

Reflective Teaching Portfolio

by Su Ku

I teach future designers to solve modern design challenges with intelligence and creativity. In each class, students visually form their ideas with design journals and in various levels of project formation that nurture creative thinking and critical analysis of design components. The lessons emphasize the processes that form constructive approaches to design. I instruct students to create designs that are informative—well-communicated designs that show construction knowledge as well as a clear understanding of design elements and proportion. Also, I nurture the creativity in students that inspires others—awe-inspiring designs that encourage viewers to invest resources and time to realize the student’s vision or an opportunity to join a fashion company. I help prepare students to embrace diversity and civility as they pursue individual growth.

Learning Methods for the Associates

My Associate level classes nurture the foundation of fashion design skills. I engage my class to ask: Why do we distort the female form in the fashion proportion? When is it appropriate to render stylized vs realistic illustrations? What constitutes an original design? And each lesson starts with class discussion where I ask the class questions that encourage meaningful dialogue. In *Model Drawing for Fashion Designers* class, I explain in my demonstration that the elongated proportion of the figure is the tool to communicate design information. Using the dimension of head size in relation to the waist, elbow, knee and ankle convey measurements the fashion professionals rely on to specify design style measurements. In each following lesson on fabrics and garment details, I delve into the effect of light and weight of fabric that form a particular look and fit on the figure. I explain the intent of fashion illustration to inform technical and manufacturing partners of a designer’s vision effectively. But I also explain that design ideas should always be presented in their ideal form though stylized rendering and artistic expression to inspire interest and appreciation. In my Core classes, I explain to students that designers always envision a perfected form of their designs to attract the investment of time and resources from others to realize their design ideas. Beautiful renderings of figures and designs are practiced and refined to enhance idealization of creative thoughts. I emphasize research as key to forming original designs since understanding historical design movements to build upon or react against supports and enhance one’s credibility as a valid designer. I help build the curatorial ability in students to sift through various image resources to choose visuals that support and develop individual’s creative vision. I also guide the students to form efficient work habits and effective design processes to manage school work and advance in their design idea developments.

Learning Methods for the Bachelors

My Bachelor level classes emphasize strong collection building which culminates in professional portfolio presentation. I designed a curriculum to address three core case studies. First is the *Key Fabric Module*. I coined the term “Fabric Pyramid” in which the collection formation starts with the base cloths and build each supporting looks with novelty fabrics in the ascending level of importance. Second is the *Key Style Module* that addresses

the casual markets where identifying next season's best-selling style forms the basis for the collection development. Identifying the important style of the season through informed market analysis constructs the start of the collection building. Then the supporting design pieces that address various merchandising requirements form the balanced collection. The third is the designer level collection building, the *Key Silhouette Module*. Promoting the design direction with the designer's individual point of view, the collection is expanded to emphasize the visionary designs and styles that celebrate abundant creativity. The avant-garde designs are built upon the designer's creative vision with supporting pieces that complement entrepreneurs' and design house's portfolio. In each of the case studies, I address the questions to the class: Are all components of the design development valid? Are designs supported with relevant information? Are the collections formed sound and complete? I urge advanced level students to think as professionals and make decisions that support their creativity.

I prepare students for the fashion industry with an emphasis on professionalism. To effectively communicate original ideas and promote oneself intelligently, I conduct mock interview sessions during the student design presentations. I ask, "Tell me about yourself? How would your collection impact the fashion trends?" I ask challenging questions from interviews I conducted as the design director of a major fashion corporation, and the students are to construct their design philosophy, explain their design process and present themselves with poise and confidence.

Learning with Inclusion

I support diversity and various learning styles of my students. I encourage students to look at design objectives from different perspectives. What are the fashion needs and requirements of various locations within the United States and around the world that are determined by climate variations, social dynamics and cultural traditions? How does one showcase different races in our design figure styling? I encourage my students to expand their visual representations through research and considerations of various cultural and ethnic influences. As global citizens, fashion designers are responsible for presenting images that embrace cultural differences and ethnic diversity. By better understanding various cultures and people from different backgrounds, designers are better informed to address the needs of diverse contemporary customers.

Learning with Considerations

I support various learning styles of my students. I conduct individual conferences with each student to assess his or her needs and make time available to students to address their concerns. I have incorporated key words in my visual presentations to clarify the focus of lecture presentations to accommodate students whose primary language is not English. I emphasize key messages pausing for questions to re-iterate or re-examine the lesson. I also include more visual examples when I am using texts or introducing fashion aesthetics or fashion history lecture presentations. Providing an open environment to ask questions and express opinions, I encourage interactive discussions and a dynamic learning environment that fosters an inclusive space for learning and individual growth.

Learning Outcomes

I design each of my class lessons to fulfill course intent and achieve student learning outcomes effectively. I prepare valid visual presentations that inspire creativity and show student examples to clarify objectives. I encourage the practical application of design development by conducting each class as a design studio. We roleplay—I am the design director and my students are the design assistants. By practicing designing and developing a collection together, students experience the efficient design process and understand an individual's role in a multi-layer design environment. I empower students to fully grasp learning outcomes for each class with focused curriculum, dynamic lectures with various visual and technological tools and an inclusive studio environment where students flourish as a design student and a budding professional. I believe students who are empowered to inform and inspire others will become leaders of the fashion industry.