



Rachel Anderson, Texas Tech University
Ismael de Anda III, Artist
Cody Arnall, Texas Tech University
Alicia McDonald, Texas Tech University
Mona Maher, Texas Tech University
Monica Prado, Texas Tech University
Chiseum Dent, Texas Tech University
David Deeds, Texas Tech University
Raegan McGuire, Texas Tech University

Collaborative Education: Community based art and fashion learning applications for the prolonged use phase of a t-shirt

Key words: collaboration, consumption, education, fashion, art, community, sustainability

Over a two-week period in 2017, the artist-in-residence, faculty, and graduate and undergraduate students collaborated on a temporary art installation of soft and hard sculpture located inside of an academic building on campus, as part of the university's public art collection. Working together as a creative team, and involving the community, they built the sculpture, applying sustainability practices through the extended use phase of the materials. In 2019, the fashion faculty led a new team to breakdown the sculpture and increase again the life cycle of the components by using them for two different community-based art and fashion education non-profit workshops that provide art and fashion learning for children in foster care.

The project addresses some pertinent topics in relationship to teaching innovation, extending the use phase of materials, collaborative education, and community involvement and outreach. The use phase of the lifecycle of the t-shirt for this project has been extended through donations from the community, re-purposed engineered patchwork canvas for the canopy of the sculpture, and its re-use again for making clothing for children in foster care. There is importance in education for teaching students about a longer use phase for the lifecycle of a garment. "Product sharing, as well as new rental and collaborative models, have great potential for conserving natural resources. This is where the concept of "using rather than owning" comes in, involving the prolongation of the use phase of products by pursuing a variety of strategies for action. For instance, the resource consumption of products that are material-intensive in the production phase can be optimized by prolonging the use phase" (Leisman, et al., 2013). Having students involved in a project through several design and execution phases combined with the creation of something new as a collaborative team fosters more overall personal satisfaction with the project. "Interestingly, it was observed that students seemed to value their sense of achievement, their learning processes, and the products they were working on more than their grades. It is

concluded that collaborative learning in higher education should be designed using challenging and relevant tasks that build shared ownership with students” (Scager, et al., 2016).

The artists personal body of work and statement behind the sculpture strongly involves using resources and collaborative involvement from the local community for his site-specific art pieces. This art installation was composed of a variety of materials including souvenir t-shirts donated by the students and local community thus creating a community based personal connection with the art. The artist and art faculty worked with the sculpture students to weld and construct a monumental bone-like framework while the artist and fashion faculty worked with the fashion students in procurement, cutting, arranging, and stitching together the donated shirts to create the canopy which would be affixed to the large hanging metal structure. The artist supplied the specifications and sketches for the initial renderings of the sculpture and students made design choices as they put the patchwork canopy together.

The presentation will include the logistics of the first phase of this project as to how the artist, faculty, and students worked within a large group of undergraduate and graduate students to design, build, and install this sculpture through multiple interdisciplinary collaborations with the local community, students, and faculty from two different colleges and departments. It will cover the history of the artist’s work in relationship to sustainability practices and community involvement and how these concepts moved toward a collaboration for public art with academic applications. Student testimonials on how the project contributed to increased skillsets in collaboration, use of sustainability practices, project ownership, teaching, teamwork, and community involvement. Photographs documenting the artists initial sketches and specifications, building and installation processes, artist talk highlights, and final images of the installed sculpture will be shown in the presentation.

The second phase of this project will be presented that involved faculty and graduate students teaching two separate classes of fashion workshops with children in foster care in the local community. Both workshops culminated with the children modeling their sewn designs using these re-used art sculpture t-shirts for their own fashion show.

Student testimonials on how the project contributed to their learning of collaboration, applying design principles, sustainability practices, increased leadership qualities, project management and teamwork, increased teaching skills and experience, and increased community involvement will be included. Documented pictures of the sculpture initial sketches, the welding and sewing of the building processes involving students, artist talk highlights, final images of the installed sculpture for public art in an academic building, and in culmination the children designing, sewing, and modeling their final garments made from materials from the sculpture.



Citations

Leismann, K., Schmitt, M., Rohn, H., & Baedeker, C. (2013). Collaborative Consumption: Towards a Resource-Saving Consumption Culture.

Scager, K., Boonstra, J., Peeters, T., Vulperhorst, J., & Wiegant, F. (2016). Collaborative Learning in Higher Education: Evoking Positive Interdependence. *CBE life sciences education*, 15(4), ar69. <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.16-07-0219>