

FASHIONING THE CITIZEN CURRICULUM:

A creative practice investigation into sustainable design education to promote engagement in responsible consumption and global citizenship.

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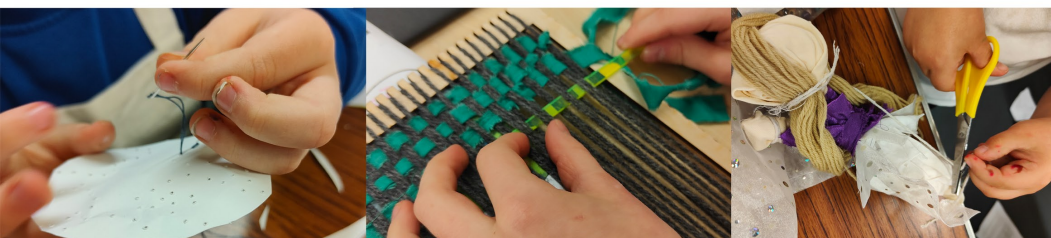
KEY WORDS:

Fashion
Sustainability
Education
Behaviour
Consumption



INTRODUCTION

While sustainability is central to many curriculums at KS4, there is no requirement to include this at KS3 design or below, resulting in the majority of young people lacking the understanding of the impact clothes have. This research is a creative investigation into sustainability-focused fashion education with primary-aged children. The aim is to investigate the role of early education in promoting responsible citizen action, in terms of clothing consumption. This longitudinal qualitative research investigates global production, exploring both the environmental and social inequality along the fashion supply chain, taking the participants on an imaginary and immersive journey. It is anticipated this transdisciplinary research will facilitate an understanding of clothing impacts, to help participants become responsible global citizens of the future.



RESEARCH STRUCTURE

This transdisciplinary research involves creative textiles-based workshops in different locations across Swansea. Each workshop lasts approximately 2 hours, with children and their parents/guardians. There will be eight sessions per group across the year exploring 7 key locations, impacts and creative solutions along the global fashion supply chain:



- AFRICA – Cotton Farming & Sankofa Prints
- CHINA – Chemical Dyes & Natural Dyes
- INDIA – Rural Weavers & Chindi Weaving
- AUSTRALIA – Indigenous Printing & Batik
- CAMBODIA – Garment Workers & Fashion Revolution
- UK – Clothing Maintenance & Repair
- CHILE – Atacama Clothing Dumping & Upcycling

RESEARCH PROGRESS

The study is currently at the end of phase one of the community workshops. Despite being early in the study, initial data analysis demonstrates clear signs of teacher habitus reflecting what is taught in classrooms and a distinct difference in vocabulary and sustainability knowledge between groups.

The children are starting to make emotive connections between themselves, the people who make their clothes and the impact on the natural world, all while creating. Conversations within the groups explore deeply the need to reduce our consumption due to the impact on the planet and all its inhabitants.

The research has started to re-establish the connection between the families and their clothes through embodied learning. The sessions have allowed the children and their families to engage in real-world issues, developing their critical thinking and critical consciousness, while crafting positive solutions.

The research is beginning to demonstrate the role compulsory sustainable design education can play in raising awareness of global fashion issues.



KEY LITERATURE

- Armstrong, C, M, J., Connell, K, Y, H., Lang, C., Ruppert-Stroescu, M. and LeHew, M, L, A. (2016)
- Environmental Audit Committee (2019)
- Freire, P. – Pedagogy of the oppressed (1996)
- Markkula, A. and Moisander, J (2011)
- Vygotsky, L, S. – Mind in society (1978)
- Willet, J., Saunders, C., Hackney, F., and Hill, K. (2022)



"Does sustainable mean handmade?"

Amy, aged 7

NEXT STEPS

The workshops will begin to trial in primary school settings from September 2023, following recent approval from the university's ethics committee.



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Abstract: While sustainability is central to many curriculums at Key Stage 4 (England and Wales), there is no requirement to include this at KS3 design or below, resulting in most young people lacking the understanding of the impact clothes have.

This multidisciplinary research is a creative investigation into sustainability-focused fashion education with primary-aged children. The aim is to investigate the role of early education in promoting responsible consumption/citizenship.

The longitudinal qualitative research involves monthly workshops with groups from varying demographics. The research investigates global production, exploring both the environmental and social inequality along the fashion supply chain, taking the participants on an imaginary and immersive journey. The transfer of knowledge is undertaken through animated cartoons, which cover the impacts, but also offer positive creative solutions undertaken during the sessions.

It is anticipated the research will facilitate an understanding of clothing impacts, to help them become responsible global citizens of the future."

Keywords: Fashion, Sustainability, Education, Behaviour, Consumption

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