THE FUTURE OF FASHION EDUCTAION: addressing, pedagogy, policy and professionalisation

Author

Anthony Bednall
Associate Professor,
Kingston School of Art, Knights Park

Corresponding Author: a.bednall@kingston.ac.uk

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Abstract

This paper examines the future educational environment of fashion education, specifically in the UK but with an acknowledgment of its broader global implications.

Fashion education at university level encompasses an intertwining of theoretical, technical, and practical elements that make up a range of artistic and business-focused manifestations of a phenomenon close to the centre of the modern world (Svendsen 2006). The macro environment, between the ongoing volatility within the Higher Education sector, driven by government policy and University marketisation and the seismic disruption across the contemporary fashion industry, through the digitalization of consumption and a global pandemic with its consequential effects on fashion retail, the fashion supply chain and public perceptions surrounding the industry, forms the basis of the research. The implications of these drivers on current, possibly outdated, pedagogic practices, rooted in singularly defined specialisms withinan appropriate meso environment, is explored, to inform a multi-faceted learning landscape anddelivery model, at a micro level. The paper proposes an Owner- Learner Model (OLM) which sits within an 'Erus' (owner) pedagogic domain, which accounts for and acknowledges acceptance of external impacting factors, puts individual ownership and co-creation at the centre of the learning experience, challenges existing models whilst supporting a broad, futurefacing, sustainable, fashion eco-system. The paper is informed by appropriate literature and personal experience of curriculum development and delivery. Its structure follows that of the implementation staircase (Reynolds and Saunders.1985), whereby the vertical location levels within an organization, respond to and interpret information requiring action, from Macro and Meso environments. In this case, consideration of national and institutional contexts down toa localized Micro level which influences the delivery domain. It also argues that the future of fashion education requires alternative propositions of pedagogic and curricula models, which are flexible enough to respond to the external and internal contexts whilst fulfilling the expectations of students, the institution and professional industry practices.

Introduction: The Learning landscape

Fashion education in the UK and across many developed countries is a highly attractive proposition. The vocationalisation and subsequent marketisation of fashion related subjects within Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) ensures that the HEI's continue to position themselves as the academic gatekeepers for the industry (Lightfoot 2015), who alone can prepare and professionally articulate individuals into their specialist future careers. For the academic year 2021/22 there are 94 Universities in the UK, offering 478 undergraduate degree programmes in fashion related courses (What Uni 2021). The majority of these programmes sit within large University and Faculty environments and are therefore bound by institutional top-down directives rooted in governmental policy and external macro level targets as validators of success. Arguably these political narratives have shifted the higher education landscape to inherently align with the goals of business, government, and educational practices(Hill et al 2016). For the UK, government sponsored design education can be traced back, to the first Select Committee of Arts and Manufactures of 1835, a Board of Trade initiative whereby the training of designers for industry was seen to be important, not for the cultural lifeof the country but as an economic necessity (Shepperd 1995). Even at its first inception the broader macro environment dominated by government and industry was instrumental as an influential driver and controlling factor over the expectations of educational institutions.

Arguably contemporary fashion education continues to have its roots in 19th Century arts and crafts, apprenticeships, and governmental requirements to support economic growth or its modern manifestations of 'value for money' and Graduate Outcomes. It adheres to present notions of curriculum, specifically, curriculum of practice for design-based courses and knowledge transmission for business focused courses, codes of practice, systems, qualifications and quality assurance which produce 'professionals' in a vast array of fashion related subjects still related to, and stimulated by, the vocational and the industrial. As Weltersand Lillethun (2007) note Fashion is not a classical academic subject, it is a pluralistic mishmash of convergent and overlapping subjects and practices. Whilst Svendsen (2006) adds further definition to fashion education at University level, as encompassing an intertwining of theoretical, technical, and practical elements, that make up a range of artistic and business-focused manifestations phenomenally close to the centre of the modern world. In a possibly over saturated market, there has already been academic speculation regarding the need for existing academic practices, in fashion education to be rethought due to significant shifts in professional practice and society's relationship with design in general as a responsive tool for the sustainable, the responsible, the ethical the diverse and the inclusive.

