

**CASE STUDIES IN SUPPORT OF THE SUPPORT FOR NEW  
ACADEMIC STAFF (SNAS) STRAND 3 PROJECT**

# **LINKING DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH TO TEACHING**

**Interviewee**

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**10:00 | 18/05/06 - Interview Summary**

## **PURPOSE OF RESEARCH**

The interviewee has been involved in a range of international research projects. She is a member of the steering group for the Project Development Management Association (PDMA) and organises workshops and newsletters for this American based organisation. She is also a representative for the International Federation of Fashion Technology Institutes (IFFTI) that was started at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) in India and the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York. These organisations have extensive international links.

The research the interviewee is involved with is focused on the work being done by PhD students that she supervises. These three projects are described as follows:

### **Project One**

“The innovation process and the links between the consumer behaviour and how to manage innovation in wearables. So she has been looking at computerised elements within clothing. Every year you get some fantastic new product, but it never seems to trickle down into the mass market. So she is looking at how to get from what is possible to make it more feasible and produce it for the mass market.”

### **Project Two**

“Another one is looking at weather in fashion. Essentially looking at how to design products that can be manufactured quickly enough to get them on to the sales floor so that it tallies with what’s going on in the weather. So we’re really looking at mass customisation and examining the link between the design process and the supply chain. So without reinventing the wheel we can look at ways of producing fast fashion.”

### **Project Three**

“The third one is looking at design thinking. How designers think. She is looking at how the textile and fashion designers think.”

The interviewee is has strong research interests that influence the focus of PhD work being supervised at the institution, although the link to learning and teaching is less evident.

“It means that I can build on the research I did on my PhD. So I think that I’ve been very fortunate in that I’ve been able to make use of my PhD in lots and lots of different ways. With my PhD students it’s building on work that I’m interested in. So my interests are really in fashion design processes, the designer, how the designer thinks. And it’s all to do with the fashion area. So all of my students are looking at aspects of the fashion design process that I am interested in, done some research in, and then can take that a little bit further. So I’m able to build on what I’ve done so far using the PhDs.

“In terms of my teaching, I’ve been able to take chapters out of my thesis and incorporate that into my teaching.”

## **PREPARATION AND SUPPORT**

Demands are focused on the RAE. There are no financial targets set, so that is not an issue, but there is a specific demand for papers by the end of 2007. In preparation for the RAE review, there have been several things included to ready staff:

“We filled out forms about what we do, things like career history to date, papers that we’ve written, conferences that we’ve been to, any esteem, factors, all the usual kind of stuff they ask you for from the RAE. We’ve had a practice RAE review, so we’ve had somebody come in the see the department and review the state of affairs. We’ve been given feedback, and we’ve been sent our forms back according to a format and we’ve been asked to review the forms about ourselves to make sure that it’s up to date. What we’ve asked to do really is to make sure

that we have four good papers. We haven't been set financial targets in terms of project funding."

## **LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS**

Pedagogical relationships with the lecturer's research are focused on the results of PhD research informing programme modules.

"My own PhD has helped me develop four modules I've written. I teach a first year module that looks at the fashion industry; it's called Mechanics of Fashion. It basically introduces the retail students into how the fashion industry works. So they are introduced to things like some of the economic terms, they look at the history of the fashion industry, what does fashion actually mean. We look at the design process and by looking at design process we look at buying process as well. We look at the relationship between those two; a lot of that has come out of the PhDs. The buying process has come out of the MSc's.

"I do a trend forecasting module. Again, when I was doing my PhD I was looking at the fashion design process and I visited lots of companies. So I was able to gather up lots of information. I had access to a lot of documents. I was able to pick up on how they went about trend forecasting so that's gone into the trend-forecasting module."

## **SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH**

There are things set up to share research knowledge through postgraduate students and lecturing staff.

"As a department we don't really do that much together. But every year we have a Colloquium and it's almost like a conference. So every postgraduate student is asked to present a paper. If they're not ready for it they're not forced to do it, but it's a good experience. It does make you question and see your work in context, so it's a very good thing to go through."

Research assistants are dependant on the amount of money involved. Interviewee uses students to assist with research being undertaken. One area of research is being undertaken in a team. Multiple aspects are necessary because the project is about team working.

“I’m interested in looking at how designers and buyers work together in industry. But because we are looking at a similar issue here we’ve come together on this as a group. It’s only if the research projects have links that people come together, otherwise it tends to be a fairly singular occupation.”

## **REVIEW**

The interviewee considers the research to be something that requires summative outcomes. Reflection on work being carried out is a cognitive process: “Paper writing and going to conferences.”

“If it’s a conference paper then you’d go to do the conference you attend or the seminar you attend has an international flavour to it. Obviously with the RAE, everyone is looking to that and making sure that whatever they do is going to count towards it. So you try and make sure that it’s as international as possible, even if it’s over here. So the last one I went to was at the London College of Fashion, but they had an International Symposium.”

## **NEXT STEPS**

Future research possibilities include textiles crafts based in Nigeria in collaboration with a PhD student.

## KEY POINTS SUMMARY

### *Perceptions of research and what it means to the interviewee:*

- Responsibility as representative of international research associations
- Important to help support of PhD students
- Helps to inform change in industry

### *Perceptions of institutional support:*

- Demands are currently focused on RAE
- Outside of RAE, funding differences between A&D and science is vast, not always recognised by institution

### *Perceptions of relationships between teaching and learning:*

- Research directly informs new degree/masters modules
- Personal interests reflected in course content

### *Support for integrating research:*

- Research assistant used dependant on funding involved

### *Reflections on the impact of research and dissemination:*

- Colloquium for staff and post-graduate students
- Summative outcomes are necessary (papers, conferences)