

TEACHING CONSCIOUS ENTREPRENEURSHIP Through Project-Based Learning

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Entrepreneurship in Fashion

- Entrepreneurship: “the creation of opportunity and value with intent to profit financially, socially or otherwise through the assumption of risk and effort.” (Americans for the Arts, 2019).
- Criticism in fashion education: Design students do not possess business skills
- Learning entrepreneurial and managerial skills are essential, particularly for students in art-related fields, such as fashion.



Study Purpose

- Providing students with entrepreneurial skills through practice-based learning completed as a collaborative cross-functional team of a designer and a merchandiser.

Project-based Learning

- Project-based learning greatly increases the likelihood that students will permanently remember new information (Anderson, 2008) through application of concepts.
- Students learn better in cross-functional teams where which emulates the working environment in the industry
- *Therefore, a semester-long course project is introduced where graduate students worked in teams of two, one specializing in fashion design and one in fashion merchandising.*
- Graduate students collaborated to create a sustainable fashion brand based on market needs and feasibility that implements sustainable practices throughout its supply chain.
- The project focuses on basic aspects of entrepreneurship through determining a market need, conducting competitive analysis and market analyses, developing a brand idea, working through finances, creating a sourcing strategy and marketing plan, as well as retail strategy. Students focused on creating unique value propositions and balancing the risks versus input that goes into creating a successful entrepreneurial idea.

Implementation



- Masters level elective graduate entrepreneurship course with eleven students (50% in design and 50% in merchandising).
- Students mentored by faculty member & campus wide resources that promote entrepreneurship efforts.



- Evaluation tools include
- business plan to be presented in the form of a 10-slide presentation
 - 90-second elevator pitch
 - self-reflection journal

Outcomes

Student Reflections:

- **Communication was the key:** “my main take away of this project is that communication is the most important thing when working in a group”
- **Details Matter:** “There are a lot of different steps and logistical things to consider when starting a business”, I learned how difficult yet exciting it can be to formulate a sustainable business.”
- **Team work makes dream work;** “You have your strengths and your partner has theirs. It is helpful to work with someone who has knowledge in different areas because it will make you a stronger team.”
- **Competitive advantage:** “It is also important to stand out when in a competition”
- **Have Confidence:** “My main takeaway from this project is that starting a company is very feasible. Not that it would be simple, but I had never viewed it as a realistic possibility, for me.”
- **Finances are HARD:** All students found figuring out the financial plan as the hardest part of their business plan.

Conclusions

Creativity meets Entrepreneurship: Collaborative Learning

The project gave students creative space to come up with their own brand concept but be pragmatic in understanding how to develop their brand into a viable business concept. Therefore, education should focus on collaborative learning between designers and merchandisers than putting them in silos.

Need for financial Literacy

All student groups found proposing a financial plan for their future business the hardest part of the project. Therefore, more business finance needs to be incorporated into fashion curriculum.

Examples of student work