This is clearly evidenced in the Central St Martins and Institute Francais de la Mode MA shows for 2022. Both of which illustrate that student design works are a bellwether of the future, pushing the limits of materials and metier.

Leaders in both business and education have been calling for a radically changed fashion industry (Thornquist 2018) which questions the way fashion goods are produced in a global industrial structure (product) and how fashion goods are consumed as social practices (concept).

Adding further narrative to this dialogue for change has been the Covid-19 global pandemic with the instigation of lockdown scenarios from early 2020 to a continued volatility within an endemic situation which remains complicated and unresolved in terms of an ongoing impact of educational pedagogic responses. The development of asynchronistic, synchronistic and blended delivery methods within HEI's, not only for fashion related activities, but for all institutional teaching activities has further initiated debates that could challenge the 'idea' of the university, as it positions itself within a 21st century eco-socio-political post-pandemic landscape. Certainly, the notion of the university as a located and fixed spacial environment , which requires timetabled physical attendance has been further challenged as the sector has attempted to negotiate new learning imperatives and responsive pedagogic dialogues which maintain both student satisfaction and professional preparation for graduate outcomes within the labour market. Ultimately the external factors which impact on academic practices, including the current macro/meso influences of external policy and legislation, contemporary fashion industry practices, Universities strategic aims and eco-socio-political contexts require micro level consideration within the delivery domains for fashion related specialist programmes.

Irrespective of defined specialist disciplines within Fashion education the subject has the potential to intersect the theoretical and the practical, connect intellectual enquiry with industry applications and business needs, and initiate dialogues that have the impact potential to reconsider existing paradigms in both a commercial and educational context.

Contemporary fashion education is undoubtedly positioned within a complex myriad landscape that is bound by an array of external factors which paradoxically have their own individual tensions and conflicts. For the future of fashion education to be sustainable a re- imagining of curricula and the questioning of existing pedagogic practices, to ensure successful navigation of these macro and meso environments is overdue and required.

External, Internal and Pedagogic Contexts

Although complex these external and internal influences can be defined In simplified overarching themes, in relation to key stakeholders. The Government and Policy, in terms of Graduate Outcomes(Teaching Excellence Framework TEF) the National Student Survey(NSS) and Value for Money (Fees, loans and repayments. The fashion Industry in terms of Industry ready graduate with an appropriate skill base, business articulate graduates and creative, responsible, problem solvers. The University in terms of student satisfaction, reiterated in responsive to Covid-19 restrictions (NSS/TEF), graduate outcomes (TEF) and attractive disciplines (recruitment and progression) and the student also in terms of value for money as well as route to employment and positive experience. What is apparent is that these themes are not unique to individual groups but reinforce the messages, perceptions and responses surrounding the massification and marketisation of HE. As part of this marketisationthere has also been an expediential growth in disciplines and their fragmentation into sub- disciplines (Burton Clark 1996). In the case of Fashion, the evolving fashion arena and its

manifestations in mainstream culture have led to an academic development model of 'Fashion + X' for example BA Fashion Styling or BA Fashion Management (Gale 2011). This is further illustrated by the range of courses delivered by large Fashion provider institutions such as the London College of Fashion (LCF) who for the academic year 21/22 advertises 70 undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, and 165 short courses across every fashion subject

These types of degrees and a multitude of other variations fall into the sub-discipline category under the umbrella of fashion but as Gale (2011) also rightly points out this fragmentation moves towards an idea of curriculum fixity and validation by the imprimatur of quality assurance bodies. To reconcile the external factors, consideration needs to be undertaken to fashion related activities which employ differing pedagogic and delivery practices and follow established theoretical education models. Before , the re-imagining of these practices and an opening up of a debate around the possibilities of a future fashion education landscape can be projected and considered.

