



Artefact:

Reflective Essay (1,500 words)

*Question: You need to write a **reflection about the artefact on the blog**, including **your journey on the unit**, which links the **inclusive learning theory** to practice. You must **refer to the vital theory around inclusive learning**, ensuring you **reference some essential reading on the reading and resource lists**. The 1500-word written blog piece must be fully referenced and include a bibliography using Harvard referencing. Please refer to Cite Them Right on the library page for support.*

1) Introduction - what is the report about, and where does your positionality sit within the review?

This report reflects on my teaching artefact, which comprises a resource list and an introductory workshop on sustainability in fashion practice. The workshop is delivered to students in their first term, enabling them to dissect and redefine complex jargon and concepts of sustainable practice in ways that are more accessible and relatable to them, their background, and lived experience. The resource list includes examples of documentaries, books, podcasts, and organisations from multiple perspectives, industry initiatives, and communication mediums. These references align with the themes outlined in the UAL Climate, Racial and Social Justice Principles (UAL, 2023).

As a practitioner, my industry experience in upcycling, sustainable fashion design and campaigning is instrumental in my teaching style and approach. In 2021, I co-founded Trash Club, a global community and support network for independent creatives and students. Trash Club advocates knowledge exchange and wellbeing with reference to intersectionality and lived experiences, particularly for working-class creatives such as myself.

As a white gay European man working within fashion and academia, I understand that my position is one of privilege, and I'm considered a majority demographic of



staff at University of the Arts London (UAL EDI Report, 2021/2022). Throughout this teaching unit, I've aimed to re-evaluate societal norms, create a safe space for diverse voices to lead the conversation, and implement diverse and radical pedagogy into the curriculum. (Freire, 1971)

Living with my partner, a Muslim man from the British Bangladeshi diaspora, has given me insights into the challenges that underrepresented minority groups are exposed to. This discrimination is recurringly nuanced within fashion academia, where he also teaches.

2) Context – which course/department are you engaged with, and why would this intervention be necessary?

I am the Sustainability Lecturer for Fashion Design at Central Saint Martins, teaching across the programme. The varying levels of pedagogy require adaptability and flexibility in teaching theory, practice, and approach. Because of this, a resource was needed that could be applied and adapted for all levels.

The intervention is necessary as fashion is arguably the most notable department within Central Saint Martins yet has been unable to meet the social and environmental policies outlined in the most recent UAL EDI Report (UAL, 2021). Aisha Richard's explores this theory in an anonymous interview with a Senior Academic where their focus remained on diversity in attainment rates rather than practiced diversity within the curriculum (Richards, 2018).

3) Inclusive learning theory - why is your work important within the Academy? How does the artefact need to change - show my engagement with the idea etc?

The Inclusive Learning Theory I've engaged with during this unit has taught me to acknowledge how the interconnected nature of identity, faith, and culture play a crucial role in moulding an individual's educational experience. As differentiation in education is a cornerstone of inclusivity (Tomlinson, 2003), the artefact I've designed



must reflect the multicultural influences and lived experiences of our students. Differentiation is a pedagogical, rather than an organisational approach (Stradling & Saunders, 1993).

Fashion's focus is a linear model, with the notion of "west does it best", often promoting thin white women as the best models or believing that a Eurocentric view of fashion is what's correct (De Castro, 2021). Most tutors at CSM are white, and because of this, there is often bias in deciding what is labelled 'good' design. Students have shared their non-western methods as being perceived less than and receiving less critique due to the white tutor's fear of being perceived as culturally insensitive. With this limitation, students are disadvantaged in opportunities for improvement and growth.

Solution-led design in the fashion zeitgeist is often produced through a European lens, with British, USA, or UK funding, and by majority-white organisations which was apparent when compiling the artefact. Bringing in more anti-fashion references to counter-hegemonise the resource, such as subcultural fashion blogs and local artisanal and vernacular practices from the Global South (Ahmed, 2023), would give points of reference to students who feel underrepresented within the UAL fashion curriculum and devalued in their design choices and references.

The session also addresses our students' diverse learning needs, including those with dyslexia and neurodiverse learning abilities, by adhering to the British Dyslexia Association's Standards (The British Dyslexia Association, 2023), and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (Web Accessibility Initiative, 2012) where possible. This is needed to address gaps in the current teaching paradigm, foster better student representation and engagement, and produce more well-rounded graduates. Critical universal design – inclusive curriculum design for students with dyslexia (Davies, 2019) and The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) argue for more accessible and inclusive teaching methods, with flexible learning environments catering to diverse learning needs and preferences (Rose and Meyer, 2014).



