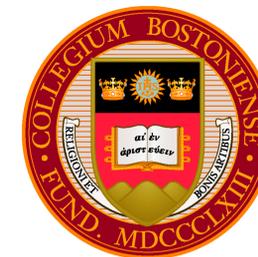# Looking at the Process:
Examining Creative and Artistic Thinking in Fashion Designers on *Project Runway*

Jillian Hogan[1], Kara Murdock[1], Morgan Hamill[2], Anastasia Lanzara[3] & Ellen Winner[1]

[1]Boston College, [2]Northeastern University, [3]University of Bath

Rationale

Visual art teachers around the world use the Studio Thinking framework (Hetland, Winner, Veenema & Sheridan, 2007, 2013) to help make disciplinary thinking more concrete to their students (Hogan, Hetland, Jaquith, & Winner, 2018). Eight Studio Habits of Mind form the core of this framework, emerging from bottom-up, grounded theory research in high quality high school visual art classrooms.

The Studio Thinking Framework was based on a study of studio artists. To determine how broadly this framework applies, it is important to investigate other kinds of visual artists. We asked whether commercial fashion designers use these same Studio Habits of Mind as they work.

To address this question, we used a readily-accessible dataset: footage from the reality competition show, *Project Runway*, in which fashion designers create garments that meet requirements of assigned challenges.

Method

Coding Manual

We selected Seasons 8 and 9 of *Project Runway* for the development of a coding method. All 28 episodes were transcribed and verbal statements by all persons on the show were coded using the Studio Habits of Mind framework. A deductive process was used (Crabtree & Miller, 1999), with eight codes reflecting the Studio Habits of Mind. As we coded, we created a manual with example behaviors and statements sorted into the appropriate Studio Habit of Mind. Coding was an iterative process: the P.I. and three coders independently coded transcripts and returned to the group such discuss decisions and the fundamental characteristics of each Studio Habit of Mind. The manual included three levels of information: the code label (the Studio Habit of Mind), what the code concerns (a sub-grouping/short definition), and a description of what the code sounds like within the context of a Project Runway episode (including guidelines for using or not using the code; Boyatzis, 1998; MacQueen, McLellan-Lemal, Bartholow, & Milstein, 2008).

Data Coding

All 14 episodes of Season 10 of Project Runway were used. Nine of the 14 episodes were coded individually by one of three coders (each coder coded three episodes). Three were coded by two independent coders (each person in the pair coded separately in order to calculate inter-rater reliability). The pooled Cohen's kappa of these episodes averaged .84, considered good to excellent agreement (Cicchetti, 1994; Fleiss, 1971; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The last two episodes were coded consensually by the three-person data coding team. The decision to code these two episodes consensually was made prior to beginning data coding.

PDF of poster available through QR Code or at : jillhoganinboston.com

Studio Habits of Mind

High School Visual Arts Classrooms

(Hetland et al., 2007, 2013)

Studio Habit		Definitions
Develop Craft	Technique	Learning to use tools, materials, and artistic conventions
	Studio Practice	Taking care of tools, materials, works, and workspace
Engage & Persist	n/a	Finding personally meaningful projects and sticking to them
Envision	n/a	Imagining what cannot be seen and a plan to create artwork of these imagined ideas
Express	n/a	Making works that convey personal meaning
Observe	n/a	Looking closely and noticing what might not ordinarily be seen
Reflect	Question & Explain	Talking about work and working processes
	Evaluate	Talking about what works well, what does not, and why, in works by self and others
Stretch & Explore	n/a	Trying new things, making mistakes, and learning from them
Understand Art Worlds	Domain	Learning what artists have made
	Communities	Learning to collaborate and understanding that artists often work in teams

Project Runway Season 10

(Bunim/Murray Productions, 2012)

Develop Craft

[Judge] Michael Kors:
I think that when we look at, you know, [the garment of designers] *Gunnar and Kooan, it could have been a really fabulous gown, but I think they picked the wrong fabric. But do I think it's a great silhouette? Do I think the back of it was really pretty? I like the chiffon. She looked gorgeous. The silver at the neck was fabulous. But I think there were some fabric issues.*

Engage & Persist

[Mentor and Co-Host] Tim Gunn:
This is about making it work. If there ever were a make it work moment, it is this one. Off we go!

Envision

[Designer] Ven: *So, this is the fabric* [shows the pattern of dress fabric], *and I really want the focus to be the eyes.*
Hairstylist: *Start with a highlight, right in the center.*
Ven: *And then fade it out to a color. Oh, that's perfect.*

Express

[Designer} Sonjia*:*
I wanted to create a look for a woman who has a lot going on during the day so she's probably running errands in the morning, in the office during the day and basically something that can take her from wearing her hair up to down to, you know, flats to pumps to basically anything she wants to wear.

Observe

Michael Kors: *It looks like a hairdressing smock. Like she was cutting her hair, she—you know, there was a fire in the beauty salon, she belted it, and she ran out in her zebra dress, and the whole thing is just weird.*
[Guest Judge] Hayden Panettiere: *Can you lift up the coral* [part of the dress]*?*
Designer Buffi: *Yeah.*
Michael: *Well, the hem is cuckoo, too.*

Reflect/Evaluate

[Designer] Christopher:
Sonjia, the 80's called and they want everything back. Cyndi Lauper is missing a dress and a clutch.

Stretch & Explore

[Designer] Fabio:
I just hope that [the judges see] *that I am pushing myself as a designer, but I'm also pushing the boundaries on design.*

Understand Art Worlds

[Judge and Co-host] Heidi Klum:
You have to think that you want to sell. I think that this is a very sellable dress. I think that a lot of women are attracted to this kind of silhouette…I think it's a very flirty and fun kind of a dress.

Discussion

This study has implications for two groups: teachers and researchers.

Teaching Implications. Many art teachers already regularly use the Studio Habits of Mind in their classroom language, curriculum planning, and assessments. This study shows that excerpts from reality shows such as *Project Runway*, can be used to exemplify the Studio Habits of Mind at work in a way that is engaging and relevant to students. Educators in other disciplines have used reality television in the classroom (Bach, 2010; Wedell, 2017).

Research Implications. The Studio Habits of Mind do not just apply to the studio arts. These habits are broad and have potential to be relevant to all creative domains. We show here that these habits can be used to describe the work of fashion designers. Whether they can also be used to describe work outside the arts remains to be determined. Researchers can use this framework to investigate thinking in domains that call on creative thinking, domains such as cooking (as in Food Network's *Chopped*), tattoo design (exemplified by Spike TV's *Ink Master*), hair design (like Bravo's *Shear Genius*), or even dog grooming (seen on Animal Planet's *Groomer Has It*).