Approaches to Teach Fashion Design - A comparative study between the three major subjects learned and their outcome.

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ABSTRACT

Pedagogies - What teaching methods are we implementing to inspire critical change within the fashion system?

In the fast-growing field of fashion, the thin line between Human learning and Machine learning is fading day by day and the creativity of human intelligence is a vital investment for budding Designers. The paper discusses the teaching and learning methods of three major subjects for Fashion Design students taught at different levels in their undergraduate degree program. The paper analyses design education with a comparison by the author to determine the best outcome for the student as an individual creative design student and a team player.

The subjects discussed are Integrated Design Project (IDP) which is done by the end of the first year with nascent and fresh minds with the urge to become a creative designer that explodes into creative unexpected outcome (Project method), Fashion Draping studied in the second year which is the practice-based and expected outcome (Demonstration method) and Fashion Portfolio which is the signature style of collection done in the final year that culminates with all the knowledge gained (Mentorship). The expectations in all the three subjects are quite different and the skill set required differs considerably. For example, IDP needs collaborative learning and teamwork that is to be presented as group work whereas it is more of Hands-on and motor Skills for Fashion Draping, with creative presentation techniques, and digital skills for Fashion Portfolio where one-to-one guidance is provided. A committee of colleges, led by Benjamin Bloom (1956), identified three domains as Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude (KSA).of educational activities:

1. Cognitive: mental skills (Knowledge)
2. Affective: growth in feelings or emotional areas (Attitude)
3. Psychomotor: manual or physical skills (Skills).

It also starts with enthusiastic sparks and energy with a wider perspective in the first year moves towards improving on skill sets and clean finishes in the second year, and then to a more serious and focused final-year Fashion Portfolio. The paper discusses

various teaching and learning methods and theories followed directly and indirectly in a design education that is the 'High Order Thinking Skills' according to the revised Taxonomy where Creativity is placed on top.

As per the Tamil poet-saint author Tiruvalluvar before the 6th century of 'Tirukural-Sacred Couplet,' number 396 explains that 'Water will flow from a well in the sand in proportion to the depth to which it is dug, and knowledge will flow from a man in proportion to his learning'. Creative design education is unlike any other professional courses that may not have the right and wrong designs whereas the depth of research and story associated is more important.

Keywords: Design Education pedagogy, Mentorship, Practice-based learning, Skill-based teaching, Fashion Design Portfolio.

INTRODUCTION

It is interesting to study the challenges in design education and related subjects. To name a few, the structure is not as well designed as mathematics or science and it is not common to all, there is no right or wrong design and it is quite subjective, the teacher should be updated continuously and before the students with an understanding of the latest trends, and keep an eye on ever-changing technological advancement with multiple and collaborative options. For a change, the only constant thing is the patterns used to make a particular style of garment.

As we are aware there lies the threat of Artificial intelligence taking over human resources to replace the need for a designer. The knowledge and attitude of Generation Z students are added to the above-mentioned challenges in front of a design teacher. To give the best input it is a prime necessity to know the readiness and adaptability of students. Therefore the feedback with multiple questions was received regarding the experiences of students who learned the fashion design subjects. This study is an effort towards understanding different learning and teaching methods in design education, the willingness and ready-to-study attitude of the students, and creating a few pedagogies to be prepared for Generation Z's irreplaceable teacher.

RESEARCH GAP

In general, the discussions and papers are mostly from the perspective of the giver and very limited concerning the receiver. Many studies talk about general students in professional courses and are limited to fashion design-oriented courses. This is an effort to understand the fashion design student's preferred pattern of learning and frame a pedagogy accordingly. When it comes to the types of thinking styles of a creative brain is said to be more intuitive and visual-based as compared to logical,

sequential, and analytical thinking.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are multiple way of learning and well researched and classified that are discussed further. The cognitive theory explains that enactive, iconic and symbolic representations are action, image and language based respectively by Jerome Bruner who lived from 1915-2016. The discussions on multiple intelligence that talks about the capacity to learn and grow with the seven forms that is, linguistic, musical, logical or mathematical, spatial, bodily kinaesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal was written in the book 'Frames of Mind' by Howard Gardner, 1983. In a Ted Talk by Joe Ruhl in the year 2015, he presented that, The National Education Association 21st Century provided the 'essential skills' needed for new teaching methods are choice, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, creativity, and care. The human behaviour is determined by the cognitive factor or personal factor, behavioural factor, and the environmental factor. The learning theories have been explored by great authors concerning behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism, humanism, and connectivism.