The Fashion Design or 'studio' based' practices courses, historically sit, within the design education sector, which has been described as having an extremely narrow philosophical anthropology with an outdated, implicit epistemology of design practice inherited from the nineteenth century and formalised through the Bauhaus model (Findelli 2001). Certainly, there have been further attempts post the Bauhaus to theorise and quantify a contemporary design process, from Archers initial (Archer 1963) model, 'the Systematic method for Designers through to the double Helix model advocated by the UK Design council (2007) the principles retain similarity, positioning the design of the product at its core. Pugh's (1990), somewhat complex Design activity model, "Total design' is also employed by design educators and is theoretically close to the aforementioned models by again positioning product development and manufacturing processes centrally. Here the core of activities, consists of market (user need), product design specification, conceptual and detailing of design and manufacture and sales, as imperatives for any form of product design, irrespective of Domain (Pugh, 1990). Pugh's view that all design starts, or should start, with a need that, when satisfied, will fit intoan existing market, or create a market of its own is generally recognized by many design educators as a key process for designing products. Other frameworks specifically in relation tothe design process of fashion garments have also been explored including Watkins (1988) proposed model of accept, analyse, define, ideate, select, implement, and evaluate, Lamb and Kallal's (1992) more general Functional-Expressive- Aesthetic (FEA) model, and contemporary versions such as Au and Yu's (2018) Design Process model for the creation of conceptual fashion. Au and Yu's model argues for the integration of professional knowledge from differing design domains within an interdisciplinary practice to enable conceptual fashion creation but continues to reinforce the notion of fashion product as core artefact. An analysis of design process models across a range of disciplines concluded that a consensus model is insufficient, with the existing matrices of tools, technique, methods, and approaches acting merely as guidelines, to support design creation and suggesting a process driven by simplifiedeasily accessible activities that require limited intellectual interpretation or critical enquiry (Gericke and Blessing 2012).

Something that is often seen as problematic from an Academy point of view in relation to non-traditional subjects.

Academics have however recognised that a number of these existing processes have systematically failed to acknowledge contemporary discourses around the subjects of Fashion including ethnography, future narratives, user-centered and participatory processes, and eco-sociology as essential influencers on the design of products (garments). Sanders (2002) advocated a more participatory approach to design moving away from a user-centered model whilst Krippendorf argues that design creation should use 'human-centred methods', requiring debate and dialogue across a range of stakeholders to be successful. His 'Science for Design' model (Krippendorf 2006) places the artefact, in this case the garment/products, meaning or context at the core of the design process. He stated that 'No artifact can be realized within a culture without being meaningful to those who can move it through its various definitions'.

Defining five practical and creative methods for designing guided by narrative.

- Designing the character of artifacts
- Designing informative or expressive artifacts
- Designing design strategies
- Designing original artifacts guided by narrative and metaphors
- Dialogical ways to design.

Krippendorf clarifies his argument for a less prescriptive and formulaic approach to the design process by observing that "through a systematic collection of successful design practices and methods, however abstract, codified or theorized, continuous re-articulation and evaluation amounts to a self-reflective reproduction of the design delivery model". Thus, illustrating how design education methods are perpetuated through a design process model that inevitably resists alternative modes of thinking. There has been a debate for these existing design methods to be reconsidered from a variety of sources, Faerm (2012) posed questions around the long- standing philosophies in art and design education, stating that the pedagogies fashion design education employ needs to evolve due to shifts in professional practice. Significantly and pre- pandemic Abbadi (2017) reflects on fashion design education as being long overdue an updatedue to digital interconnectivity, the interdisciplinary nature of current practices and the changing demands of the consumers whilst bringing into question the mythology surrounding creative directors and individual designer names as the driver and ambition for existing practice, Illustrating one of the major issues emanating from fashion design courses globally. That being, most fashion courses follow a conceptually driven process, with the aim of producing an individually themed fashion collection of 4-6 outfits in the final year which has its aspirations rooted within these historic aspirational mythologies. This is further reinforced by the core texts written by fashion academics, within the reading lists of most fashion design courses, Dieffenbachers (2013) Fashion Thinking: creative approaches to the design process, Mark Atkinsons (2012) How to Create your Final Collection: a fashion student's handbook, Renfrew & Lynn (2021) Developing a collection and Hopkins (2012) Fashion Design: the complete guide, to name a few. The custom and practice of garments creation and realisation under the pandemic has brought significant debate into the pedagogic arena for this type of activities. With many institutions unable to accommodate students within practical studio and workshop spaces, which have historically allowed students the mandatory and necessary equipment to

