

2007 Queensland Training Awards nomination – Jane Smith
Category: Vocational Student of the Year

Tertiary studies undertaken

- Graduated from Bachelor of [REDACTED] 19[REDACTED] [REDACTED] University
- Introduction to Clothing Production [REDACTED] Institute of TAFE
- Certificate IV in Clothing Production [REDACTED] Institute of TAFE

during which I worked in a popular restaurant as a waitress. From this point I have worked as a sales assistant in a pharmacy, an administration officer for a [REDACTED] car dealership and worked for the [REDACTED] in personal tax enquiries. Knocking one dream off at a time I then travelled extensively in Europe, one of the many highlights seeing the birthplace of my mother, [REDACTED]. I based myself in London, at first not knowing a soul for three years where I found myself running a bed and breakfast hotel. It was a time of learning and personal growth.

The time I spent overseas gave me clarity and it was then when I began to think of fashion as a creative outlet. A fellow traveller who showed me how to make a skirt out of a pair of jeans inspired me. I sewed it by hand as I did not have access to a machine and thus my passion was born.

When I returned to Australia I enrolled in the 10 week Introduction to Sewing course just to see if I had the ability. On my first nervous day, I sat at a machine and giggled at the sight of my crooked lines of sewing. It was the first time that I had really used a sewing machine. It wasn't long before I started to gain the momentum and relished in every task that was before me.

For me, the gravity involved when making the decision to start full time study after so many years of working full time, was astronomical. However, I had the passion and talent for fashion & design so, I took the plunge and enrolled in Certificate 4 Clothing Production.

Once I made the commitment to study fashion full time at the [REDACTED] TAFE it became my top priority. I am very regimented and dedicated to my study, so naturally I gained so much out of my course, which then led to some outstanding achievements. All of which feels like it has been all in a days work. When I'm not studying I can usually be found experimenting with fabrics and patterns and testing new techniques to create something individual and unique. I am dedicated to developing my own style and new ideas and I am achieving my goals by utilising the experiential nature of TAFE and the guidance of my teachers.

I graduated from Certificate 4 with distinctions (record attached) in the performance level assessment subjects and passed the other subjects. However, regardless of the type of assessment, I always undertook extra research, reaching far beyond the minimal workload required in order to pursue my thirst for knowledge.

The only struggle I have encountered in this field is the cost. My focus is being the best I can possibly be. Therefore, I treat and respect my studies like a job. Funds are limited so I have to be resourceful and often the best ideas come out of necessity, like changing a design line to fit the pattern pieces onto a lay of fabric. I see using recycled fabrics as an ecological choice and in the future I plan to continue to source such fabrics as well as other environmentally friendly natural fabrics such as organically grown cotton, wool and

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silk. I believe this will be an important trend in the future as the population becomes more environmentally aware and it will be the path I will pursue for my label, WORN. I have registered my business name to commence creating design for sale.

The habits of consumers of the different generations intrigue me. Being able to understand and have insight into trends and the cyclic nature of the fashion industry is crucial and an integral part of the design process. Today there is an ever-growing number of niche markets with many cultures and subcultures, this satisfies a need for individualism, and that to identify with a particular group is foremost.

I keep up to date with the going's on in the Australian fashion industry with my subscription to Ragtrader magazine. I find this fortnightly magazine a valuable informative tool as it covers all facets of the industry. I also buy key fashion magazines like Frankie and Tank, which target the market I am interested in. I regularly attend fashion parades and have volunteered to help dressing backstage. I also attended workshops during the lead up to the NRA (Dec 2006) and went to a breakfast seminar held by Peter Morrissey. SBS aired a series following a number of Australian designers, which I found extremely inspirational.

I regularly use the internet for research into the Australian trends but more importantly for global trends. New York, Paris, London are only a click away. I find the WGSN education site invaluable as is Vogue and other design sites.

Criterion 1:

Career development

Using my knowledge attained from studying certificate four, I make one off garments and perform alterations and repairs for a small clientele base. From my training I can discern what their needs are and I can measure and fit to an individual's body shape.

The experiential learning nature of TAFE is allowing me to develop my label [REDACTED]. I have developed the logo for [REDACTED] and have done extensive research into the market segment I intend to sell to and I am looking forward to writing a business plan for the subject of the same name. Currently, I am designing a range for [REDACTED], a female clothing store in [REDACTED], as part of my studies. It involves writing a report and presenting my designs to the store owner, [REDACTED], who's clientele are of a similar demographic that I hope to attract to [REDACTED].

Shared knowledge

I devote time to spend with other students outside class time to tutoring in patternmaking and grading and as beneficial it is to these students, I find this extra work develops my skills further. Being able to communicate and explain processes in a variety of ways helps concrete my knowledge as well as it being a vital requirement when portraying ideas in the design process, both for a client and in a team situation.

I am involved in a small study group in which I use as a think tank. We share knowledge via discussions and constructively critique each other's work and ideas.

Utilising my knowledge of design outside the learning environment, I have assisted two of my clients in dressing for their figure types. I find this to be a rewarding aspect of applying my knowledge as it gives more confidence to the wearer as they learn the theory behind

the styles that suit them, how to show off their assets and conceal or draw attention away from the not so perfect areas.

Career aspirations

I am working towards starting my own label and company. I intend to manufacture in Australia and provide a product for females aged 20 to 35, who are interested in the arts, have a social/environmental conscience and want something more original. I am also interested in developing men's wear, as there's a growing demand in their market segment for something outside the norm as a growing shift within the male culture with the care, style and attention everyday men are now devoting to fashion and themselves.