The pedagogical components encompass information, performance, situations, and hands-on experiences of knowledge and interactive experiences that fulfill individual learning (Jaleniauskiene and Juceviciene, 2015). Formal learning must be deliberate and explicit, structured and goal-oriented, analytical, abstracting and generalizing (Kalantzis and Cope, 2016, p-26-30). The Multiple inclusions of pedagogical approaches (MIOPA) gives an insight on informal learning (Aurel Pera, 2013).

Generation Z is less about communication and more about learning (Du Plessis, 2011), They are conducive to collaboration, critical thinking, and co-creation (Stern,2014), and they engage in hands-on learning and apply to real life (Seemiller and Grace,2017). The technology advances and supporting social learning tools that support constructivist learning approach is needed for the current generation (Cater,2018). The future technology integration in education should focus on what students use instead of what the school wants them to use to guarantee maximum efficiency. When students become the stakeholders of their own learning, education will be truly revolutionalized through the effective collaboration between educators and students (Liu, Youmei, 2009). A meaningful evaluation is not only about assessments and measurements but aims at getting a holistic view of the person we want to evaluate. Such a holistic view of the person must include their culture, gender, personality, learning style, technological abilities, etc. (Finkelstein Tsfira, 2021).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted across the 2nd, 3[rd,] and 4th year undergraduate students with

a questionnaire who are perceiving fashion design course at NIFT, Chennai. The questions were of various types for example multiple choice questions, rating scales, and open-ended questions. The total population of fashion design students was around 160 students. The sample size of respondents was around 50 students. The age group of the students is from 19 years to 22 years old. Out of the total sample, nearly 85% are women and 15% are men. Nearly 53% of junior students and 47% of senior students.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The study was with restriction to three major core subjects that is Integrated Design project that culminates the first year input, Draping that is a practical subject and portfolio. The following are the findings and analysis of the study.

The Graph (Fig-1) shows that the majority of Gen Z students are flexible and adaptable to work both as an individual and in a team. Though nearly 40% are comfortable working in isolation that shows that they are confident and independent.
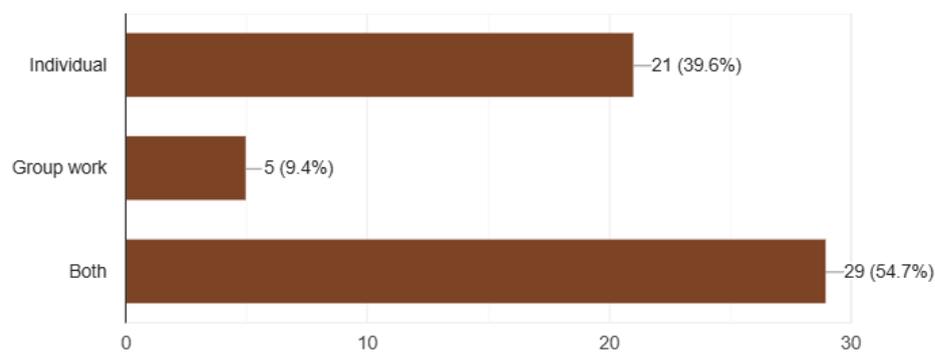
Fig 1: Preference to working alone or in a team

