



# Skilled Hands:

an approach to participating in fashion design processes to encourage responsible practices

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# Contents

Abstract	5
Acknowledgements	6
List of Figures	7
List of Tables	12
Glossary of Key Terms	13
Preface	15

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## 1 Introduction

1.1. Research questions, aims and objectives	21
1.2. Fieldwork Context: Further Education	22
1.3. The role of designer-makers and user-makers	23
1.4. Summary	24

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## 2 Scope of Context

2.1. Introduction	26
2.2. Fashion Design Pedagogy	27
2.3. Extending the wearer-garment relationship	31
2.4. Participation in the fashion design process	35
2.4.1. Example One: Open Design: Make/ Use	38
2.4.2. Example Two: Halfway design: Make{able}	39
2.4.3. Example Three: Participatory Design: Ready-to-Paint	40
2.5. Summary	42

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## 3 Research Design

3.1.	Introduction	45
3.2.	Practice-based research	46
3.3.	Social Constructivism	46
3.4.	Theoretical Perspective: Communities of Practice	47
3.5.	Methodology: Action Research	48
3.6.	Justification of Research Design	49
3.7.	Research Design	50
3.8.	Methods	52
3.9.	Analytical framework	57
3.10.	Participants and Recruitment	59
3.11.	Ethical Implications	60
3.12.	Summary	61

---

## 4 Fieldwork

4.1.	Introduction	63
4.2.	Phase One: Orientation	64
4.2.1.	Baseline	64
4.2.2	Pre-pilot Workshop	71
4.2.3.	Pilot Workshop	72
4.3.	Phase Two: Immersion	77
4.3.1.	Workshop One: Theme	81
4.3.2.	Workshop Two: Design	85
4.3.3.	Workshop Three: Toile	88
4.3.4.	Workshops Four, Five & Six: Manufacture	90
4.4.	Phase Three: Validation	114
4.5.	Summary	119

---

## 5 Analysis and Discussion

5.1.	Introduction	122
5.2.	Theme 1: The importance of the (active) user-maker input	125
5.3.	Theme 2: Valuing the making process	127
5.4.	Theme 3: The experience of participation as memory	130
5.5.	Theme 4: The development of communities	133
5.6.	Theme 5: The potential for responsible trajectories	138
	following engagement	
5.6.1.	Responsible trajectories: designer-makers	138
5.6.2.	Responsible trajectories: user-makers	141
5.6.3.	Responsible trajectories: Ripple beyond the	142
	participants	
5.7.	Recommendations	145
5.8.	Summary	148

---

## 6 Conclusion

6.1.	Reflections	150
6.2.	Limitations and Constraints of study	151
6.3.	Future research	152
6.4.	Concluding Remarks	153

	References	155
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# Abstract

In the current era of climate emergency, this research responds to the growing need to develop more responsible approaches to designing, making and owning garments. Current approaches to extend the garment lifecycle are often focused on the ability for garments and materials to be reused, more emphasis on wearers' relationship with garments could offer innovative approaches to encourage behaviour change. Fashion education is often viewed as contributing to unsustainable practices; however, education has the promise to transform approaches to fashion design for sustainability.

This research project is embedded in a Further Education context, with the potential for its impact to ripple to the surrounding context and participants future practices. The project intention was to develop pedagogical approaches that actively involving the wearer of a garment in the design process. Collaboration between designers and wearers takes advantage of the required skill and experience of the designer, and takes account of the wearers' requirements. Working collaboratively as a group has the added value of sharing skills; the development of a positive making environment; contribution to a common goal; and finding a community of like-minded people. The iterative fieldwork allowed for approaches to be reflected on and refined, to ensure appropriate levels of participation for both designer-makers and user-makers. From the insights and themes that emerged, a set of five recommendations has been developed that could be used within education to create change. These recommendations include active and equal engagement by both designer-makers and user-makers; ensuring the user-maker has an input in the making process; ensuring a supportive workshop environment; working towards a shared goal; and providing opportunities for engagement beyond the workshop series. As a result of participation, a group of designer-makers were empowered to set up a Sustainability Collective based within the FE context to promote responsible design and consumption behaviours.

## Acknowledgements

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# List of Figures

Figure 1: Archibald, H. (2019) *Skilled hands: research project overview*. Diagram.

Source: Author's own.

Figure 2: Archibald, H. (2019) *Overview of research focus*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Figure 3: Archibald, H. (2019) *The FE context*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

Figure 4: Archibald, H. (2019) *Designer-maker & user-maker dynamic*. Diagram.

Source: Author's own

Figure 5: Archibald, H. (2019) *Overview of scope of context*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Figure 6: Von Busch, O. (2008) *Self-passage project with artist Sirja Liisa Vahtra*. Image.

Source: Fashion-able Hacktivism and engaged fashion design (PhD thesis).

Figure 7: McQuillan, H. (2015) *Make/Use workshops*. Image. Source: makeuse.nz website

Figure 8: Zhemchuzhnikova, V. (2017) *Ready-to-paint: Co-creation with little artists in fashion practice*. Image. Source: Author's own, thesis

Figure 9. Archibald, H. (2019) *Hierarchical research structure*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

Figure 10. Archibald, H. (2019) *Overview of research design*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Figure 11. Archibald, H. (2019) *Cyclical action research structure*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Figure 12. Archibald, H (2019) *Research design: Methods used during field research*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Figure 13. Archibald, H (2019) *Data Gathered during field research*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Figure 14. Archibald, H (2019) *Workshop design: mutual learning*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Figure 15. Archibald, H. (2019) *Recruitment strategies*. Image. Source: Author's own.

Figure 16. Archibald, H. (2018) *Timeline of field research*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Figure 17. Archibald, H. (2018) *Overview of orientation phase*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Figure 18: Archibald, H. (2018) *Likert responses to statement 14: Garments have more value if they are made by hand*. Image. Source: Author's own.

Figure 19: Archibald, H. (2018) *Likert responses to statement 15: Understanding the design process would make buyers value an item more*. Image. Source: Author's own.

Figure 20: Archibald, H. (2019) *'What makes a garment valuable?' - key themes*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Figure 21: Archibald, H. (2018) *Participatory survey 'Which garment is most valuable?'*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Figure 22: Archibald, H. (2018) *Pre-pilot images from workshop*. Image. Source: Author's own.

Figure 23: Archibald, H. (2018) *Pilot: Workshop steps of participation*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Figure 24: Archibald, H. (2018) *Pilot: Method cards from workshop*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Figure 25: Archibald, H. (2018) *Pilot: Tool cards from workshop*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Figure 26: Archibald, H. (2018) *Pilot: Moodboard*. Image. Source: Author's own.

Figure 27: Archibald, H. (2018) *Pilot: workshop outcomes*. Image. Source: Author's own.

Figure 28: Archibald, H. (2019) *Immersion: workshop plan*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Figure 29: Archibald, H. (2019) *Immersion: participant group profile*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Figure 30: Archibald, H. (2019) *Workshop: Week 1 presentation*. Image. Source: Author's own.

Figure 31: Archibald, H. (2019) *Workshop zero-waste paper manipulation*. Image. Source: Author's own.

Figure 32: Archibald, H. (2019) *Workshop one*. Image. Source: Author's own.

Figure 33: Archibald, H. (2019) *Workshop one: moodboards*. Image Source: Author's own.

Figure 34: Archibald, H. (2019) *Zerowaste patterns*. Image. Source: Author's own.

Figure 35: Archibald, H. (2019) *Week two: designer-maker sketch*. Image Source: participants.

Figure 36: Archibald, H. (2019) *Week two: garment design sheets*. Image Source: participants.

Figure 37: Archibald, H. (2019) *Workshop three*. Image. Source: Author's own.

Figure 38: Archibald, H. (2019) *Workshop Three: toiles*. Image. Source: Author's own.

Figure 39: Archibald, H. (2019) *Workshop four and five*. Image. Source: Author's own.

Figure 40: Archibald, H. (2019) *Workshop artefact: final garment*. Image. Source: Author's own.

Figure 41: Archibald, H. (2019) *Semi-structured interview*. Image. Source: Author's own.

