

## **FASHION FUSION NEXUS: BRIDGING BORDERS, BUILDING FUTURES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In an era where education transcends geographical boundaries, the “Fashion Fusion Nexus: Bridging Borders, Building Futures” poster encapsulates a groundbreaking six-week Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) initiative. This landmark project, the largest ever undertaken by Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and Humber College, is at the forefront of a post-humanist exploration in global education, challenging 144 students to reimagine the contours of learning and collaboration.

The COIL initiative prompted students to form virtual consultancy agencies, addressing pressing issues in sustainability and technology provided by the Commonwealth Fashion Council (CFC). These groups ventured beyond conventional academic exercises, engaging in pre-recorded client pitches that culminated in reflective insights and, for the most exceptional, coveted internships.

At the heart of our research is a pivotal question: How do COIL projects, rooted in a post-humanist framework, sculpt student experiences and perceptions? This inquiry is particularly salient in nurturing intercultural competencies, digital literacy, and innovative thinking within the global fashion education sphere.

Adopting a qualitative approach, the study delved into student reflections on their COIL experience. Through content analysis, we discerned emergent themes highlighting the transformative nature of this educational model.

The COIL project’s real-world consultancy simulation exposed students to the rigors of navigating complex intercultural and interpersonal relationships, fostering a nuanced understanding of collaborative leadership. The international complexion of the project afforded students a genuine engagement with a kaleidoscope of cultural perspectives, enhancing their global outlook.

In the digital realm, reliance on communication technologies provided students with a tangible experience of virtual collaboration’s challenges, a skill increasingly valued in today’s digital workplace. Furthermore, the project’s integration of systems thinking with cutting-edge technologies such as AI, AR, and VR spurred a culture of innovation and creative problem-solving.

Central to the project was the seamless weaving of sustainability and ethical considerations into a practical industry framework, prompting students to confront these critical elements in real-world business contexts. Moreover, the COIL project was instrumental in honing both technical acumen and soft skills, pivotal for growth in a digital and globalised environment.

The outcomes were telling. Students showcased critical thinking, creativity, and technological adeptness, with two teams securing internships—a testament to the project’s practical and professional impact. This educational experience, as demonstrated by the “Fashion Fusion Nexus” poster, is a beacon of future-focused learning, exemplifying the power of digital collaboration in shaping the changemakers of tomorrow.