The younger fashion design students enjoy learning by doing as proven by the following chart (fig-2). Design subjects have more to do with drawing and sketching such are the students who study this stream as well.
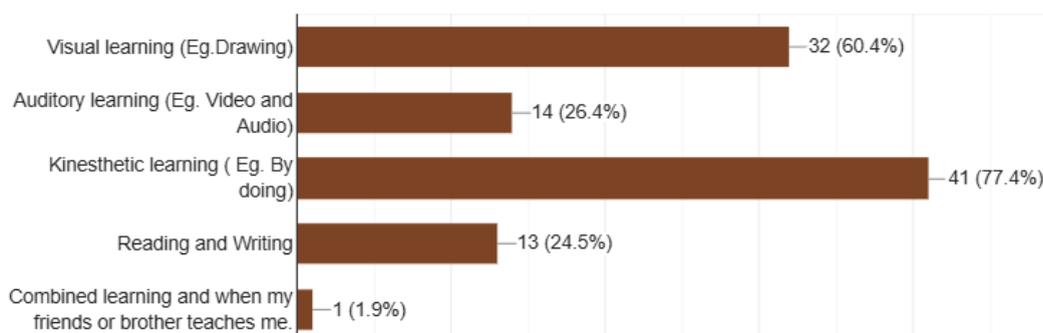
Fig 2: Preference in the type of learning

The question in which subject the learning aced based on input and output was a real surprise since both team work-based integrated design project and skill-based draping scored the same points compared to the portfolio as shown in figure 3 below.
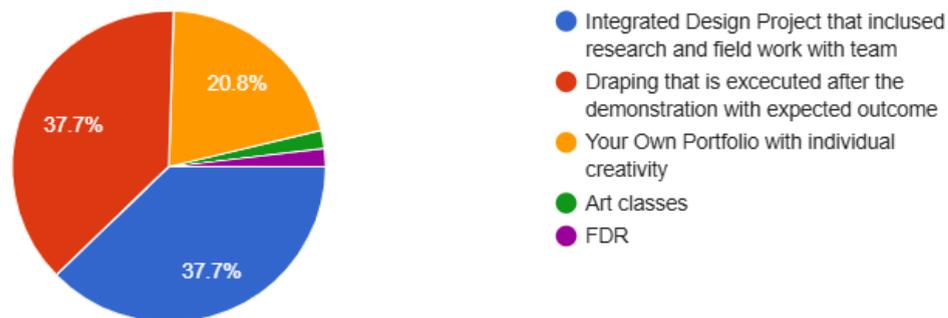

Fig 3: Preference in subject input and output learned the most

There is a thin difference between the subject that is learned the most and that had an interesting process. So was the question based on the most enjoyable subject and that was demonstrated based Draping subject with the expected result as it was hands-on and the results were prominent as shown in fig-4.
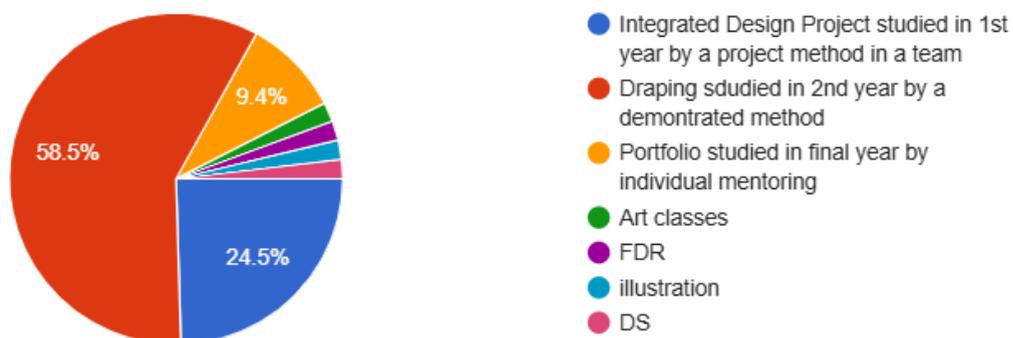