Figure 42: Archibald, H. (2019) *Evaluation event: Key factors to encourage change*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Figure 43: Archibald, H. (2019) *Evaluation event*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

Figure 44: Archibald, H. (2019) *Analysis: Re-coded themes*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

Figure 45: Archibald, H. (2019) *Analysis: Grouping re-coded themes*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

Figure 46: Archibald, H. (2019) *Analysis Theme One: Importance of the (active) user-maker input*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

Figure 47: Archibald, H. (2019) *Analysis Theme Two: Valuing the making process*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

Figure 48: Archibald, H. (2019) *Analysis Theme Three: The experience of participation as memory*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

Figure 49: Archibald, H. (2019) *Analysis Theme Four: The development of communities*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

Figure 50: Archibald, H. (2019) *Designer-maker/ User-maker: Communities of Practice*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

Figure 51: Archibald, H. (2019) *Sustainability Collective GCC: event poster*. Image. Source: Author's own

Figure 52: Archibald, H. (2019) *Analysis Theme Five: The potential for responsible trajectories following engagement*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

Figure 53: Archibald, H. (2019) *Potential designer-maker ripple of responsibility*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

Figure 54: Archibald, H. (2019) *Potential ripple of responsible communities*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

## List of Tables

Table 1: Archibald, H. (2018) *Interactive questionnaire 'Which garment is more valuable?'*. Source: Author's own.



# Glossary of Key Terms

*Centre for Sustainable Fashion (CSF):* Based at London College of Fashion, Centre for Sustainable Fashion is a research centre committed to using fashion to create change and develop sustainable futures.

*Designer-makers:* The designer-maker act as the skilled hands in the design and making process, working in collaboration with user-makers during this participatory approach.

*D.I.T:* Do-it-together is the making of things within a group or social setting.

*D.I.Y:* Do-it-yourself, within a fashion context, is the method of creating, or making garments without the help of professional designers.

*Environmental Audit Committee:* Environmental Audit Committee aims to consider how policies can have an impact of encouraging sustainable futures and protect the environment. A fashion report released in 2019 calls on the government to make fashion retailers take responsibility for the waste they create.

*Fashion Activism:* Fashion activism is the practice of using fashion to create social change. This can take the form of empowering consumers with tools and knowledge to become activists.

*Further Education (FE):* Further Education is education above school leaving age that is below degree level. This acts as a progression into Higher Education.

*Global Fashion Agenda (GFA):* Global Fashion Agenda is a group for collaborators in fashion sustainability, with the aim to support those within industry to create change in fashion design, production, marketing and consumption.

## Skilled Hands

*Halfway design:* Garments are produced incomplete to be finished by consumers, which allows final users to contribute and design products to suit their personal taste.

*Higher Education (HE):* Higher Education is the education which leads to an academic degree. This is beyond school or further education.

*Mass-customisation:* Mass customisation is design and manufacturing which allows for flexibility of final product and allows users to personalise items.

*Open Design:* Open Design is a collaborative practice where users are involved in developing a garment. These practices can be at any stage of the garment life cycle – its design, use and at the stage of disposal.

*Participatory Design:* Participatory Design is an approach to design which attempts to actively involve users in design processes, ensuring their needs are met.

*School of Fashion and Textiles (SOF):* The School of Fashion and Textiles, based at Glasgow Clyde College encompasses 3 HND courses: Fashion Design, Fashion Technology and Textiles.

*Toile:* A toile is the development of a sample garment or piece made from basic calico fabric, used as a way to test a design's success in manufacture.

*User-makers:* The user-makers are able to provide essential insights into what they need and want from a garment. By working in collaboration with skilled designer-makers, the user-makers are able to gain valuable knowledge and understanding of the skilled design and making process.

*Zero-waste pattern cutting:* Zero-waste pattern cutting is the process of producing garments that aim to create little or no fabric waste by using the full widths of fabric.

# Preface

This practice-based research actively engaged the wearer in the fashion design process. Using a participatory approach reveals insights into the personal requirements of the wearer and takes advantage of the skill and knowledge of the designer. This explorative project examined whether this approach has the potential to encourage the development of responsible practices for both designer-maker and user-maker, with a particular focus on the FE context.

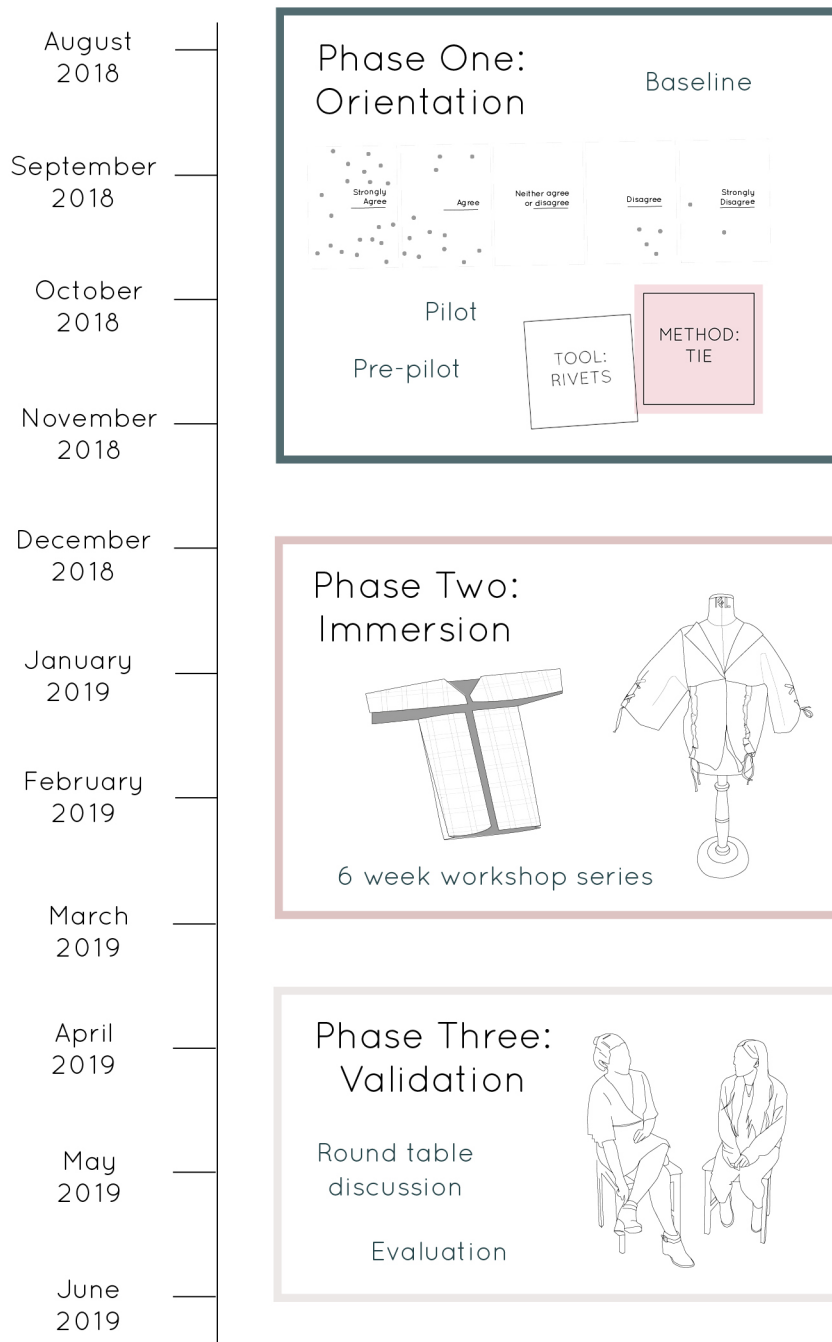
This thesis consists of a 20,000 word dissertation, and the supporting visuals embedded within the thesis. Given the richness of visual material produced during the fieldwork, I felt it was necessary to include a bank of images in the centre of the thesis to enrich and support the research. Each section is colour coded, and links to coloured markers in the corner of pages within the field research chapter. A public-facing online version of this thesis and supporting three-part appendix will be available to encourage the dissemination of these approaches to wider audiences.

