THE FASHION INDUSTRY
Including the manufacturing chain

Bridging the Skills Gap!

UPPER SECONDARY
VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION & TRAINING
- Kokkola Vocational Institute
- Puchov Associated Secondary School of Clothing
- E. TOSI
- O. FIORINI
- Q. SELLA
- Virginska Upper Secondary School

IT & Media
Senselogic AB

HIGHER
VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION & TRAINING
- Borås University College
- Somerset College

INOVATION

PILOT TESTING ACTIVITIES

EVALUATION

- Center of Vocational Training in Methodology and Pedagogics
- Industrial Workers’ Union 18
- Lodz Regional centre of Teacher Training and Vocational Education
- Swedish Council of Fashion
- Swedish Textile and Clothing Industries Association
- UNIVA
- Örebro University - Department of Technology
- Gijón Polytechnic College

DISSEMINATION
There are numerous opportunities to work with IT and Multimedia within the fashion and textile industry, which has meant that new working methods have been developed. The use of computer aids within the fashion and textile industry is widespread and due to the high level of outsourcing the main part of communication is done through ICT-aids. Everything from design, first samples to production is today computerized. At the same time the vocational education and training of clothing and textile design has not developed as fast and is now struggling to offer up to date teaching methods.

The E-Fashion project
In October the 15th 2004 a project founded by the European Union was launched in order to investigate how to overcome the gaps between vocational education and training and the fashion and textile industry. The project was called E-fashion and involved seven European countries and 18 organisations in total.

The main outcomes of this project includes a learning package for vocational teachers and trainers, a self-learning package for students in vocational education and a general guide including a strategy on how to integrate ICT and multimedia in design oriented textile and fashion education, 5 national workshop-based seminars and a European conference on the innovative use of ICT and Multimedia in vocational training.

Where are we now?
Step one in the project was a research report where an analysis of the industry (and a description of the textile value chain) and their need of ICT-knowledge where described together with a report of the present knowledge and programme use by students and teachers in textile- and fashion education. The research process included a survey among companies in the fashion and textile industry and a survey among vocational educational schools. Small-case studies were also carried out.
The research report showed that teachers and staff did not use available software to the fullest. Often the software was used only to produce teaching material. The use of software within the participating schools varied and the report showed the importance of continuously implementation of IT-skills within fashion and textile education and training.

The report also showed that students have more and more computer knowledge when they begin their higher education but that their knowledge varies. Much of the knowledge are self learned which makes it hard to know which level to expect from students.

The survey directed to the industry showed that it is not only the apparel companies who have realized the advantages in having a demand-driven supply-chain. Also the suppliers of software seem to work hard in promoting both “the new supply-chain flow” and the software supposed to improve it.

The companies spoken to all agreed that knowledge of a specific programme was of less importance than an employers understanding of what data to work with in each area.

**Learning packages**

One of the aims of the e-fashion project has been to create a flexible teaching aid that can be used by both teachers and students. The result is an educational package for both teachers and students with various software programmes for presentation of textile and fashion.

The learning packages combined with the e-Fashion website offers teachers the chance to create courses that are flexible and creative. By combining self-studies with support and feedback teachers can design their own learning package and adjust their teaching to their students’ specific needs. This can be further emphasized by the use of case studies.

To be able to evaluate the project six schools have tested the e-fashion teaching material. The evaluation showed that many schools found the e-fashion programme as easy to follow from the start. The interactive approach made learning much more interesting for the students who picked up how to use the programme quickly and were able to get immediate feedback if they were doing something wrong. The students also seemed more motivated and the products gave slow learners a chance to catch up with their fellow students because they could reach the instructions at any time.

The negative aspects were language obstacles since the teaching materials on the e-Fashion website are in English and also the lack of student tasks with various levels of difficulty.

The Swedish School of Textiles, University College of Borås developed a short course, Computer Aided Design in Fashion Sketching 7.5 ECTS by using the e-fashion teaching material as a starting point.

**References**

The Nordic Textile Journal

The Nordic Textile Journal collects and publishes articles of interest within the fields of textile, design management, engineering and craft. Although the Journal is mainly for Nordic readership, many articles are published in English, in order to feature new and interesting research outside the Nordic countries.

Articles should cover subjects of wide interest within and between the fields mentioned above. They can also be summaries of lectures and seminars. All material is subject to consideration by the editorial Board.

Subscription

The issues of the Journal are available free of charge.

Guidelines for authors

All papers must comply as follows:

Manuscripts

Headings, paragraphs, captions, italics etc must be absolutely clear. Articles should be submitted on disc or by e-mail, clearly marked with the name(s) and address of the author(s), indicating the title of the article, and the software used. (MS Word or WordPerfect is preferred.)

An abstract should be provided for each article. The abstract precedes the main text and draws attention to its salient points. Authors writing in Swedish may, if they wish, include an abstract in English.

References should indicate the author’s name, the name of the publication and the year of publication.

The Nordic Textile Journal includes illustrations in four-colour printing. Authors should therefore indicate which pictures are required in colour. These can be submitted as slides, photos, or sent on a disk or e-mail, preferably in TIF or EPS. Final decisions on colour illustrations to be included are taken by the editors.

For further information, please contact: The Nordic Textile Journal, University College of Borås, CTF/THS, SE-501 09 BORÅS, Sweden. E-mail: CTF@hb.se, Fax: +46 33 435 40 09, Phone: +46 33 435 41 93