Fig 4: Preference in the subject that was enjoyed the most

The reason for attachment to the draping subject was the process, the expected end result, and the enhancement of the skill set.
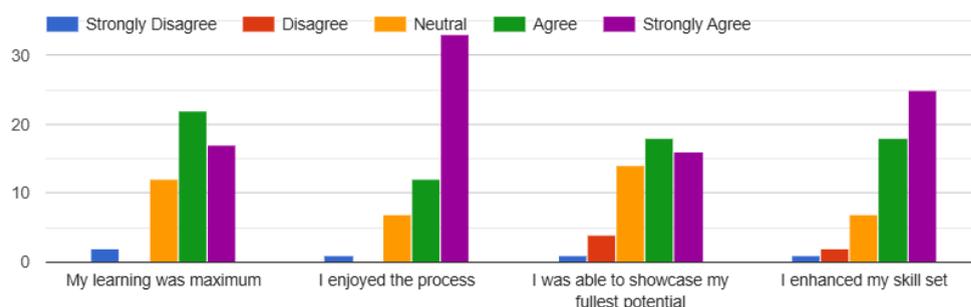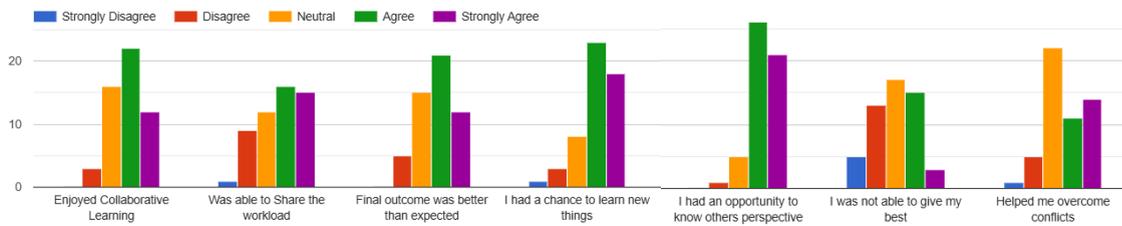

**Fig 5:** Reason to like Draping subject over the others

The experience working with the team is shown in the following chart which states

that it helped in understanding others' perspectives, it paved the way to learn new things and the workload was shared but the emotional management was still weak where conflicts were prevailing.


Fig 6: The experience working in a team

There are quite many templates available for layouts and creating portfolios for free as well as on a payment basis. The question was to understand if there is an influence of readymade templates that are available to create a portfolio and whether the students are interested in using them as such. All thanks to the appreciation of originality and individuality many did not want to use the readymade templates.
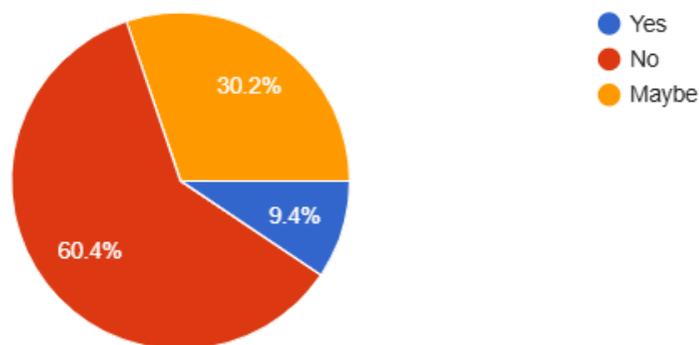
Fig 7: Preference in using readymade templates for portfolio

In addition, with the age of the internet and social networking, it is observed that interpersonal relations online are valued more than actual physical interaction. Based on that there was a question asked regarding the Social Media used by Gen Z. The result showcased that many are shifting to Instagram as it is fast and picture and video-friendly followed by WhatsApp. Surprising to see Facebook is out of trend and may be as students LinkedIn is yet to be explored.
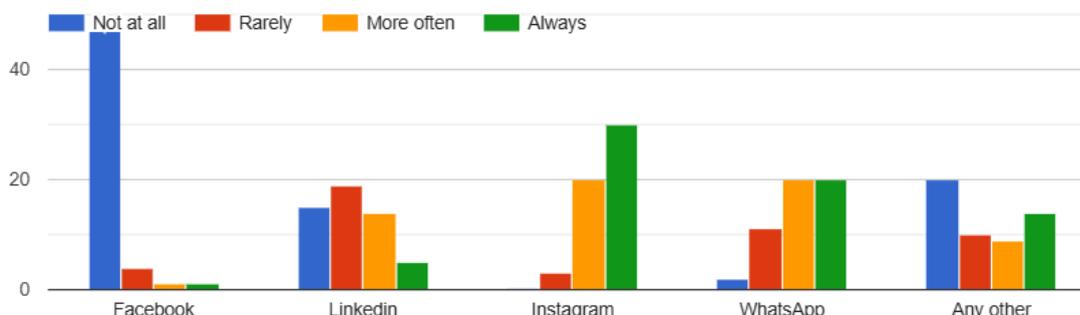
Fig 8: Preference for the use of social networking sites to enhance your network