Some areas of this thesis are written in the first person. The investigation into my own practice means writing in the first person acknowledged my positionality and role in the research process, and also recognised my position as an embedded researcher.

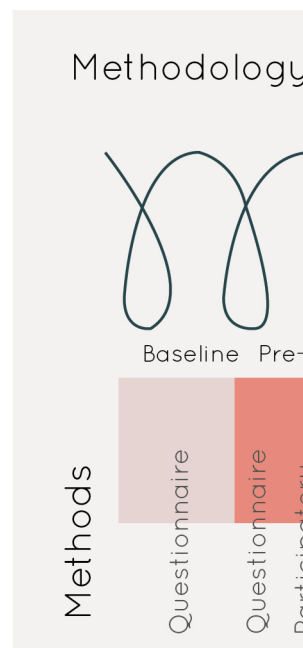
## Research question

How can collaborative participation of designer-makers and user-makers in the fashion design process encourage the development of responsible practices?

## The Timeline



## Research Design



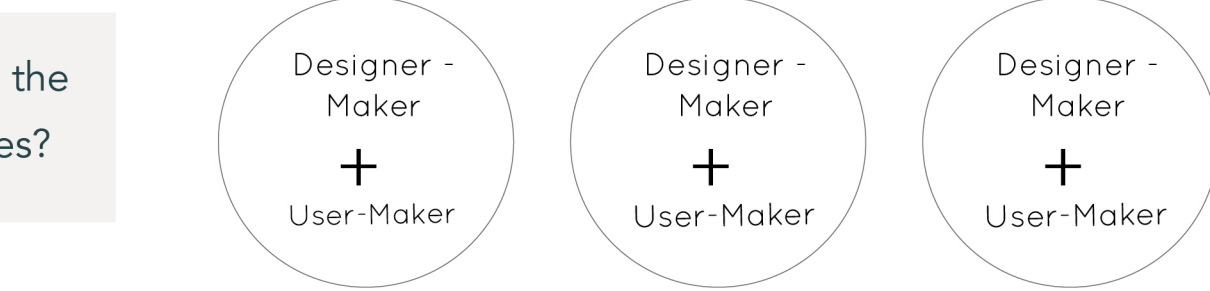
## Themes from



## Recommendations

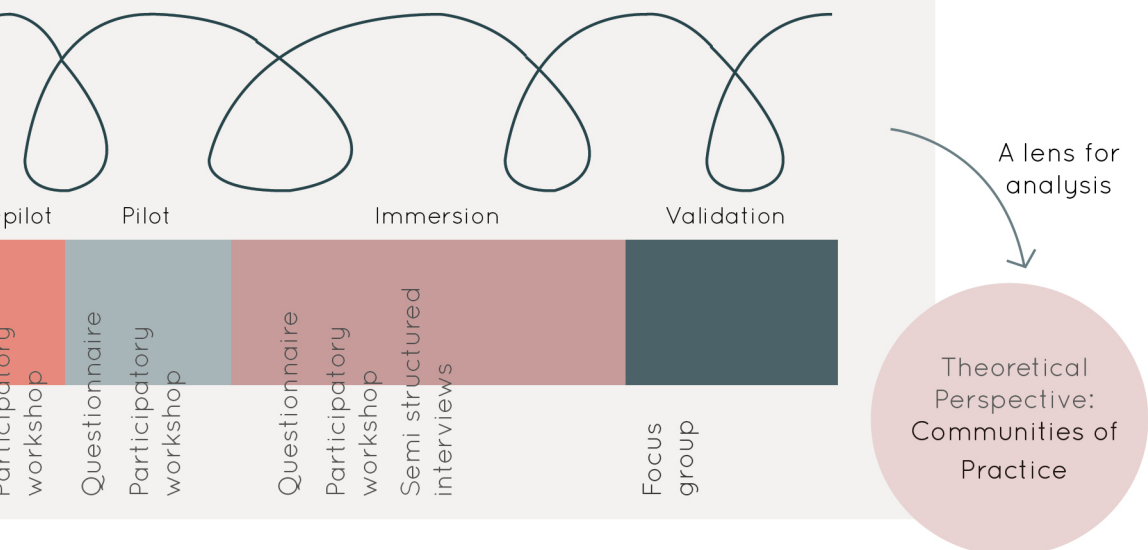
Active and equal engagement by both designer-makers and user-makers.

## The Approach



## Design

: Action Research



## findings



Chapter 1:

# Introduction

## Chapter 1: Introduction

In this chapter, I will initially introduce the research project, then set out the research question, aims and associated objectives. I then give an overview of the Further Education (FE) fieldwork context, before providing a rationale and outlining the role of designer-makers and user-makers in this study.

It is argued that radical change to sustainable practices is needed within the fashion sector, and there is an urgent need to create positive change to the industry's environmental impact (University of London 2019, Ellen McArthur 2017). Many researchers, designers, and professional groups are striving for change and believe finding alternative approaches to making, owning and using garments is necessary (Global Fashion Agenda 2018, Centre for Sustainable Fashion 2019, English 2019, McQuillan 2015). Much of the activity in fashion sustainability has focused on product and process-led practices, developing garments made of sustainable fibres, which can be upcycled and recycled. However, there is also a need for a social shift, developing transformational practices that can lead to a change of mindsets and culture (Global Fashion Agenda, 2018). Rather than a drive towards slower fashion, or 'circular' approaches, arguably there is a need for garments to be valued, which could, in turn, lead to garments being kept for longer. Smith, Ballie and McHattie note that for lasting change, the focus should be on improving consumption behaviours:

*Conventional methods [...] have been cited as being symptoms based; they have not addressed continuous and rising consumption levels. (2017: 1938)*

Consumers have arguably grown to expect things instantly (Helbig 2018), however, wearers could play a role in changing habits of consumption. Education is essential for both wearers and designers, and there is a need for responsible practices to be visible and approachable. Research by Saner (2017) has shown there is a growing trend in consumers wanting to act more consciously but not being sure how to do this. An overview of current sustainable practices within the fashion industry in Appendix 1.1.

This study set out to explore whether participation by wearers in the fashion design process could help instil greater wearer-garment attachment. This practice-based project aimed to develop education-driven initiatives to encourage responsible practices. Earley *et al.* have highlighted that designers have potential to be ‘strategic agents for change’ (2016: 7). Evidence has shown that education could offer a solution to create lasting change within industry (Williams 2018, Environmental Audit Committee 2019). This project sought to develop innovative pedagogical practices that focus on designing in collaboration with wearers, as illustrated in Figure 2.

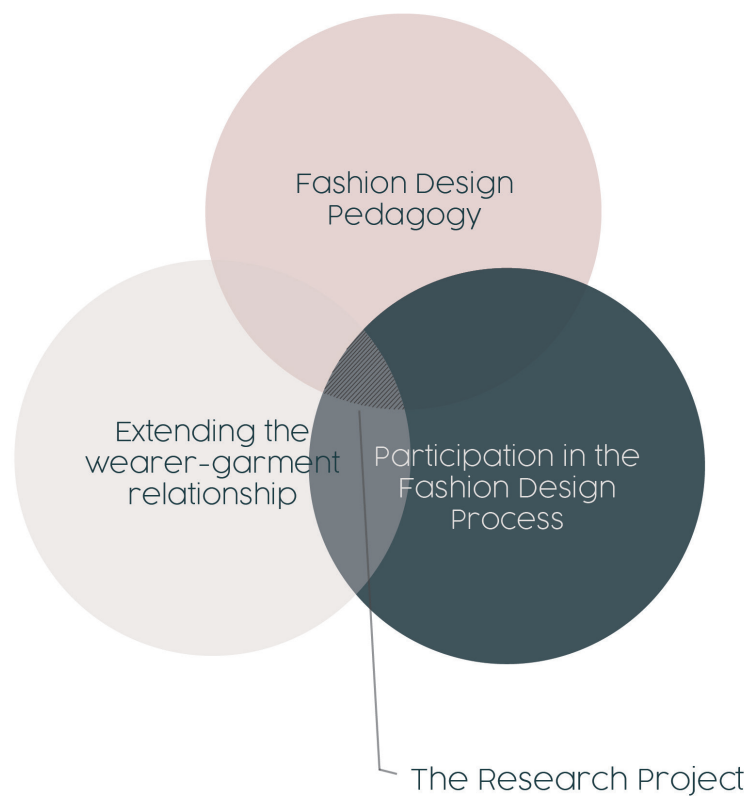


Figure 2: Archibald, H. (2019) *Overview of research focus*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

In the next sections, I set out my research questions, aims and objectives before describing the role of my practice as a fashion design educator. I conclude by providing an introduction to the role of designer-makers and user-makers within this study.



