



ADVANCING DESIGN CREATIVITY THROUGH THE DRAPING PROCESS

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The design strategies of students in upper level design courses frequently rely on known seam placements and accents. Their approach tends toward the two dimensional as they develop skills through flat pattern exercises and flat sketching. The purpose of this classroom exercise is to present students with a creative problem that requires three-dimensional design development, a process that guides them beyond preconceived ideas about garment shape, fit, and the arrangement of fabric and seam lines on the body.

Initially, students are presented an experimental design problem that requires draping of geometrical pieces of muslin on half scale forms. They are asked to drape using the entire fabric piece. They may cut into the fabric to twist, fold, or otherwise manipulate it around the form but must retain the whole piece.

After experimenting in half size, students move to full size forms with a preliminary design concept. As this idea evolves, they discover new possibilities that lead them away from traditional shapes. With a more definite design in mind, they may then cut away small segments or add additional pieces or inserts to make the garment more functional or to expand on a design theme. Additional creative thinking is then required to construct these unconventional garment shapes.

The results of this assignment are beneficial from several perspectives. Students produce designs they would not otherwise have envisioned, they carry some of this creative approach forward to other design projects, and it adds another tool to their traditional sources of inspiration.