fulfil the requisite outputs, alternative assessment strategies were initiated to meet a range of learning outcomes. This reconsideration of learning activities and the assessment of learning as opposed to the traditional construction skills encompassing the creation of 3-dimensional product has further opened up the broader narratives surrounding student and professional expectations within design based academic environments. Ultimately Fashion graduates will emerge into a contemporary professional environment which is highly competitive and demands high level capabilities above and beyond the traditional skills acknowledged and required by the discipline (Bridgstock et al 2012) thus further implying for some time that pedagogical alternatives need to be taken into consideration and realigned accordingly.

In parallel to the design, studio-based courses, where there has been a considerable amount of theorising and academic analysis, the exponential growth of Fashion business rooted programmes appear to have had limited investigation and contextualisation. Programmes such as Fashion Buying and Merchandising and Fashion Marketing although vocationally rooted, have often been focused around the theoretical and analytical positioning of product, customer and customer experience employing a pedagogic model which allows for substantial cohorts of students per year groups. Historically this is through the lecture and seminar based traditional learning model, which includes report and exam-based assessment. This model is often favoured by HEI's, particularly in the context of Business School communities, as it is seen as a cost-effective approach to learning and teaching and appropriate for managing large student numbers. This model does, however, for these specific "specialist' fashion courses appear to remain at odds with modern expectations of learning, from both a theoretical and student perspective, as well as counter responsive to the expected skill requirements for graduates in the aforementioned prevailing professionalised environment. There have been some developments within a more practical and experiential approach to the subject of business focused fashion courses in response to industry changes and contemporary scholars and educationalist identifying that the lecture seminar model is not particularly effective as a tool for learning to exist. (Freeman et al 2014). The conventional one/two-hour lecture often represents a passive, rigidly teacher-centred conception of teaching and learning (Ramsden 2005), whilst other activities such as experiential learning, situated learning theory, community of practice and behaviourist theories have been identified (UNESCO. 2014) to support learning more successfully as well as improving student engagement and motivations.

For this model to be effective Ramsden accurately states that the seminar and tutorials, which support the lectures, should be engaging and encourage confrontation between students with ideas and feedback on a student's progress towards grasping those ideas something not always evident or explicit within many Fashion Business related programmes. Further research into specific modules/units as part of the larger body of work which informs this paper showed that many of the business-based courses appear to be devoid of constructive alignment (Biggs 2003), whereby the constructive element is something the learners create for themselves, and the alignment element is the teaching system which supports learning activities that are appropriate to successfully achieving the desired outcomes. Learning often appears to take place on a 'surface' level with little or no 'scaffolding' to support individual investigation.

There also seems to be minimal identification of authoritative discourse through even the two-step model of dialogic (presenting ideas) and discourse (making meaning) (Leach and Scott 2000).