## 1.1 Research question, aims and objectives

The focus of this research evolved as I examined the literature, engaged with participants, and had ongoing discussions with my supervisors. My practice as a fashion lecturer shaped my research and allowed time for reflection in the field. As the research focus continued to refine, the research question went through several iterations. This is consistent with the explorative nature of the project.

Research question:

How can collaborative participation of designer-makers and user-makers in the fashion design process encourage the development of responsible practices?

This study aims to:

1. Gain insights into the process of collaboration between a designer-maker and user-maker.
2. Gain an understanding of the impact participating in fashion design processes has on the wearer-garment relationship.
3. Develop approaches for responsible fashion design processes in the context of Further Education.

The objectives are to:

1. Develop and test a workshop approach that supports user-makers and designer-makers to collaboratively participate in a fashion design process.
2. Identify the key factors pertaining to the designer-maker and user-maker relationship.
3. Drawing on the participants' reflections, understand the value of the wearer-garment relationship.

## 1.2. Fieldwork Context: Further Education

Grounded in my practice as a fashion lecturer, this research is located within the Further Education (FE) context. FE caters to a wide range of learners from diverse backgrounds and experiences (Department for Education, 2019). Learners can range from 14 years old up to adults returning to education (Education and Training Foundation, 2019), and in doing so the curriculum and educators need to respond to all levels of prior experience and ability. In a review of the role of FE, Foster noted: 'FE Colleges are striking in their heterogeneity' (2005: 8). The demographic is varied, with learners able to bring a wide range of experiences to the classroom. It is important to acknowledge the growing challenges of learning and mental health issues. More than ever, the value of social integration and inclusive learning is apparent (Foster 2005, Education Scotland 2019). FE offers an important transition pathway and articulation links to Higher Education (HE) (Gallacher, 2006). Figure 3 shows the potential progression of learned skills and knowledge from FE to HE.

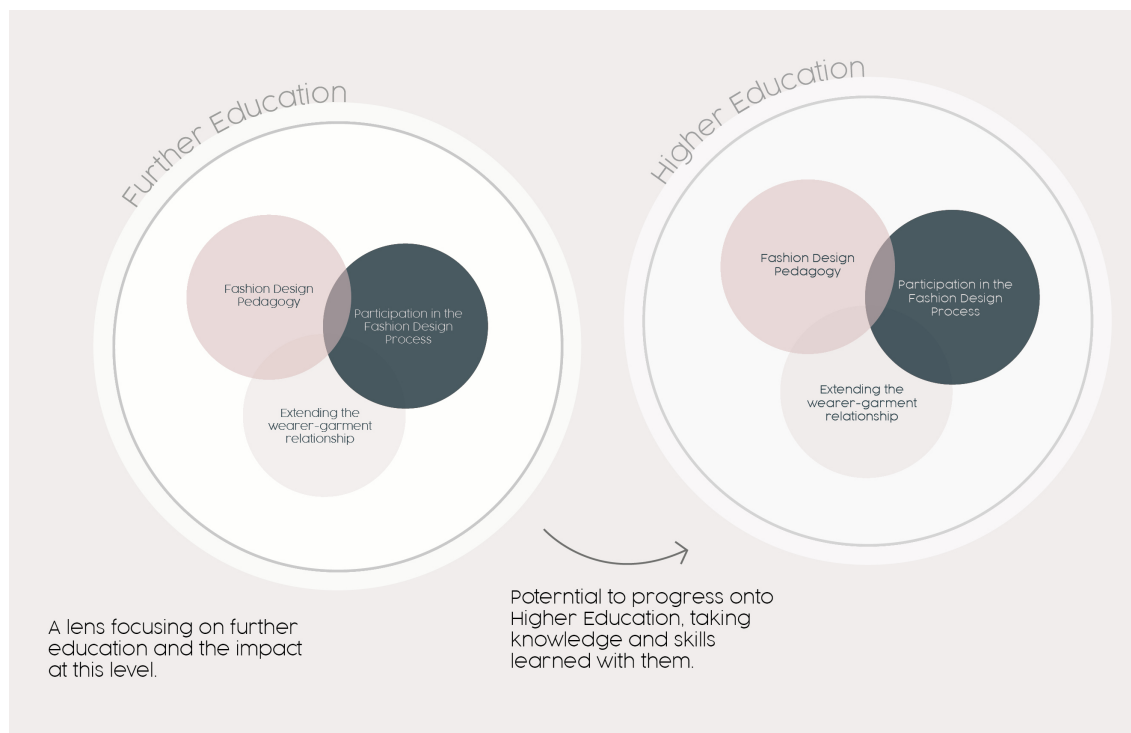


Figure 3: Archibald, H. (2019) *The FE context*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

Within the context of this study, it is important to note that FE is 'a notoriously under-researched area.' (James, 2007: XIV). Furthermore, research within the context of fashion design pedagogy and sustainability in FE is limited (see Appendix 1.4 for the search terms used). This study was an opportunity to develop research embedded in an FE context in collaboration with FE students and colleagues, rather than imposing external perspectives.

### 1.3. The role of designer-makers and user-makers

This project explores the collaboration between someone trained in fashion design processes and someone without this experience. Research has shown the value of hands-on learning experiences to encourage knowledge exchange (Earley *et al.*, 2016: 112). Collaboration between designers and wearers takes advantage of the required skill and experience of the designer, and takes account of the wearers' requirements. The designers – FE fashion students – are able to contribute skills and knowledge of design and production processes, therefore acting as the skilled hands. This also gives students the potential to develop new skills as change-makers and activists (Mazzarella, Storey and Williams, 2019). For the purpose of the study the designers will be termed *designer-makers*.

As wearers are 'experts of their own experiences' (Sanders, 2008:12), they give valuable insights into what they need and want from a garment. Having input in the design, development, and making stages means the garment can be tailored to the wearer's needs and desires. Wearers are therefore termed *user-makers* during their participation in the research project. By working in collaboration with skilled designer-makers, the user-makers are able to gain valuable knowledge and understanding of the skilled design and making process. While designer-makers are acting as the skilled hands, they are also consumers and can equally be considered user-makers. Other terms were proposed for the designer-makers and user-makers, but were problematic.

Acting as the facilitator of this collaborative design process, my role was to catalyse a change process that had the potential to transform habits and behaviours of all involved. Figure 4 illustrates the research relationships.

