Pinterest Project: Using Social Media and Co-Design to Develop Apparel Design Skills

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(1) New/Creative/Innovative Strategy

This paper demonstrates a creative approach to teaching aesthetics, design, and product development. It utilizes co-design methodologies and the website, Pinterest, as a social media outlet to teach students in a concept development course how to design for a target customer's aesthetic tastes.

(2) Purpose/Objective of Strategy

The purpose of this paper is to present an innovative approach to incorporating social media and co-design methods in fashion design pedagogy. There is increasing evidence that student use of social media is on the rise. In *The American Freshman National Norms Fall 2011*, the Higher Education Research Institute highlights only 5.2% of high school seniors don't spend time using social media (Pryor, J. H., DeAngelo, L., Palucki Blake, L., Hurtado, S., Tran, S, p. 13). Co-design research methods include interactivity between the designer and consumer. With over twenty years experience in generative research, Sanders (2006) found people want to transition from passive consumers to becoming more active creators. *The Pinterest Project* sets out to build upon the increased student use of social media and the consumer desires to be active participants with the design process.

(3) Implementation of Strategy

*The Pinterest Project* was introduced to college juniors and seniors in a concept development course. A specified target consumer created an inspiration board on Pinterest, and the students were challenged to design a small collection of illustrated garments based on the consumer's aesthetic tastes and overall lifestyle. Prior to the project, an identified consumer was asked to participate in the project by initially creating the inspiration board and later giving feedback on the designs.

1. Students established design teams of two. They were given a photo of the consumer and weblink to the consumer's inspiration board on Pinterest. The created inspiration board did not include clothing as to prevent any direct design influence from a specific garment.

2. A verbal analysis of the inspiration board was presented to show research of the consumer's aesthetic taste with specific regards to color, pattern, texture, and shape.

3. The design teams created a 6 piece collection of illustrated garments using Adobe Illustrator. These collections were then uploaded to the consumer's existing Pinterest inspiration board.

4. The target consumer was able to post comments directly online about each design in the collection for instant feedback to the students. The consumer was given directions to make both positive and constructive criticism regarding whether there was interest in purchasing the design. A general class critique was also included in the project.

(4) Effectiveness of Strategy

This creative approach proved to be an effective student learning experience. It provided an educational opportunity to interface with a realized consumer, develop designs based on aesthetic principles, and build skills in giving/receiving criticism. Students of the course specifically made positive comments about gaining knowledge of a target customer. *The Pinterest Project* will be continued in future concept development courses. The presentation of this project would include photographs and images of the process and final designs.

## References

Pryor, J. H., DeAngelo, L., Palucki Blake, L., Hurtado, S., and Tran, S. (2012). *The American Freshman: National norms for fall 2011*. Los Angeles, CA: Higher Education Research Institute.

Sanders, Elizabeth B.-N. "Scaffolds for Building Everyday Creativity," in *Design for Effective Communications: Creating Contexts for Clarity and Meaning*. Jorge Frascara (Ed.) Allworth Press New York, New York, 2006.