through bursary
- Online and in person
- All resources, recordings and questions on padlet







# The shape of the live brief

7 week delivery project


- Combination of design tasks and enterprise learning
- Feedback and 1:1's through buddy
- Outcome to design a series of homeware for not just a shop
- Everyone will see something go to production







# Findings / outcomes

- Rise in applications
  - Broader group as a result of new application process
  - The tiny details matter
  - People struggle to see the benefit of multiple approaches
  - Bias is subtle
  - People are really tied to criteria
  - Criteria is often a protective mechanism for complaints
  - Assessing learning
  - Trust!
  - A face to an email is vital
- 





## What went well (so far)

- The environment has been highly praised and shows the environmental affect on confidence
- Because effort was made to really create relationships and a warm space in person – this translated when we were online and students were more engaged  
(images and observations on blog)







## What went well (so far)

- We have avoided delivery methods that center on a teacher and learner
- Less screens more human
- Connections are already forming
- Feedback at midway point is good
- The designs are more developed







# Feedback

“it’s so great that you’re addressing financial barriers, it’s not talked about enough” Jordan Cluroe Industry collaborator

“You're basically doing action research all the time” Hannah Breslin

“I never thought I’d be able to do this, it’s completely changed the direction of my work” buddy on project

“Last night's call was fantastic, and it's really helped me to starting visualising where I'm going to take my work & future business” Sophie Grindlay student participant

“It’s really interesting that the students that get selected are not the students that often perform best in assessment or usually win things” Academic







# BIGGEST LEARNING

**Finding a place to exist in the world of  
academic research**

“BECAUSE YOU NATURALLY INNOVATE AND  
YOU'RE DRAWN TO THINGS THAT ARE  
NOVEL, YOU'RE CONSTANTLY CARRYING  
OUT SEVERAL ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS  
SIMULTANEOUSLY” - HANNAH BRESLIN



# ● Forward motion

- More collection of data once the brief is completed
- To try to find ways to capture and formalise the work I'm doing because it is valid beyond the 'doing'
- To keep redesigning and reiterating the live brief format
- Continue to map and evidence the rationale which for years lived only in my head
- Address Padlet in more depth from an accessibility perspective
- Maybe a masters and a PHD





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