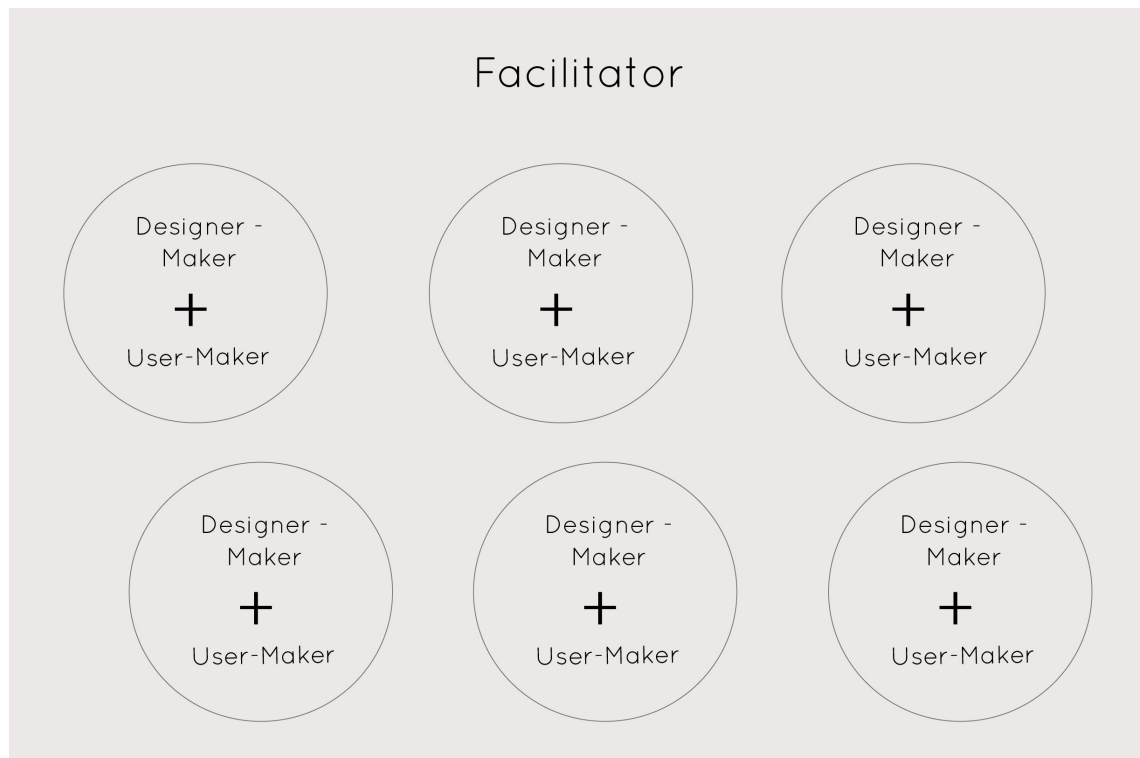


Figure 4: Archibald, H. (2019) *Designer-maker & user-maker dynamic*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

## 1.4. Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the research focus, including the research question, aims and objectives; the role of my practice as a fashion design educator; the significance of the FE context; and introduced the concept of designer-maker and user-maker. In the next chapter, the scope of context will explore the integration of sustainability in fashion design pedagogy, ways of extending the wearer-garment relationship, and participatory approaches to the fashion design process.

Chapter 2:

# Scope of Context

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore the development of sustainable practices in fashion design education; debates surrounding garment longevity and its connection to the wearer-garment relationship; the effect participatory approaches to fashion design can have on sustainable practices; it will coincide with three examples that illustrate current approaches to participatory practices. (Figure 5 provides an overview of the scope of context).

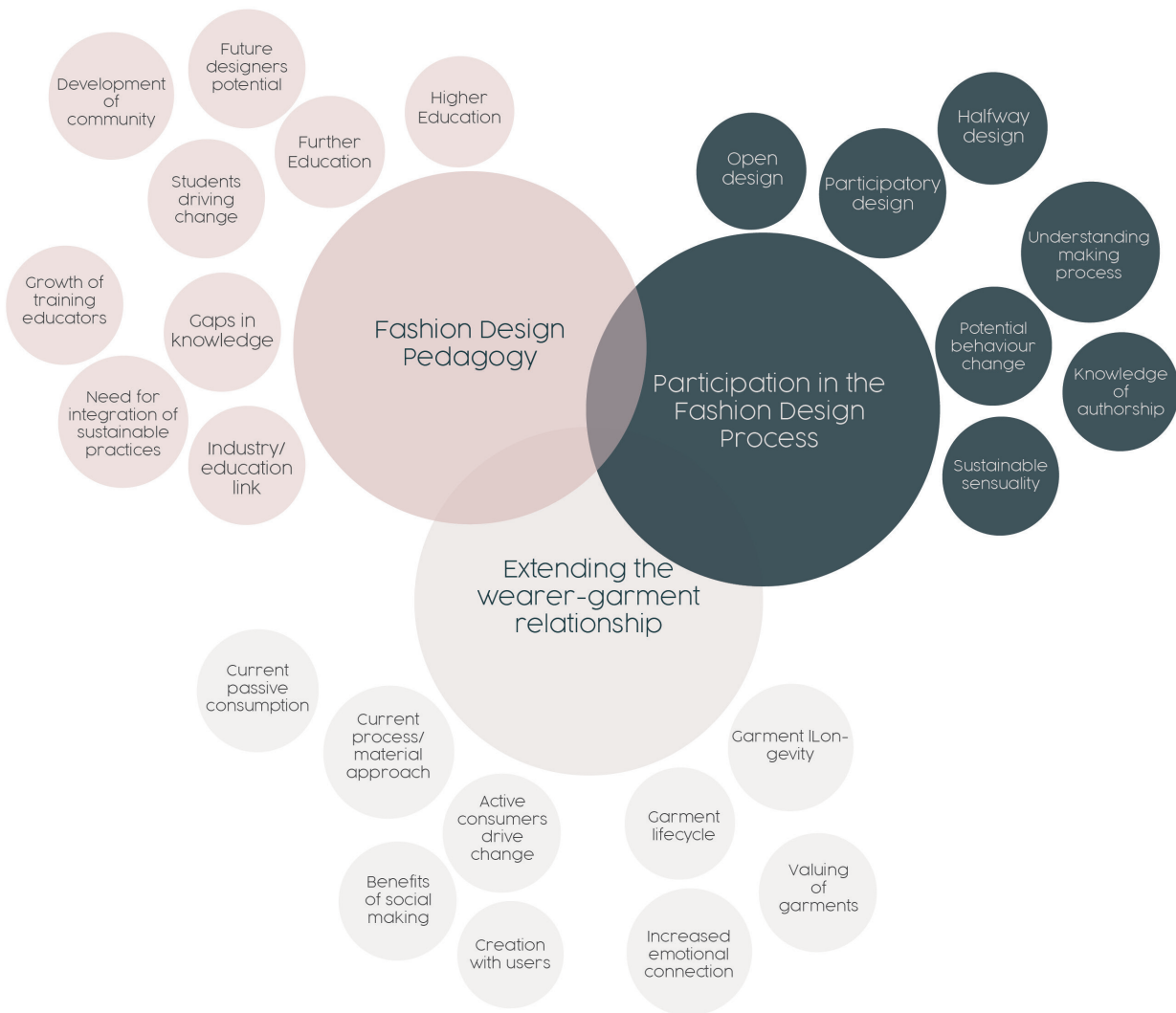


Figure 5: Archibald, H. (2019) *Overview of Scope of Context*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

## 2.2. Fashion Design Pedagogy

Whilst designers can play a significant role in developing sustainable fashion design practices, many are considered as not having sufficient knowledge and skill sets to develop new approaches (see for example: Business of Fashion 2019). Many established fashion designers have progressed through their careers without using sustainable practices (Williams, 2016). Course leader of Amsterdam Fashion Institute (AMFI), Leslie Holden, emphasises that established designers were trained for a very different industry, where the focus was on high levels of creativity leading to an increase in unsustainable practices (Kent and Ifeagwu, 2019).

Dilys Williams, Director of Centre for Sustainable Fashion (CSF), believes education has the potential to transform approaches to fashion design for sustainability, and give graduate students skills that have the potential to effect lasting change (2016). Holden agrees that changing the core teaching to focus on sustainability and well-being means students have the potential to become a 'community of change-makers' (Business of Fashion, 2019). Fashion lecturer and creative director of ethically-focused brand Outsider, Noorin Khamisani, believes:

*The whole conversation about sustainability is changing and getting louder ... We have to look at education because we're still training designers to work in an industry that doesn't work for the future.* (Khamisani, cited in Kent and Ifeagwu, 2019)

Although education can offer solutions in many respects and pave the way towards more ethical and sustainable practices, education is also viewed as currently contributing to unsustainable practices (Kruse et al., 2018). Developing innovative systems could help avoid reproducing the same unsustainable approaches each year. Fitzpatrick and Williams believe education has a key role in creating a truly sustainable fashion industry (2018), and in teaching future designers to work in a way that fully considers the garment lifecycle (Moorhouse and Moorhouse, 2017; Moorish, 2017).

Higher education institutes are in an influential position to develop new and relevant knowledge to reshape societies' views on sustainability (Kruse et al., 2018).