4) Reflection - what were the considerations for deciding on the artefact and a description of the artefact?

I do not have the lived experience to give first-hand generational knowledge and expertise of sustainable practices. As most sustainable knowledge we currently appropriate within a contemporary fashion system derives from indigenous technique and culture, looking back to look forward (Brinia & Davim, 2020), it is necessary for me to create a multicultural learning environment. Biodesign and regenerative farming methods are examples of this. It's especially important to acknowledge the origins of this model to the Industrial Revolution, which in turn has resulted in the climate crisis and racial segregation (Williams, 2021). Creating an open dialogue where multiculturalism and multiperspective views evolve the conversation rather than positioning myself in an 'expert' role, I attempt to avoid creating 'cultural capital', as so many teaching styles revert to which in turn results in the derecognising of concepts and work created by PoC students. (Finnigan & Richards, 2016).

My role as an educator has led me to experience how diverse perspectives can create robust, sustainable solutions. I want to offer students a platform to engage with the material and apply the information in a way that resonates with their unique backgrounds and perspectives rather than imposing my own.

5) Action - How would this artefact be used/has/would be used, and what does this mean to your practices?

The artefact can be moulded to various learning styles and contexts. My programme-wide colleagues have shared mutual interest in the artefact, and I've suggested that we collaborate and scale the initiative together, so that all cohorts can benefit from this tool and with the artefact how they wish. This artefact could help to counteract organisational conditions (Ainscow, 1999).

The artefact will be reviewed annually, to ensure its relevance. It will also be open source, encouraging students to contribute to the artefact. This would enable a multicultural and diverse perspective of resources, and sources of knowledge, as well as less information transmission and transformational learning by incorporating



community contexts (Cress, 2004). Transformational learning theory will ensure that no one viewpoint of sustainability is imposed onto students, and students recognise that their views are valid in an industry setting. On the other hand, a cultural change could be directed towards a transformative view of inclusion, in which diversity is seen as making a positive contribution to the creation of responsive educational settings. (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010).

The goal of higher education is to support students in developing their capacity for recognising and understanding the complexity of sustainability issues and for thinking critically about assumptions, biases, beliefs, and attitudes while actively participating in their resolutions (Seatter & Ceulemans, 2017).

The adaptation and refinement of the artefact, based on feedback from students and colleagues, is ongoing. The workshop enables an open discussion delivered to multiple teaching groups simultaneously. Transformative learning of sustainability often takes a constructivist approach due to its complexity and often deeply challenging nature, opposed to transmissive (Sterling, 2002). Sustainability in the west isn't commonly considered part of life rather than an application to replicate can begin during this style of open discussion teaching, rather than a traditional one-to-many 'expert' and 'learner' approach. When considering the evolution of the artefact over time, it should be open source so that students and staff can access and contribute to the shared knowledge exchange.

6) Evaluate your process – how successful, what you learned, and how you would/could do things differently.

Student feedback via Padlet has been successful. Feedback included students' views/feelings at the start, during, and end of the session, to allow for documentation throughout and analysis of how it's helped them to progress. The Padlet can be accessed by students at any time and multiple groups will be asked to contribute to the same page, to encourage peer support.

I could improve the session further by inviting non-white British and international designers from the Global South, offering a platform for their unique perspectives to



be shared with the students in an attempt for them to see representation. Widening the scope of decolonial conversation would result in the semblance of a world that is increasingly decolonial (Hirmer, 2020).

7) Conclusion - what are your key findings, observations and reflections regarding this process and your practices?

I was able to embed inclusive learning principles into a flexible tool for students of diverse backgrounds and abilities through this Unit. The UAL EDI Report (UAL, 2021) will guide which diversity aspects I address in my intervention moving forward. The Reimagining Conversations Report (Odeniyi, 2023) will further inform how I use language for international students. I'm dedicated to crafting an educational experience that appeals to a wide range of learners, including those from the Global South. Running a workshop exclusively for Muslim students, for example, would allow space for conversations to be had that may otherwise be undervalued within a white-dominant teaching environment.

The feedback I've received, both formal and informal, has greatly influenced the evolution of the artefact and its deployment. My journey has brought me face-to-face with the complexities of nurturing an inclusive, sustainability-centred learning environment and enabled a deep introspection of my role as an educator. As educators, we have the responsibility to continue to educate ourselves and ensure equal opportunity for all students. This is important in higher education where students of black and minority ethnic groups receive lower achievement rates than their peers (Broecke & Nicholls, 2007).

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