



## **REFLECTIVE TEACHING PORTFOLIO**

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**July 26, 2020**

### **1. Define your teaching philosophy.**

My teaching philosophy is rooted in my 24 years of experience working in the NYC fashion industry. I didn't have any academic teaching experience when I was hired, but Mary Ann Ferro assured me that I had the knowledge and current industry experience that would be priceless for the students at FIT. She was right. I realized I have been teaching others all my years as a head designer, design director, and creative director. I encourage my students to be fearless in their learning and in their creativity. And I often relate the lessons I teach to my experience working in the industry. These stories help give relevance to what they are learning. Whether it's a lecture on how to drape a raglan sleeve or how to foster a relationship with your sample maker, my students start to see the big picture and realize they are not just working for a letter grade, but for skills that will help them on the job. I do feel students are sometimes taught in a vacuum while in school and are often not prepared to tackle their first design job. I stress the importance of people skills because you can be the most talented designer in the world, but you will not be successful if you cannot effectively communicate your designs and relate to people. So when I split the students up into groups for their term project I can really see those who step up as leaders and those who need to learn to step up. I believe helping them hone their people skills along with their technical skills will give them an advantage out in the workforce and help navigate the ever-shifting landscape of the fashion industry.

### **2. Have you ever observed a master teacher? If the answer is yes, what do you recall most from the experience?**

Yes, my patternmaker, Jean Wnuk, was my master teacher and confidant for 17 years. She taught me everything I know about draping and patternmaking. But most importantly, she taught me to appreciate the craft of making a garment. The quality of her draping and patternmaking was impeccable and her problem solving-skills were unmatched. Her love and enthusiasm for her work kept her healthy until her passing at 94 years of age. She taught me to keep cool under deadlines and to always see life as an opportunity to learn and teach. She

actually started learning Chinese at age 85 and got into the Chinese newspaper as the honor student! I will always be indebted to her for her friendship and her nurturing advice.



**3. Give a examples of your most successful lesson. Why do you feel it was successful?**

My most successful lesson was this last Spring semester. It was a very trying semester to transition to remote teaching with practically no notice. I was determined to be there for the students who felt upended. Some were stranded in the FIT dorms with no means of getting home. Some ended up quarantined once they arrived in their country. And many did not have access to a dress form or a sewing machine. Resiliency and resourcefulness was the common theme throughout the remainder of my lessons. And despite the students' lack of resources, their final term projects ended being some of the most creative I have seen. One student, who was quarantined in India, ended up using her father's clear car cover to sew up her final term jacket. This student went from almost dropping out to having the best final term project in the class.

**4. Do you have an example of an unsuccessful lesson? How did you address the challenges?**

My first draping lesson of my first semester teaching was not successful because I had not properly assessed the skill level of my students. I assumed students in third semester draping could jump into a draping lesson on day one. I quickly realized they needed a review on even the basic principles of draping before I could introduce new techniques. Since that first class, I've learned that getting to know the students' skill level is just as important as getting to know who they are. So now I do a survey on day one and review what is needed before I start demoing.

**5. Why are you introducing and/or expanding the use of technology into your teaching?**

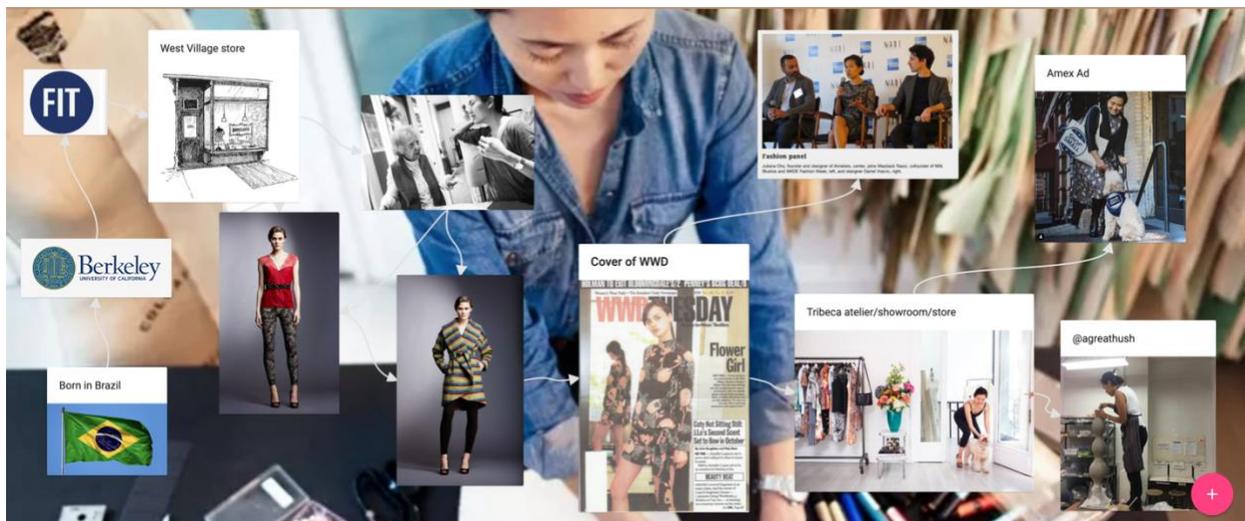
The future of academics is intertwined with technology. And when appropriately used, can only aid in the teaching process. This generation of students do not know life without technology, and therefore it is a crucial tool in relating to them. As an instructor, I feel obligated to take advantage of as many tech tools that are available to faculty. The more I can integrate applications like Padlet, Screencast-O-Matic, and Voice-Thread to my course, the more interesting and efficient it will be, especially in the remote setting that we are forced to be in right now.

**6. How do you feel these technology innovations will affect the student experience? How do you think it will affect your experience?**

I think these technology innovations will only help round out the students' experience. Technology should make you work smarter not harder. They help both the student and faculty be more efficient and sometimes lend new ways to be creative. One needs to be adept in technology to advance in almost any field these days. So arming these students with these skills now will only help them once they are working in the industry. My experience with technology has already made my lessons more layered and interesting. I am very excited to implement the new applications that I have learned in recent workshops.

**7. Please describe new teaching ideas you plan to implement as a result of this technology certificate program.**

I am excited to tackle a digital syllabus and I will be using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra for my lessons. One of the first assignments will be a Padlet collage that visually introduces themselves to the class. I have made one as my introduction to the students this coming semester.



I also plan to make Screencast-O-Matic videos and embed them on my Blackboard Content page via Youtube. I plan to continue to use all these teaching ideas even when we go back to face to face teaching.

**8. How will these new technology tools/approaches contribute to your classroom practice?**

These technology tools/approaches will only improve my classroom practice. Implementing these tools will help me connect with my tech savvy students. I love to learn new skills and these new approaches open up many possibilities for new creative assignments and collaborative group projects. I am especially excited to try the breakout groups in the Blackboard Collaborate sessions. It will not replace the experience of students collaborating in person, but it will be a helpful tool to simulate that experience. These breakout groups will help them feel like they are part of a real design team working on the Final Term Project together.

**9. How will you evaluate the success of your activities?**

I will evaluate the success of my activities by seeing whether the students are responding well to my lessons and assignments. Most students are not shy about asking questions or letting you know if they are having issues. I regularly take the temperature of the class by asking for feedback or questions on my demos or assignments. You can wait until the end of the semester to get their feedback, but by that time, it is too late.

**10. What do you consider to be the bigger picture items with regard to technology and learning?**

The big picture is that you cannot expect to thrive in any field without technology. And this is especially true in academics. Any technology which facilitates remote learning will play a big role in the future of education.