While change is starting to happen within the HE curriculum, more pressure is being placed on educators to have sustainability at the core of courses (Williams, 2016). In talks with Stella McCartney and London College of Fashion (LCF), Rosily agrees there is a need to incorporate sustainability into 'every aspect of teaching' (2016). In contrast, Charlotte Turner from Eco Age believes that education is already moving beyond the 'tokenistic, stand-alone project,' (Kent and Ifeagwu, 2019). In the last 10 years there has been a growth in courses specialising in sustainable fashion design. While these developments can be seen at a HE level, there is less evidence of this within FE, as described in section 1.2. As with industry and society, approaches to deal with sustainability in fashion education are not cohesive, and no clear approach has been developed by institutes (Valentine and Ballie, 2018). Insights from University of Arts London highlighted the need to focus not just on the theory of fashion design for sustainability but also on ensuring students develop practical skills and expertise in sustainable methods (2018). This is aligned with the arguments of Fletcher and Williams on the need for active involvement to have lasting and transformative effects for students, rather than more passive approaches to developing knowledge (2013). A report from the House of Commons: Environmental Audit Committee (2019) emphasised the benefits of increasing sustainability practices in HE but suggests the need for the government to support education at school and college level.

Sustainability itself acts as a challenge to encourage future designers to be 'visionary, adaptive and innovative' (Sherin, 2013:13). The next generation of designers could offer a forward-thinking solution, and with the appropriate tools could transform the industry (Kozlowski, Bardecki, and Searcy, 2019). The Centre for Sustainable Fashion was set up over 10 years ago by LCF, aiming to offer education that is 'responsive, responsible, imaginative and inspirational' (Williams, 2018). Their primary approach was to help students learn through a 'lens of sustainability' (Fitzpatrick and Williams, 2018), implying sustainability would filter through everything they do. While educators



are feeling pressure to change curricula, students are becoming more aware of the negative impact of the fashion industry and are 'demanding' to learn new approaches to design sustainability (Business of Fashion, 2019). Accordingly, it could be argued that recent graduates will have more training, from the increase of new incentives and programmes, than others who have been in industry for a lengthier period (Kozlowski, Bardecki, and Searcy, 2019).

Companies are more engaged with environmental issues, and many now offer roles specifically aimed at developing sustainable practices within companies. Williams (2016) explores the concept of cause and effect between education and industry - education is influenced by industry, and industry is influenced by education. Fashion brands such as Kering have successfully collaborated in projects with HE institute LCF, co-creating sustainable approaches to fashion design, and integrating sustainable practices. This approach equips students with the required knowledge for niche job opportunities and career paths, developing employability skills that can future proof their career (Business of Fashion, 2019). At the Copenhagen Fashion Summit (CFS) 2018, CSF held events in collaboration with GFA, with the aim of defining the relationship between education and industry, and to create a joint vision for sustainability for fashion education (Appendix 1.3). Understanding what education offers industry and vice versa could provide valuable insights and enable progress on a larger scale in developing sustainability for fashion design. Developing a framework for education institutes could relieve some of the barriers for educators in generating this new vision (Kruse et al., 2018).

There has been a growth in courses aimed at training and developing educators in ways to integrate sustainable practices into their teaching. Healy, leader of fashion and textiles at RMIT, has emphasised the importance of re-educating staff. Furthermore, Stevenson notes '[w]e needed to make sure all our tutors feel engaged in the conversation and feel empowered to create a learning experience for their students' (cited in Kent and Ifeagwu 2019). In the last 10 years, research projects have been developed to provide tools and educational approaches for tutors, designers and

industry. The Textile Toolbox is an open source website that provides a space to engage with new sustainable design ideas. Further examples of initiatives and toolkits, from for example Raebild, Hasling and Kofoed 2018 and University of Arts London 2019, to support educators can be found in Appendix 1.2. FashionSEEDS delves into the transformation of pedagogical practices, focusing on developing a framework to embed sustainability in fashion education whilst working in consultation with educators. After several years of collaboration with LCF, Kering have responded to the growing demand from industry and institutes to provide education by developing a free online course 'Fashion and Sustainability: Understanding Luxury Fashion in a Changing World' (University of Arts London, 2018).

While education, such as the examples above, can offer benefits to students, Radclyffe-Thomas (2018) suggest that students can become overwhelmed by the enormity of sustainability issues. Business of Fashion (2019) found that some institutes are struggling with teaching sustainability in a way that is not disheartening for students.

The benefits of embedding sustainable practices in fashion education go beyond the implied impact of being more environmentally aware; a strengthened community can develop, as students and educators work towards the common goal of a sustainable future (Fitzpatrick and Williams 2018, Williams 2016). Accordingly, Williams believes that as the goal becomes increasingly tangible, those who are part of the movement will be more motivated and energised to create change (2016). The programme leader at De Montford noted the development of responsible practices has resulted in many students spending longer thinking, rather than 'churning out garments' (Kent and Ifeagwu, 2019), suggesting that sustainable practices are leading to students creating work that is more considered.

## 2.3. Extending the wearer-garment relationships

While approaches to extend the garment lifecycle are often focused on the ability for garments and materials to be reused, more emphasis on wearers' relationship with garments could offer an innovative approach to develop behaviour change. Rather than solely focusing on a garment's material longevity, which does not deal with wearer's attachment to garments, Goldsworthy believes:

*We must stop viewing the product as the ultimate vehicle for longevity and start to see the materials themselves as holding the true value. (2017:1963)*

Garment longevity can be affected by elements such as garment durability and planned obsolescence. However, Fletcher (2017) contends that physical durability is rarely the key issues with garment longevity. Instead continually changing trends, aesthetic change, and social preferences have a greater impact on garment longevity. MISTRA Future Research Programme (2015 - 2019) promotes the need to move away from a focus on the physical longevity of garments and share sustainable approaches with designers and educators to shift the focus to prolonging the wearer-garment relationship. Many other researchers have highlighted the ability to develop more sustained use of garments by shifting the focus of efforts towards a focus on the wearer-garment relationship (see for example Hirscher 2017 and McQuillan 2015). Fletcher summarises the differences between process and material-focused approaches to sustainability, and approaches that focus on the wearer-garment relationship, arguing that 'making a garment last is very different from making a long-lasting garment' (2017: 6). Niinimäki (2011) has determined ways the wearer-garment relationship can optimise the life of a garment: whether the garment meets the needs of the wearer over a prolonged period; whether the garment has meaning for the wearer; and whether the designer can stimulate a greater relationship between wearer and garment. Arguably, designers have a responsibility to support wearers in developing a closer relationship to the garments they buy (Hirscher, Mazzarella and

Fuad Luke, 2019).

Chapman (2005) notes that strengthening the relationship between product and person, and experiencing an emotional connection with a product can lead to more considered consumption. This considered consumption could lead to a garment being valued for longer. Fuad-Luke (2009) explores key approaches to enhance the user-product relationship, which includes producing products together with users; developing personal narratives and memories; and making social connections. In a fashion context, designing a meaningful garment requires a 'unique design process of creation with users' (Hassi and Niinimäki, 2011:1880). Further developing this approach, Hirscher, Mazzarella and Fuad-Luke (2019) believe that inviting the wearer to participate in the design process can help develop meaningful garments suited to the wearer, and that the process of making can develop an experience that can act as the garment's narrative. Studies by Niinimäki and Koskien (2015) have shown that cherished garments are often cared for and repaired more often, therefore such valued garments become a meaningful piece of the wearer's wardrobe. As such, the design process can act as a valuable tool to help strengthen the wearer-garment relationship, and participation in design processes can be utilised to develop greater attachment to a garment as a way to extend the use phase (Armstrong and Niinimäki, 2013). The use phase is often not considered during the design process; however, this phase can regularly have a negative impact on the environment (Kozłowski, Bardecki, and Searcy, 2019).

When value is developed by purchasing and then wearing garments, the consumer is considered more passive. Given the throwaway culture and the resulting limited wear of garments, developing value from the use phase can be difficult (Hirscher, Mazzarella and Fuad-Luke 2019: 58). However, by participating in the design process, it is possible for the consumer to become a 'value creator' by taking a more active role in the design and making of a garment (Niinimäki 2011, Hirscher, Niinimäki and Amrstrong 2018). Where there is active involvement from the designer and wearer, the value is said to be co-created (Hirscher, Mazzarella and Fuad-Luke 2019: 59).

