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## Incorporating Pattern Making Textbook with a Notebook Project for Pattern Design Software

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Apparel design and product development alumni are currently discovering new employment prospects in pattern design especially related to computerized pattern design software. As a result of this observation a technical apparel design faculty member has incorporated a new project that combines both manual and computerized pattern design into the curriculum.

This project requires students to create **ALL** the patterns in the pattern design text book, *Flat Pattern Design* by Norma M. MacDonald while using Pattern Design Software/Systems (PDS). The textbook shows how to make the patterns when working manually on the table, but it gives no directions for applying that information to PDS. So, for this project students have to read all the directions in the textbook on how to make the pattern manually, then they had to use critical thinking to determine the best and shortest steps to follow when using the software to make the patterns.

Not only does this project help students to reinforce and learn manual pattern design processes and information, it also helps the students to increase their knowledge and skills to a much higher level when using pattern design software. Once the students are finished making each pattern, they are required to apply all needed text including their name, page and figure number from the text book, piece name, date, along with notches, drill holes, grain lines and any other special instructions. The patterns are printed on a piece of 8.5" x 11" paper and a thumbnail sketch of the garment is added to the page for further clarification. The pattern pieces are scaled down automatically to fit on the piece of paper and each one is at an approximate half scale size. Each page is placed inside a plastic enclosed page inside a notebook with a cover page, table of contents, and tabs dividing all the sections.

Making all the patterns in the entire textbook with the software requires students to read all the directions in the book, which helps to reinforce the information on how to make the patterns manually and also introduces new information covering pattern making concepts they have never used. They are required to make every collar, front, back, sleeve, skirt, etc. in the entire text book. At first they are slower when using the software and making the patterns, but as they get used to using the software, they become much faster. These students have taken three classes that include pattern design information and exercises prior to creating this project, so they are familiar with the manual pattern making processes. But they are not experts with making all types of garments especially the more complicated processes like how to create a

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shawl collar. They are also not experts with the software when they start this process, however by the end of the project their skill level has increased significantly and they are much faster. Creating this notebook significantly improves their overall knowledge and skill levels for manual and computer pattern making.

The last major design class that the apparel/fashion students take is where they make their senior collection. This class is taken in the semester after the pattern design notebook project is created. Prior to the students making the pattern design software notebook project, on average 10% or less of the students were able to use the pattern design software to make all their patterns for their senior collection. If they were able to use the software, most were slower on the computer when compared to working manually on the table. Consequently, the students did not want to use the software to make the patterns for their senior collection because they lacked speed and knowledge especially with the more complicated patterns. Those who did know how to make patterns with the software were much slower, and therefore it was not the most efficient use of their time.

Since the students have been making the computer pattern making notebook all the senior students want to use the pattern design software to create the patterns for their senior collection because they can make patterns three to four times faster than when making patterns manually. This saves them valuable time during one of their busiest semesters while they are at our university.

The pattern design notebooks are neat and professional and all writing in the book is typed. Several students have taken their pattern design notebooks with them on job interviews and the prospective employers always comment on how the books clearly show the student's extensive knowledge of pattern making when working manually or on a computer. In our current competitive work environment, having this additional tool to present to prospective employers, gives our alumni additional materials to present their technical knowledge and expertise when trying to land that perfect job!

Future ideas and plans for this expanding and improving this project are to add more advanced patterns and patterns for specific product types that are not currently included in the book by Norma MacDonald. For example, there are no patterns in this book for making a notched collar, swimwear, or strapless garments. My hopes are to include these items as part of the project in the future.