



Fashion Meets Architecture: Inspiration Interchange
A Collaborative Project for Apparel Design and Interior Design

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Research has shown early exposure to interdisciplinary activities may contribute to a professional's appreciation of perspectives from diverse fields. This exposure is the founding principle behind a collaborative project developed for sophomore-level apparel design (AD) and interior (ID) design students. This presentation highlights the objectives, method, and outcomes of the project, and addresses the future of this collaboration. This presentation will be a foundation for discussion of the possibilities, challenges, and progression of interdisciplinary projects.

Objectives & Method

There were three main objectives for both the AD and ID projects:

1. Encourage students to interact with others outside their comfort zone and other than their immediate discipline of study
2. Advance the students' presentation and language skills to communicate effectively with others outside their discipline
3. Challenge the students to critically analyze and apply a source of inspiration which is dependent upon specialized knowledge from others outside their immediate discipline area of study

The project was developed as two distinct assignments. The AD students designed garments using the work of famous architects as inspiration. The ID students designed an Apparel Research Center using collections from famous fashion designers as inspiration. Students in both disciplines worked in teams to complete the projects, pairing an AD with an ID team. Interdisciplinary teams met at key points throughout the design process to gain feedback for their designs.

The first phase of the project involved concept development. During this phase the students met in a collaborative meeting with their interdisciplinary teams and obtained information about their respective designers and architects. The students from both disciplines, based on the knowledge and research gathered in these collaborative meetings, then developed a concept board.

The second phase of the project was the implementation phase. Prior to moving forward to final designs, students met again in their interdisciplinary groups to present their concept boards and obtain feedback on the representation (or misrepresentation) of their designer or architect. The project culminated in a final presentation with both the AD and the ID classes in attendance.

Outcomes

Generally the outcomes were very positive and the educators believe the collaborative approach was successful and overall the initial objectives were met. However, there is room for improvement.

Objective 1

In the first objective students were asked to interact with others from their immediate area of study. Both the AD and the ID groups reported positive comments regarding working in their interdisciplinary teams, specifically each group noted they gained a deeper respect and understanding of the others' discipline.

Objective 2

The second objective, which focused on advancing the student's presentation and language skills, met with strong success for the ID students, and weaker success for the AD students. The educators believe this resulted from the ID students having more opportunities for presentation practice throughout their semester.

Objective 3

In objective number three, the students were challenged to analyze how an inspiration and the knowledge that students from another discipline area of study could be applied to their immediate discipline area. This objective met with partial success. Based on the constructivist perspective of learning, this project put a strong emphasis on the understanding and application of design from two discipline areas. The collaboration of the different design programs encouraged all students to construct their own knowledge based on what they already knew and use that knowledge to engage in problem solving activities.

The educators found they need to challenge the students further to promote more creative outcomes. It is believed this can be accomplished by including a longer "incubation" for the concept development phase, which could produce a more in-depth application of the inspiration and the students' knowledge in the final results. Additionally, it was recognized the educators should provide more direction for the collaborative effort in order to assist the students in plumbing the depths of their respective knowledge bases.