In between the spaces of these two contrasting pedagogic models sits some of the newly focused courses such as Fashion Promotion and Fashion Communication rooted courses. These are beginning to adopt a more hybrid model, part creative and part business, part lecture and part studio, or embracing the notion of studio practice as a theoretical positioning for the creation of outputs as opposed to a physical experience. This hybrid model clearly allows for the inclusion of business orientation and understanding; however, it is questionable whether these static non-experiential aspects of the model, identified earlier as not being particularly conducive to learning can satisfy contemporary industry needs and student expectations. Radclyffe-Thomas et al (2018) accurately identify Fashion education as predominantly nurturing creativity in design and promotion while its sole purpose for business has been to identify and implement efficiencies across varying market operations, the challenge for fashion educators therefore is to interrogate these practices and propose alternatives that address and triangulate the model into a working pedagogy, that is possibly more radical in its approach, but is responsive to the broader macro/meso influences, previously noted, whilst underpinned by robust learning approaches and methodologies that enable student participation, ownership and engagement.

The Owner Learner Model (OLM) within the Erus Domain

For the vocational rooted, non-traditional academic subjects such as fashion the afore mentioned centralised approach to institutional structures, curriculum models, quality procedures and programme timelines seems counter intuitive to contemporary expectations of a consumerist culture now embedded within the 'norms' of present and future generations of prospective students. As Gale (2011) accurately remarks there is an expectation to see the global orientation of the industry from garment manufacture, garment, consumption, and garment disposal reflected in curriculum development and which in turn drives the student experience. Change within the education sector is certainly beginning to take shape and is beginning to be reimagined at an accelerated pace as a response to the global Covid-19 pandemic, with renowned institutions globally beginning to acknowledge the breadth and variety of skills and technical expertise that will be required for future fashion graduates.

Joanne Arbuckle an academic from the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York defines fashion as no longer a siloed vocation but requires educators to create interdisciplinary environments and experiences that allow students to become active participants in their own learning, discovering, and constructing knowledge for themselves or as part of a team (Arbuckle 2018). Farah Ahmed from the London College of fashion suggests that the next generation of creative leaders will need to respond to eco-social and political issues responsibly,which will require fashion education to adopt sustainability as a default mindset. Jason Kass from the School of Fashion at Parsons School of Design, New York observes that the skills required for fashion design students of the future should have focus on the thinking and use ofdesign, harnessing technology, such as virtual garment simulation and 3D printing to rethink

the global supply chain in a responsible manner, whilst fashion business students require adaptive skills to respond quickly to social, cultural political economic and environmental developments as they occur (Van Elven 2019).

Acknowledgment and implementation, however, is more challenging and complicated to align and enable especially in supporting an inclusive learning environment which empowers s all students in engaging with a collaborative, possibly multi-disciplinary learning landscape as opposed to the notion of individual discipline. Trowler (2014) adopts a position that the categorisation of 'discipline' does not have a set of essential characteristics or individual core characteristics either and, in line with this paper, identifies that the twenty first century needs of disciplines goes beyond their original epistemological structures requiring the incorporationof technologies, ideologies, marketisation, globalisation and the rise of the evaluative state, as influential to academic's behaviour. (Trowler 2014). There is clearly a consensus for change within a model that clearly positions the student, the student experience, and the student's expectations at its core. It is the student that ultimately informs the teaching excellence Framework (TEF) which in turn responds to University KPI's and the student data which supports the Academy in terms of funding, reputation and, as a consequence, league table status for the majority of UK HEI's. The proposition therefore is to employ a learning and teaching regime within a Higher Education Fashion School/Institute setting which identifies student ownership as its key emergent practice. Students as already noted, entertain a consumerist ethos, which aligns with the external dynamics of policy and performance.

There is no one 'student experience' rather each individual student has his or her own experience (Kandiko and Mawer 2013) reinforcing the need to shape educational practices and the student journey through these realities or the 'perceived realities' experienced by the student. This learning and teaching regime with its focus on learning and ownership, identifies with Trowlers (2008) description of the composition of a Teaching and Learning regimes (TLR) constructed from a constellation of 'eight moments'.