Knowledge is shared in various forms to reach the needy. The learning platforms are increasing each and every day and so was keen to know about the student's way of enriching their knowledge through social media. It was noted that Pinterest and YouTube are the highest preferred followed by Google Scholar and podcasts.
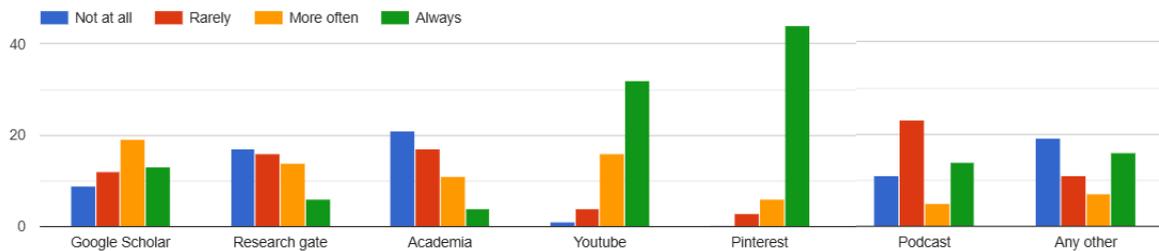
Fig 9: Preference of social media to enrich knowledge and research

And yes finally the question was asked about their preference of social media videos over books and unlike the previous years the answer was yes, they do prefer A/V compared to books. It is fast and easy to understand with an option of multiple authors or presenters who add their own style of presentation.
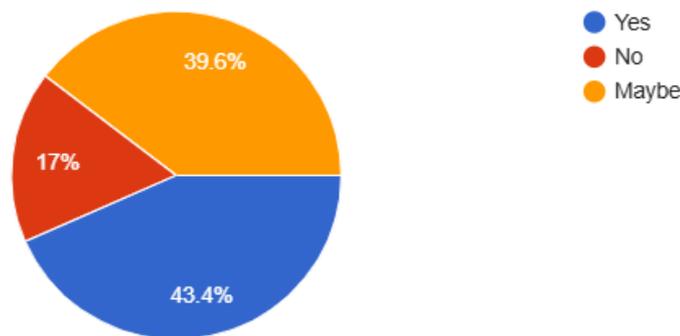
Fig 10: Preference of Social Media/Videos over Books

DISCUSSIONS

The survey from the students of Fashion Design included a few suggestions provided by them concerning their expectations and experience in design education that are as follows:

- More art-oriented classes for the fashion design department is needed
- Need of video recordings of the steps and procedures would be helpful so that the students can go back and review the steps. Also, to work leisurely at home to create a work-life balance in and out of college.
- To make it more normal that some people cannot draw well.
- Attendance should not be the biggest concern in students learning.

- Integrated Design Project groups should be team of people who they are comfortable with.
- There was a need of more time to learn, even though they had very few subjects than the previous years.
- Competition or as a live project based on end-term and mid-term. That will motivate students to think better since there is a prize or a consolidation.
- There was a preference of the college to be open till late on weekdays and be used on Saturdays and Sundays which would be the biggest help to access the body forms and experiment or explore more.

