

# Fashioning the Future – Where will Fashion be in 2020?

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1. Level	FE, UG
2. Pre-requisite knowledge required by educators	A. No background knowledge required
3. Pre-requisite knowledge required by students	A. No background knowledge required
4. Number of students	3 to 80
5. Length of time required	60 minutes
6. Type of activity	Group work, Interactive activities, Discussion and debate,
7. Discipline	Business, Cross-curricular, Design, Marketing, Interactive
8. Topics covered	Student / educator defined

## OBJECTIVES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To have an awareness of the breadth and complexity of the sustainability issues in fashion; and to be able to think creatively to respond to these issues.

## SUMMARY

The fashion industry's seasonal nature and reliance on the power of consumption make for a tricky dilemma when considering its ethical and environmental impact. Fashioning the Future is an exercise that allows students to explore the many issues surrounding sustainability and fashion, and develop creative visions in response to these issues. Our students are the professionals and decision makers of the future, and by gazing forwards and debating the major ethical and environmental issues, fashion students can understand the importance of their roles whilst highlighting the relevance of creativity in developing solutions.

This workshop was developed by London College of Fashion staff, and ran during Pathfinding Week in September 2007 with approximately 50 arts students of varied disciplines. The workshop could work with small or large groups, up to around 80 students. The workshop lasts approximately one hour.

## MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Flipcharts (1 per group)
- Coloured pens (selection per group)
- Glue
- Selection of magazines and newspapers
- Scissors

## OUTLINE

1. Introduction: Workshop leader invites students to introduce themselves. Students are sat at tables in groups of 4-8 people.
2. Leader asks each group to come up with three key issues affecting fashion in relation to ethical and environmental consequences. Suggestions may include:
  - pesticide use in cotton production;
  - labour conditions in garment factories;
  - air miles and carbon footprint associated with air freighting and shipping long distances;
  - fast fashion;
  - care and repair of clothing;
  - end of life, e.g. textiles going to landfill, recycling.
3. Leader collates answers from groups and initiates discussion, using flipchart or whiteboard to chart ideas and issues. Encourage debate and discussion within the group, and ask whether these issues are likely to have more or less relevance in the year 2020. Think about the all encompassing nature of fashion and the many

forms that it takes in society – media, retail, journalism, photography, advertising, music, product, etc.

Suggested questions:

- How will we buy fashion in 2020?
  - How will fashion products be advertised?
  - What role will the Internet play in the retailing and promotion of fashion?
  - Which big brands will still be around?
  - What relevance will big brands have?
  - Will we be paying relatively more or less for fashion?
  - How important will magazines be?
  - What will we do with our clothes when we no longer want them?
  - How will clothes make us feel?
4. Ask each group to think about all the issues discussed. Fast forward to the year 2020 and ask each group to imagine how the fashion industry may be working differently by then. Using the materials provided, develop an idea that may be a reality in 2020, in response to the issues discussed. It may be a fashion product, a retail concept, form of media or advertising campaign, how things are designed, or consumed. The materials provide stimulus and allow the students to offer a visual representation of their concept.
  5. Each group presents back and others have the opportunity to ask questions and debate the concepts.
  6. Each group offers a score out of ten for each concept, and the overall winner is awarded a prize (optional).

## FEEDBACK

On running this workshop in September 2007, I was struck by the enthusiasm of the group. We had around 50 newly enrolled students from across the University of the Arts, London, so not exclusively fashion but also fine art, graphic design, textiles and broadcasting students. The group's reaction to the issues involved was positive, however the ideas and responses were less developed than originally anticipated by the group leaders. A strong emphasis on the discussion and sharing of ideas seemed to evolve the group's arguments and I would recommend allocating plenty of time for point 3 of the workshop. This section also seemed to be the most rewarding. The responses to point 4 were varied and visually exciting, ranging from new retail concepts to clothes recycling programmes. The groups worked well together given that they hadn't met before.

This is an excerpt from:

### **Sustainable Fashion: A Handbook for Educators**

Edited by Liz Parker on behalf of Fashioning an Ethical Industry, UK, and Marsha A. Dickson on behalf of Educators for Socially Responsible Apparel Business, USA.

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