

## **Exploring Design Students' Translations from Brief to Prototypes**

**Ulla Ræbild**

Design School Kolding, Denmark

[ur@dskd.dk](mailto:ur@dskd.dk)

**Vibeke Riisberg**

Design School Kolding, Denmark

[vri@dskd.dk](mailto:vri@dskd.dk)

### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** To explore and evaluate the role of the educational design brief in relation to fashion and textile students' intellectual, conceptual and practical competence building within the subject of design and sustainability. The paper seeks to inform other educators, academics and practitioners affiliated to fashion and textile design education, as well as contribute to the general knowledge development around sustainability competencies and education.

**Design methodology/approach:** The study builds on a specific case: The Design for Change BA fashion and textiles course at Design School Kolding 2014-17. The study applies a cluster analysis inspired research approach to explore the empirical material, which consists of partly written documents (i.e. course framework, design brief, student project descriptions) partly physical outcomes (finished textiles and garments). The findings are evaluated in the light of recent literature on fashion futures.

**Findings:** The study shows that the open, holistic and relatively stable brief has accumulated and built knowledge within both student and staff communities over the four years. In consequence, this has led to increasingly complex design concepts and solutions emerging in the students' work.

**Research limitations/implications:** Outcomes should be addressed as indicative and explorative, due to the small-scale nature and specific context.

**Originality/value:** The paper contributes with new knowledge towards the relatively underresearched notion of the brief in design education, here specifically in relation to fashion and textile students' development of sustainability competencies and learning outcomes.

**Keywords:** Design brief, fashion and textile education, practice, sustainability, futures scenarios, systems

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