

## **PROACTIVE EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR MEDIATING FASHION ACROSS BORDERS: building a library of fashion business case studies to teach sustainability**

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### **Abstract**

The fashion industry is acknowledging that a shift towards sustainability is the key to the future. Thus, fashion students - key players in this future - must understand the tenets of sustainability and how they can collaborate with other disciplines, cultures, and nations to create and implement changes. Developing analytical, creative, and innovative thinking is essential for students to have a competitive advantage when entering the workforce. (Louca et. al, 2014). Research purports that advanced case studies help learners apply various thinking methods and make use of their existing knowledge in new situations (Kimmel, 1995); such cases are useful for enhancing complex cognitive abilities in learners (Bonner, 1999). In the process of studying existing cases from the leading publishers, the authors observed a gap in the market: a limited array of sustainability-focused case studies. With localization being another overlooked aspect, the idea of a tailored library of contemporary, Canadian-specific case studies, focused on innovative business models has organically emerged. To date, the authors have developed four and evaluated three case studies in their classroom based on local apparel businesses. To mediate fashion across borders, the project included three education institutions from Canada, Brazil, and the UK. The students participated in system design thinking framework workshops aiming to further enhance their critical thinking and support intellectual curiosity from a future perspective (Scharmer, 2018). Student feedback has been gathered through anonymous questionnaires, individual reflection papers with open-ended questions, and one-on-one discussions with learners between January 2020 and May 2021. It can be concluded that the teaching materials have allowed students to relate, observe,

and provide innovative solutions more critically. To implement the process in future classroom projects, educators can utilize system design frameworks in correspondence with respective local case studies.