Table 1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Learning Integrated Design Project subject

Sl.No.	Advantages	Disadvantages
1	Learned a lot from the diverse perspectives of my teammates	lack of comparability and alignment among group members and language barriers
2	It included group discussions which enhanced the learning process	Perspectives of different individuals may clash
3	Many skills came together and sharing of workload	Work distribution may not be the same
4	Helped to learn the process of how a product is made from scratch	Conflicts and group coordination
5	In a limited time, all teammates came up with so many innovative ideas	The members got stressed and procrastination
6	Getting to experience a lot of challenges and working them out by oneself also builds up your confidence	Physical health is compromised sometimes and it's hard to gather enough information on new own design ideas
7	Did not get enough time to research and explore many ideas	Felt rushed by my teammates
8	Good chance to put to test everything learned in the academic year	Not much liberty in choosing and ideation
9	Helps to understand how each subject contributes to the end results and how you can combine all your knowledge practically as well as theoretically	Could be challenging to do everything at once for beginners
10	Opens up new areas for developing our knowledge	The project consumes more time
11	Good source of idea generation	Domination by the stronger outspoken groupmate and few ideas of the silent ones are ignored

Table 2. Advantages and Disadvantages of Learning Draping subject

Sl.No.	Advantages	Disadvantages
1	Draping has given me a much clearer understanding of how a garment functions, more so than pattern making allowing for easier adjustments and changes during the process.	It does take twice as long as to do patterns
2	live demonstrations and interactive learning	If the demo session is missed its difficult to cope-up
3	Practical work is more enjoyable	Time taking and good skills required
4	Able to take exact measurements and good fit through the body form	Draping can only be performed with the body form
5	The skill to handle fabrics with care	Step-by-step guidance is required at times
6	Helps to let the creativity flow on the fabric with no such restrictions	Can easily recycle leftovers
7	Overall very therapeutic and relaxing	more knowledge of drapes and techniques to be added to the subject
	It is the direct actualization of the visualization in your head and it's fast and reliable	A lot of fabric wastage and sometimes as you have to trace the muslin pattern back to paper and then again trace it in the final fabric
8	Custom-made garment and can experiment so much without any limitations	Quite hard to remove from the body form

Table 3. Advantages and Disadvantages of Learning Portfolio subject

Sl.No.	Advantages	Disadvantages
1	It helps to explore and record the progress	It is a trouble for few to convert inspiration into designs
2	It enhances one's perspective and reflects your design identity	Not everyone will like it.
3	It helps to be professional	Time-consuming
4	It is a vast canvas to put ideas into making	Less time to work on specific projects
5	It helps to constantly learn and sharpen the skills	Many projects at the same time is hectic
6	Helps review your projects and helps to self-evaluate.	Constrain when combining projects to a single document format. The essence of individual projects is reduced to get a sync between projects
7	It can be developed over time and is a mirror image of creativity	One person might find it impressive and others might not
8	Advantages are endless with the knowledge gathering in the field and	Restriction of material for outcome or the presentation

	the theme we enjoy make work fun and learning a great experience	

By understanding the above-mentioned requirements the takeaways for teaching pedagogies may be as follows:

- The group members for teamwork are to be thoughtful and well-analysed.
- A guideline by the mentor and intermediate timely mentoring is necessary
- Time management and checking on all the group members' contributions may be cautiously noted.
- Freedom to be given in research and type of presentation
- Students may be allowed to record the practical demonstration session with an undertaking that it may not be circulated outside and to be removed after completing the assignment.
- Teachers should focus more on quality compared to quantity.
- There can be options given to combine a few assignments and present them together.
- The layouts and presentations can be optional and a chance to be provided for a comfortable mode of submission.
- Live projects and flexible timings may be allowed as much as possible.

CONCLUSION

From the above study, it may be concluded that Gen Z students are adaptable, they are confident, and enjoy the process more than results. They prefer social media and alternate sources of information more than just books and also, they do look forward to a guide or a mentor who would be able to handhold them till they get a grip on the subject. The preferred mode of teaching method is collaborative learning, kinaesthetic, demonstrated, experiential, project based and interactive lectures.

The order of growth for a fashion design student is dominated by the psychomotor skills that are developed by continuous practice with good knowledge and attitude. It is time for all the teachers to raise high and keep up with the expectation of the energetic, vibrant and dynamic multi-talented generation. Learning newer technologies, being more empathetic and having an edge on the current events are a must to a fashion design educator. The only way machine can be different from human is the emotional connect and care shown to the student that cannot and need not be declined. Let us together grow and let help the younger ones to show and bloom in as many variety of unique creativity.

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