- Recurrent Practices
- Tacit assumptions
- Implicit Theories of teaching and learning
- Discursive repertoires
- Conventions of Appropriateness
- Power Relations
- Subjectivities in Interaction
- Codes of Signification

In which Trowler recognises that each moment internalises all the others and that this discourse of beliefs, values, desires, institution, material practice and social relationships are simultaneously powerful formative modes and discourse in their own rights. What seems less explicit within this model is the role of the student as 'actor' or 'engager' within these

'moments'. The development of alternative TLR's usually relates to the operation and flow of power and its distribution between academics (teachers) and students with Academics normally in the prominent position of power in their everyday practices and in relation to their students (Trowler and Cooper 2002). In recognising this shift in power from the academic to the student and putting greater emphasis on learning it would seem appropriate to marginally modify the semantic emphasis of TLR to a Learning Teaching Regime (LTR) and a curriculum framework proposition that could be identified and labelled as the Owner-Learner Model (OLM). This proposed OLM model places ownership as its fundamental driver identifying both student as owner and teacher as owner, sometimes equally and sometimes individually, but always with shared discourse. Student involvement in faculty development practices has been virtually invisible (Cox and Sorenson 2000) although the student voice has become a powerful tool in the universities and individual programmes standing, through the NSS. Bovill et al (2010) suggest that academics should embrace and encourage students to participate in the analysing and designing of pedagogical practices (Bovill et al 2010) whilst identifying the following characteristics which may enable this joint participation to change to occur; These are:

- Inviting students to be partners (active and authorative collaborators) in pedagogical planning, thus challenging traditional hierarchies and roles.
- Supporting dialogue across differences (position and perspective) yielding fresh insights and deeper engagement in teaching and learning
- Fostering collaboration with staff and students taking responsibility for teaching and learning
- Serving as intermediaries , facilitating new relationships between students and academic staff.

The proposition of an Owner-Learner model (OLM) as being a consideration for future fashion education certainly draws influence from these characteristics and supports the notion of building student agency in the development of educational practices whilst in turn contributing to student engagement through ownership, a community of shared responsibility and authentic co-enquiry informed practices.

In terms of an applied practical context OLM locates itself within several practice models such as co-creation, the connected curriculum, problem/project-based learning, and studio practice, a signature pedagogy, of art and design disciplines. Bovill et al (2016) identify four distinct roles that the student undertakes in the co-creation of learning and teaching these are Representation, Consultant, Co-researcher and Pedagogical co -designer. In a later publication Bovill and Woolmer (2018) analyse four curriculum frameworks in relation to co-creation. Constructive alignment (Biggs 1996), Academic Staff Definitions of Curriculum (Fraser & Bosanquet 2006),Knowing , Acting and Being (Barnett and Coate, 2005) and What Counts as Valid Knowledge and 'Framing' (Bernstein 1975, 2000). They identify accurately that although Biggs model is influential in emphasising student learning and activities within the curriculum, it does not address issues of power and privilege in the production of knowledge, assuming the academic is responsible for teaching, evaluation, assessment and learning outcomes. OLM recognises that this framework although student centred limits flexibility,

student ownership and the broader co-creation of learning. Bovill and Woolmer (2018) also acknowledge that Barnet and (2005) ideas of knowing, acting and being should allow the student to influence practices through developing a position in relation to knowledge, existing experiences, and their place in the world (Bovill and Woolmer 2018). However, Barnett and Coate (2005) themselves argue that the focus on content and skills development within curriculum, and by extension pedagogic practices, are insufficient for the complexities of contemporary education. Concluding that although being suitably located to be influential, students rarely have the opportunity to impact institutional practices. OLM would aim to ensure students play a pivotal role in the enactment of curriculum and pedagogy through empowerment and dialogue.

In relation to the connected curriculum Fung's (2017) visual framework comprises of a core principle that students should learn through critical enquiry and research and six connective dimensions of practice which is designed to encourage critical and constructive dialogue around how undergraduate and post graduate degree programmes are designed and the relationship of this design with how students learn. (Carnell and Fung 2017).