To get this project off the ground I believe it is important that I ascertain a complete understanding of the behind the scenes running of a business, including sample cutting, working in dispatch stockroom, doing garment quality control, design, and working in the pattern room. I understand that in order to acquire this knowledge it would be beneficial to strive for an internship either in Australia or overseas.

Also, I have been inspired in my research into Natalie Denning's story and am considering opening a store that stocks student and young designer's labels.

Future Studies

I intend to constantly update my knowledge, enhance my skills and learn new techniques through further study and any refresher courses that relate. I'm currently and will continue to attend seminars that offer exposure to established designers and hope that one day it will be me offering advice and support to emerging designers.

I am currently enrolled in the Diploma of Textiles Clothing and Footwear at [REDACTED] Institute of TAFE which will help me develop business skills that will assist me in launching my own label. This course will also allow me to participate in competition to work with other students and gain more experience. Fortunately, this course is at a more advanced level so I am constantly learning new techniques that challenge my current level of knowledge.

Ultimately, my passion to study within the fashion industry derives from my first course where my success was first recognised, both in myself and those around me. My devotion inspires me to further develop and critique my skills.

Criterion 2:

Application of theoretical knowledge to achieve a result

As part of the Certificate IV curriculum, I was required to design, pattern making and sew a range of 5 garments. This was an almighty challenge for me as I have already mentioned. I had barely used a sewing machine before the commencement of my studies and I had no experience in drawing. I met the challenges head on and with great enthusiasm. Being trained as a scientist I used my analytical thinking to solve problems between the design and the patterns and then the assembly in a creative way. The ability to visualise how everything goes together is a key element of my efficiency, and the result of my planning saw me creating eight garments for my range – [REDACTED], all of which I am most proud of. I methodically made toiles for each piece of the collection, checked and rechecked the fit.

Leadership expressed inside and outside the workplace

I am at an advantage beginning fashion as a mature student. I am seen as a person other students can go to for advice and guidance as well as help. The teachers use my focus, determination and skills as an example and I believe it encourages others to strive for the same high standards. Having more life experience and being happy in this learning environment leaves me feeling confident, more grounded and able to assist others, both in and out of my training class.

I began working with the [REDACTED] Arts Centre as a Volunteer dresser and coordinator for the orphans costumes in a student production of Annie. My responsibility was to make sure every costume was accounted for and in its correct place. My role also included costume alteration, maintenance and construction.

I assisted with [REDACTED] event held by [REDACTED] Institute of TAFE in 2006. I was asked to supervise and allocate dressers to models and check and run through all changes.

Entering the student division of the NRA (National Retail Association) Australian Fashion Design Awards was a very exciting part of my career to date. This involved showcasing my '[REDACTED]' range, organising models, hair, makeup, and meeting times to present my garments. This is a time when I relied on my leadership skills to make it run as smooth as it did. The event was a great opportunity and being there was an amazing experience.

Communication skills

Public interest in my designs has been positive and has helped to boost my profile in the community. I have had a number of interviews with the media

- [REDACTED] magazine
- [REDACTED] bulletin Tuesday magazine
- [REDACTED] news allisee parade
- [REDACTED] fashion awards student designs competition
- [REDACTED] published photo of range
- Radio interview [REDACTED] – re NRA Awards

I conducted myself in a professional manner for all interviews and it is an area where my strong communication skills are essential. Some occasions have arisen where the media have sought me to represent TAFE and other such events. As a designer it will be critical to have a reputable media profile and be able to represent my business.

Teamwork

Many years experience in the customer service industry and managing the bed and breakfast in London helped nurture my strong interpersonal skills. I thrive in a team environment and have the ability to relate to all age groups on their level. I believe working within a team draws out the best in me. A group assignment is an example of such a time. The very first assignment presented to me was designing an outfit for a wedding. There were three in the group all with strong design opinions. We worked together to determine colours etc, often compromising with a mix of the ideas together. In the end we were all pleased with the outcome and a sense of accomplishment.

I also play competitive netball. It's great for fitness and the togetherness of the team and the way we work as one to achieve our goals is why I continue to play season after season.

Goals and Monitoring

I meet my goals in projects and assignments by creating a time line specific to each as a guide to keep on track. I find that a checklist is an excellent tool to assess at a glance exactly where I'm up to. For [REDACTED] I created a weekly schedule and gave myself deadlines. It took the pressure off knowing that I was accomplishing a huge task little by little. Seeing the progress also gave me great satisfaction and confidence to continue. As a result of this, I was able to make an eighth garment for that collection (5 being the assessment required, I originally designed 7).

Time management

I have a diary that is A4 size and I write everything in it, dead lines, reminders, due dates etc. I keep it close by and it helps keep my study plan real and on schedule. In order to best utilise the time available (to me) on a daily basis, I generally break up my time into blocks. I allow for breaks which most of the time my enthusiasm gets the better of me and I work through them. Walk for an hour which I try to make daily. I give myself a study order and if I have spare time I try to gather information on subjects in the near future.

Use of technology

Using software for design as a creative outlet, helps me prepare for the fashion industry as all businesses involve computer work. I am currently developing crucial skills both in class time and out, by using Adobe Illustrator & Photoshop. This will allow me to design garments, presentations, reports, and advertisements. TAFE has subscriptions to extensive database which can be used for research & I make use of technology by taking advantage of this tool as well as Internet research.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Graduated from Bachelor of [REDACTED] 19[REDACTED] [REDACTED] University

Introduction to Clothing Production [REDACTED] Institute of TAFE

Certificate IV in Clothing Production Gold Coast Institute of TAFE

NRA student division entrant

First Aid Certificate

[REDACTED] fashion parade opening designs

Supported other student designers, dressing for them at [REDACTED]

Competitive Netball Player for the [REDACTED] – Player of the Season Awards 20[REDACTED]