Skill development in Textile Design education: transition and play through manual and digital process

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Abstract

In order to question the nature and perception of skill development within Textile Design education, we investigate the value of playful exchanges between manual and digital processes in encouraging flexibility and adaptability in design thinking at a base level.

We present findings from active research that draws upon qualitative data collected over two academic years, 2009 – 2011, which is ongoing. We developed a three week workshop for level 1 undergraduate Textile Design students, where methods utilised aim to allow playful experimentation rather than focussing on overly complex technical skills. Hand skills, in this context are developed through tactile engagement with materials, driven by broad design directives such as fluidity, expansion, density, fragility and repetition. Sensual engagement is enriched through use of digital imaging and projection, often playing with perceptions of scale and surface. We examine sites of transition and convergence, where malleability, lustre, stability, 2D/3D... are explored and disrupted.

‘What skills do you think you have developed?: Ability to play more? Not worry so much about end product as this will come more naturally from development, though maybe not in the way I expected’

Anonymous student questionnaire response, 2010