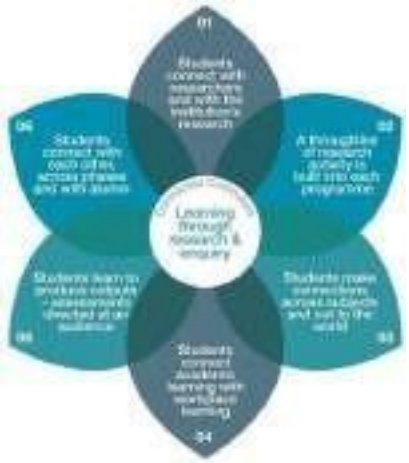

Figure 1

This model (Fig 1) reiterates the student as learner within a research and project-based model and there is some evidence to show that these type of active enquiry-based activities and approach's lead to highly effective learning (Wieman and Gilbert 2015). For OLM and its context for Fashion, characteristics 03 and 05 are significant in addressing the external factors identified within this paper. For 03 a powerful and significant relationship with external partners and socio-eco-political environments is certainly key to obtaining individual ownership and graduate career directions. Whilst characteristic 05 empowers the students to create appropriate and individual outcomes, across the broader notion of 'Fashion' relevant to identifiable audiences , specifically global fashion business. In contrast the audience in many existing practices within non industry rooted courses is invariably the academic. In terms of pedagogic delivery, the basis for OLM and Fashion, due to its vocational nature could, within existing paradigms, be primarily situated within the art and design model which historically requires a studio setting to support the development of outputs/artefacts or within a hybrid

model whereby the studio setting is a philosophical space for creating ideas, concepts, and services.

An OLM hybridity becomes less reliant upon the physical space to ‘make’ practice but a requires a setting for shared engagement which supports the learning of theoretical and thematic explorations which underpins both vocationalism and professional practice. There have been significant investigations into art and design pedagogy or studio practice and Orr etal (2014) suggest from their analysis and interviews with students, that the student’s conceptions of this type of pedagogy is understood as one that places the student as active co-producers of their learning a form of ‘reverse transmission’(Orr et al 2014). They also significantly noted that students omitted from their experiences of a studio-based learning environment any reference to any explicit theoretical underpinning. Art and design staff wouldprefer to believe that this element of a student’s learning is embedded within all activities, butthe emphasis is effectively on the currency of the creation of artefact, OLM would also envisage critical debate and theoretical underpinning as an essential element within a learning domain .In most situations within an OLM pedagogy, students could engage with a project centred or aproblem-based learning curriculum. Project centred learning from an art and design perspectiveundoubtedly creates a complex environment between tutor and student which shifts in subtle ways between positions of power and powerlessness throughout the duration of an individual student study journey(Orr and Shreeve 2017).

The project is normally informed by a brief which presents the learning tasks and how learning is structured, OLM would encourage most briefs to be negotiated co-creations, in triangulation with the student (the performer), the academic (the institutional representative) and wherever possible an external contributor (the professional). Project centred learning as defined by Orr and Shreeve (2017) “asks what is to be learnt, not what has been learnt, a contested space when the university requirement is for tutors to specify learning outcomes in advance”. They also identify the challenges and responses required to successfully navigate and negotiate these practices, as a curriculum, that is ‘sticky’ translated as dynamic and emergent, having the potential to be experienced in positive and negative ways enroute to fashioning a creative practitioner identity (Orr and Shreeve 2017). OLM recognises the notion of ‘stickiness’ but prefers to replace and extend this principle in a project and problem based, negotiated, individually positioned domain identified as ‘Erus’ (Latin for owner).