There has been a shift towards more personalised consumer experiences, where wearers can have a more active role in a garment's design, as with bespoke and customised garments. Designers can already be seen as proactive in an attempt to displace consumption with designed experiences (Earley et al., 2016: 8). More fashion designers are developing participatory practices aimed at 'empowering people through shared learning experiences' (Hirscher, Mazzarella and Fuad-Luke, 2019: 53). While designers can be seen to have a catalysing role in helping to construct the relationship between wearer and garment, Cooper notes the limitations of designing for attachment - arguing that designers cannot control users' emotional responses:

*Designers cannot craft an experience, but only the conditions that might lead to an intended experience. (2016: 65)*

While the wearer's personal journey and past experiences can shape the relationship they have with garments, the designer can play a role in developing conditions and experiences that can foster a positive wearer-garment relationship.

Change is being driven not only by designers but also by consumers. Active consumers are seen as interested and aware individuals who are more conscious of sustainability. These consumers are interested in an experience beyond the single garment, and have been seen as more demanding (Hirscher, Niinimäki and Amrstrong, 2018). In the case of DIY, active consumers contribute more to the final product. While these wearers participate in fashion design processes, the wearer's skill level or lack of experience can play a role in the resulting garment longevity (Hirscher, Niinimäki and Amrstrong, 2018).

Working collaboratively as a group has the added value of sharing skills; the development of a positive making environment; contribution to a common goal; and finding a community of like-minded people (Hirscher, Niinimäki and Amrstrong, 2018). These positive impacts of making together in communities has been considered by researchers as social making. In an article on Social Making, Carpenter (2011) explored

the increased desire by makers to learn using open source materials and as part of a community, such as 'stitch-n-bitch' groups. Carpenter notes that maker communities are providing participants with a greater understanding of how things are made, which can allow for more innovative use and re-use of materials. With links to social design and community arts, a symposium called *Social Making: Socially Engaged Practice Now and Next* (2016), which was established by Take a Part, considers the role of socially engaged practices in developing identities and the role of community. *Take a Part* is an initiative that encourages creativity in people by co-commissioning and co-creating art as a way to engage communities. Social making as a practice can be seen to be gaining traction. More recently, The Making Futures conference (Plymouth College of Art, 2019) focused on social aspects of maker practices, specifically how social making can promote responsible practices. The conference also explored social making as a way of generating an increased sense of value and encouraging 'progressive circuits of engagement, production and consumption'.

In the context of fashion, Hirscher, Mazarella and Fuad-Luke (2018) discuss makerspaces as an example of social making, where community members can work to design and make clothes that would not be possible when working in isolation. The wearer can be proud of their creative input, which can also generate enjoyment and wellbeing from the experience itself. Research has shown links between social making and more responsible consumption (Hirscher, Mazarella and Fuad-Luke 2019, Hackney 2019). Hirscher, Mazarella and Fuad-Luke consider engagement in makerspaces as a way to increase awareness of authorship and making processes, while also 'overcoming the need and desire to consume with more creative, personal and social experiences' (2019: 57). Researchers have explored to what extent social making can lead to greater awareness of and responsiveness toward sustainable practices, also considered as *sustainable sensibility* (Hackney 2019, von Busch 2013). Furthermore, Von Busch has reasoned that social making environments can promote feelings of belonging and encourage responsible behaviours. In his research, von Busch (2014) explores the impact of active participation by consumers in the design and making process. His *Fashion Hacktivism* (2008) experiments consider the role of the designer

in engaging participants to create change, offering spaces for action and tools to facilitate engagements. Von Busch developed instruction manuals or 'cookbooks' that share knowledge with participants. (see Figure 6 for an example of his work). The literature suggests that social making can make an important contribution to extending the wearer garment relationship.



Figure 6: Von Busch, O. (2008) *Self-passage project*. Image. Source: Fashion-able Hacktivism and engaged fashion design (PhD thesis).

### 2.4. Participation in the Fashion Design Process

Many approaches are already being used by fashion designers and industry to allow wearers to participate in the design process (Cramer 2011, Nayak et al. 2015). Von Hippel (2017) believes designing with wearers leads to them being responsible for more innovative solutions, suggesting that 'transformational changes to fashion products and services develop in consultation with consumers' (von Hippel, 2017: 195). Kozlowski, Cory, and Bardecki (2018) also emphasise the need to work in consultation with wearers to prolong the garment lifecycle. Design activism, as

pioneered by Fuad-Luke (2009: 27), is 'design thinking, imagination and practice' applied to effect change. The designers play an active role in helping to give a voice to consumers (Konola, 2014: 22). Links to Participatory Design practices, whereby those most affected by the design are empowered to have a larger input in its creation (see for example Sanders and Stappers 2008; Binder and Brandt, 2008; Brandt, Binder and Sanders, 2012).

It is argued that consumers of fast fashion do not necessarily appreciate design and making processes. Cramer believes that consumers only make a choice of whether to buy a garment or not and are 'entirely disengaged from its creation' (2011:1). The act of being engaged in the design process serves as a way to understand and acknowledge the skill and time necessary to develop a garment. Ceppi describes this as 'sustainable sensuality' (2006: 20) where an understanding of a product is gained from knowing about how it was made, rather than just from its consumption. Participation in the fashion design process arguably gives the wearer more control and involvement in the garment being created (Vines et al, 2013), and gives them the ability to have more input in generating change. Projects such as 'Make Yourself' by Mode Uncut (2017) focus on participatory methods that value place and time, and embrace a mindful approach to design. Participatory approaches can open up discussions between designers and wearers to better understand the wearer's needs, so creating a garment which is more appealing to the wearer (Niinimäki cited in Zhemchuzhnikova, 2017). Workshops within a sustainable context can allow for meaningful discussions around the responsibility of consumers and designers. While knowledge gained during the making process plays an important role, so too does participation in the making itself. Niinimäki and Hirscher believe the making environment has an important role, developing a positive and unforgettable experience to encourage attachment to garments (2013).

Participation is available at many stages of garment development, from idea generation, choosing of colours and fabrics to development of shapes and silhouettes. Sanders and Stappers (2008) argue that participation in the design process is now



readily available as the newest trend in marketing for major brands, with brands developing strategies for customisation of styles such as Fendi's DIY Baguette Bag. Cross wrote that participatory design has the potential to 'arrest the escalating problems of the man-made world' (1972:11), having impact on those who participate in the design process.

Research studies have shown various participatory approaches as having the potential to contribute to the development of responsible practices for wearers (see for example: Niinimäki and Hirscher 2013, Williams 2018, McQuillan 2015). Sustained and active participation has been shown to allow greater input in the design process by the wearer, however, increasing levels of participation require increasing creative input from participants (Hirscher, Niinimäki and Amrstrong, 2018). Sampson notes that participation in the design process can be a meaningful and memorable event where 'the self and the garment become entwined' (2018: 343). By engaging in designing and making a garment, wearers are investing some of themselves and their own creativity in the item. The project Shared Talent (2019), led by Williams and Stevenson, values the contribution of each person in the design process. The project illustrated that participatory practices can facilitate immersive and experiential experiences which can develop 'empathetic understanding' of fashion processes. Various levels of participation are already in use within both the fashion industry and research studies, including mass customisation, DIY and DIT. While these approaches allow wearers to have a large input into designs, they do limit the designers' input (Cramer, 2011). While participation by wearers has benefits, a balance of input by designers and makers is important during participatory approaches (Zhemchuzhnikova, 2017).

The following three visual examples illustrate the various approaches to participation in sustainable fashion, including: open design, halfway design and participatory design.

## 2.4.1. Example One: Open Design: Make/Use

Most fashion garments are presented as closed garments, that are complete and that limit the input wearers can have on them. Researcher and fashion activist, von Busch found that it was easier for participants to have an input on items if they could perceive them as 'open' and suitable for modification (2014: 383). Open Design combines designer and wearer input, and research has shown that it has considerable potential to contribute to a more sustainable future in the fashion industry (Textiles Environmental Design 2019, Smith, Ballie and McHattie 2017). Open design practices can be used at any stage of the garment life cycle – its design, use and at the stage of disposal (Cramer, 2011), and this approach can be linked to collaborative practices such as participatory design. Smith, Ballie and McHattie (2017: 1940) explore open design as a concept that allows designs and instructions to be shared freely.