This Erus domain would fully engage with project based and problem-based learning as research evidence in this area shows that it helps students become intrinsically motivated, as the work they undertake on meaningful tasks are essentially motivated by their own interests, challenges, or sense of satisfaction, adding value to what they are learning (Himelo-Silver2004). Creating an appropriate environment however for a successful implementation of these activities would no doubt be problematic in the current HEI environment , as space and resource designation requires flex and a learning landscape not prevailing across the majority of UK Universities, who continue to build signature buildings filled with traditional teaching spaces.

the Erus domain for an Owner-Learner model to exist within and Erus domian and to be enabled would require significant disruption across university paradigms. These would include,

delivery methods where currently activities are related to individual programmes within historically rooted landscapes of classroom, studio, or lecture theatre. OLM could support a multi-disciplinary student experience allowing an individual students 'Fashion' journey scaffolded by a much broader theoretical and practical knowledge, an interface with technologies and a unique student experience which supports a career path trajectory that is negotiated and facilitated with academics and relevant industry contributors. There seems no reason to differentiate between classified sub-disciplines such as, Fashion Design, Fashion Marketing, Fashion Buying and Merchandising or Fashion Promotion when these current definitions are already becoming blurred and, in the future, possibly obsolete. Abbadi (2017) describes the potential for a new fashion education as an evolving 'fashion sculpture' which is participatory, interconnected, engaged with cultural and material production through critical eyes and by many hands and minds seeking common solutions whilst retaining individuality. The OLM would certainly aspire to these criteria but encourage this to be taken further questioning institutional programme frameworks, assessment regulations and academic calendars.

Weideling (2019) forecasts a future HEI environment whereby students demand a 'playlist' approach to HE selecting content and development opportunities from more than one provider, which may or may not equate to a 3 or 4 year period of study. He describes an 'Infinite' classroom using Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) to create 5G powered spaces for 'lifelike' activities to be enacted. The fashion industry undoubtedly has become globalised, virtualised, and diversified moving from analogue to digital environments, characterised by speed of transaction, innovation, and continual change (Bridgstock et al 2012). The future fashion student ultimately needs a more diverse skill set and an individual outlook which understands a technological relationship with fashion, such as data, behavioural analytics, material sciences construction methodologies and ecological impacts (Hoang 2016).

Final Thoughts

The premise of this paper was to gain insights from a broader piece of study into the vast array of complex factors which impact on academic practices . This includes the current macro/meso influences of external governmental policy and legislation, the accelerated contemporary fashion industry, Universities strategic aims, the broader narratives around the eco-socio and political environments and the role of the students as consumer. The aim at the micro level, was to consider existing pedagogic practices and delivery domains for fashion related programmes, with a view to proposing an alternative model as a response to these factors witha view to provoke and inspire further discussion and debate.

Positioning the learner (student) and learning at the core of pedagogy and curriculum through an Owner-Learner Model (OLM) proposition and an Erus (owner) domain has arguably the possibility to directly respond to the key influences of NSS, TEF, Value for Money, Industry requirements and student expectations, formulated through the empowerment of students in the co-creation of pedagogy and curricula. This approach requires collaboration and negotiation

with both academics and industry professionals, with consideration of the broader eco-socio-political landscape the in the creation of a sustainable educational template.

Christopher (2018) suggests Universities will maintain competitive positions by reducing asset bases and administration in favour of digital channels and third party-relationships. As already noted, this requires a cultural change from academics and a considerable move away from purely imparting knowledge to creating a transitional experience that enables learning and the uniqueness of the individual to flourish. Fundamentally existing practices have been recognised within the sector (Faerm 2012, Thornquist 2014, Gale 2012 , Williams 2018) as requiring modernisation in line with shifting environments in global industry practices, the digitalisation and massification of communication and consumption, and particularly with reference to the UK , the politicisation of the HE sector, in terms of funding and measures of success.

This proposition of an alternative approach, model and domain presently stops short of application although it is currently being mapped for a newly validated programme. Future investigation would require a practical delivery model and an empirical evaluation of an enacted Owner Learner Model to identify whether this would indeed create a sustainable template for the Future of Fashion education in the future which is agile enough to respond sufficiently and successfully to a variety of stakeholders and remain robust and responsive in extraordinary situations such as witnessed recently as institutions and students alike navigated their way through a global pandemic.

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