Make/Use is a research project led by Holly McQuillan (2015), well-known for her zero-waste pattern development (Figure 7). The project aimed to empower wearers to participate in making by downloading zero waste designs. McQuillan facilitated a series of workshops where participants gained understanding of the zero-waste design process. Wearers were able to understand more about the construction process and the waste involved in garment production. McQuillan believes that when consumers are supported to become makers and users, the making process empowers the wearers with creative agency (2015: 12).

The need for skill and experience to produce garments can mean participation in the making process is not always accessible for wearers. McQuillan et al. (2018) found that although patterns could be used and modified by users, often the quality of the final garment presented an issue: 'for unassisted non-experts, achieving well-constructed garments was problematic' (2018: 9). Using an approach where wearers can work alongside skilled makers could remove the need for prior design experience.

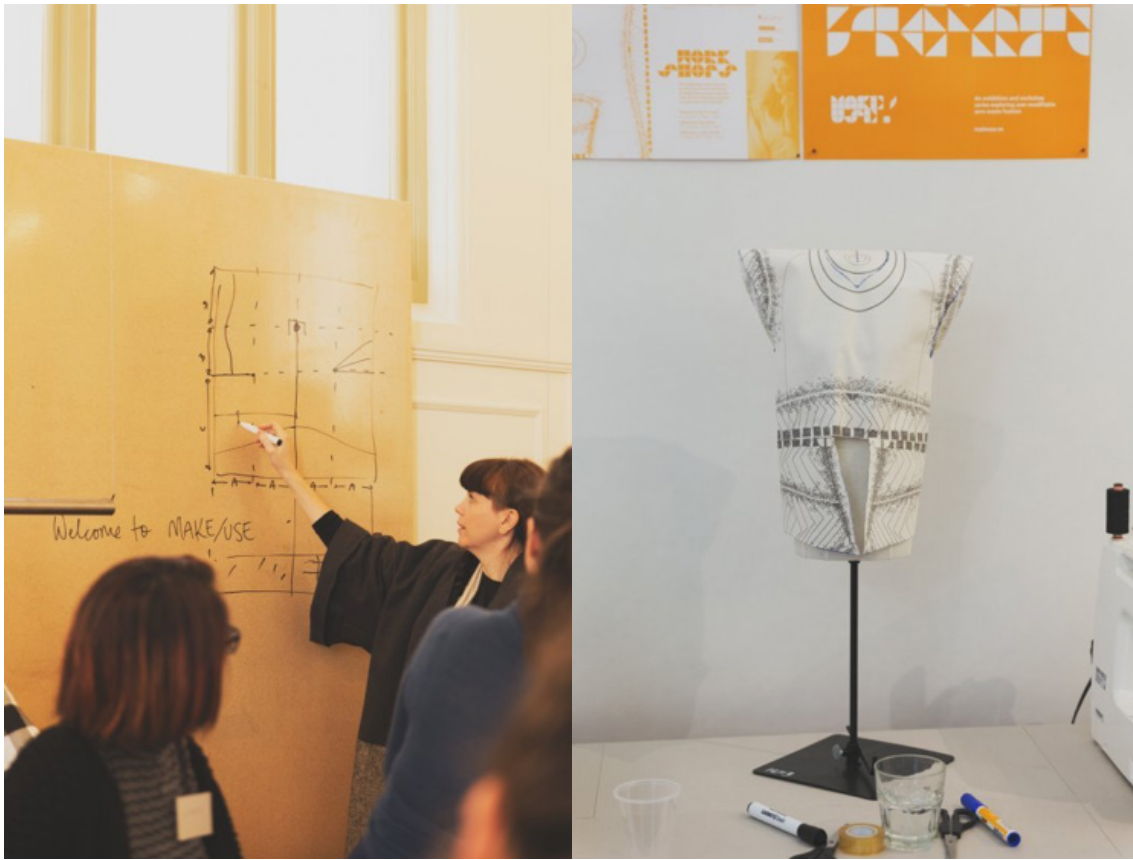


Figure 7: McQuillan, H. (2015) *Make/Use workshops*. Image. Source: [makeuse.nz](http://makeuse.nz) website.

### 2.4.2. Example Two: Halfway design: Make{able}

*Halfway Design* offers another participatory approach and process of collaboration between designers and wearers. Garments are produced incomplete to be finished by consumers, which allows wearers to contribute and design products to suit their personal taste (Hirscher, 2017). Halfway Design allows the wearer to be a significant part of the garment's narrative and 'not just a recipient of the designer's given meaning' (Chapman, 2005: 128). Halfway design allows the outcome to be shaped by a designer, which can help to reduce frustration relating to lack of experience or tools, instead allowing space for a positive experience (Hirscher, 2013).

Make{able} was a project led by Anja-Lisa Hirscher where participants worked with half-way products to become active makers of their own garment. The workshops' facilitators provided a variety of half-made pieces, which could be completed using the participants' own creative ideas (Hirscher, 2014). This approach allows participation by wearers in the design and making process, while input from the designer ensures the design is suitable for completion by the wearer.

Hirscher reports that participants expressed satisfaction from the making process and enjoyed the creative working environment and process of learning. The facilitators of the Make{able} workshops had the challenge of developing half-way designs that were suitable for finishing by any participant, regardless of experience (Hirscher and Fuad-Luke, 2013: 186).

### 2.4.3. Examples Three: Participatory Design: Ready-to-Paint

Ready-to-Paint was a research project (Zhemchuzhnikova, 2017) where participatory design approaches were used to develop garments, in collaboration with parents and their children (Figure 8). Children's drawings were used to create textiles, which were developed into garments for both adults and children, using zero-waste cutting techniques.

The feedback from the workshop was largely positive, and emphasised the value of participation in the design process (Zhemchuzhnikova, 2017: 264). Memory of the experience was seen as being especially important at this stage in the children's development. This led to increased emotional attachment to both the garments and the process, and many participants said they would keep the garments for an extended time period.



Men's underwear, toy and left-over textile waste, that becomes a filling for the toy.



Figure 8: Zhemchuzhnikova, V. (2017) *Ready-to-paint: Co-creation with little artists in fashion practice*. Image. Source: Author's own, thesis.

In each of these visual examples, the researchers have emphasised the importance of tools to help participants engage in the design process (Hirscher 2017; Hirscher, Niinimäki and Armstrong 2018). Sanders noted that researchers can design tools and activities which facilitate active involvement in the making experience (Sanders & Stappers, 2008: 11-12), which resonates with McQuillan's reflections around the significance of the designer's role in facilitating the design process:

*...the role of the designer in transforming the passive consumer into an active participant in the design process is one of facilitation and scaffolding through the provision of cognitive tools. (2018: 12)*

As demand has grown for sustainable fashion design practices, evidence suggests that it is crucial to recognise the value of making in consultation with wearers. Developing participatory approaches that allow equal input from designers and wearers, can lead to participants creating memorable experiences, and developing a community of practice working towards a common goal. This collaboration can remove the need for the wearer to have prior technical making experience, allowing the designer to support the development of a garment that will last.

## 2.5. Summary

Within this scope of context, I have highlighted the links between extending the wearer-garment relationship and wearers having more active roles in fashion design processes. Participation in making acts as a way of creating value and can encourage greater wearer-garment attachment. The social aspect of making encourages social connections and nurtures a community working towards a common goal. Research has shown wearers need to become more engaged in design processes to understand and value them. While sustained participation can encourage deeper connection to garments, approaches that draw on Open Design, Halfway Design and Participatory Design highlight the need for designer input.

As a fashion educator in the FE context, I am committed to developing teaching approaches that support collaborative participation in the fashion design process as a way to extend the wearer garment relationship. Chapter three outlines the design of the research project, which aims to develop these approaches for responsible fashion design processes.

Chapter 3:

# Research Design:

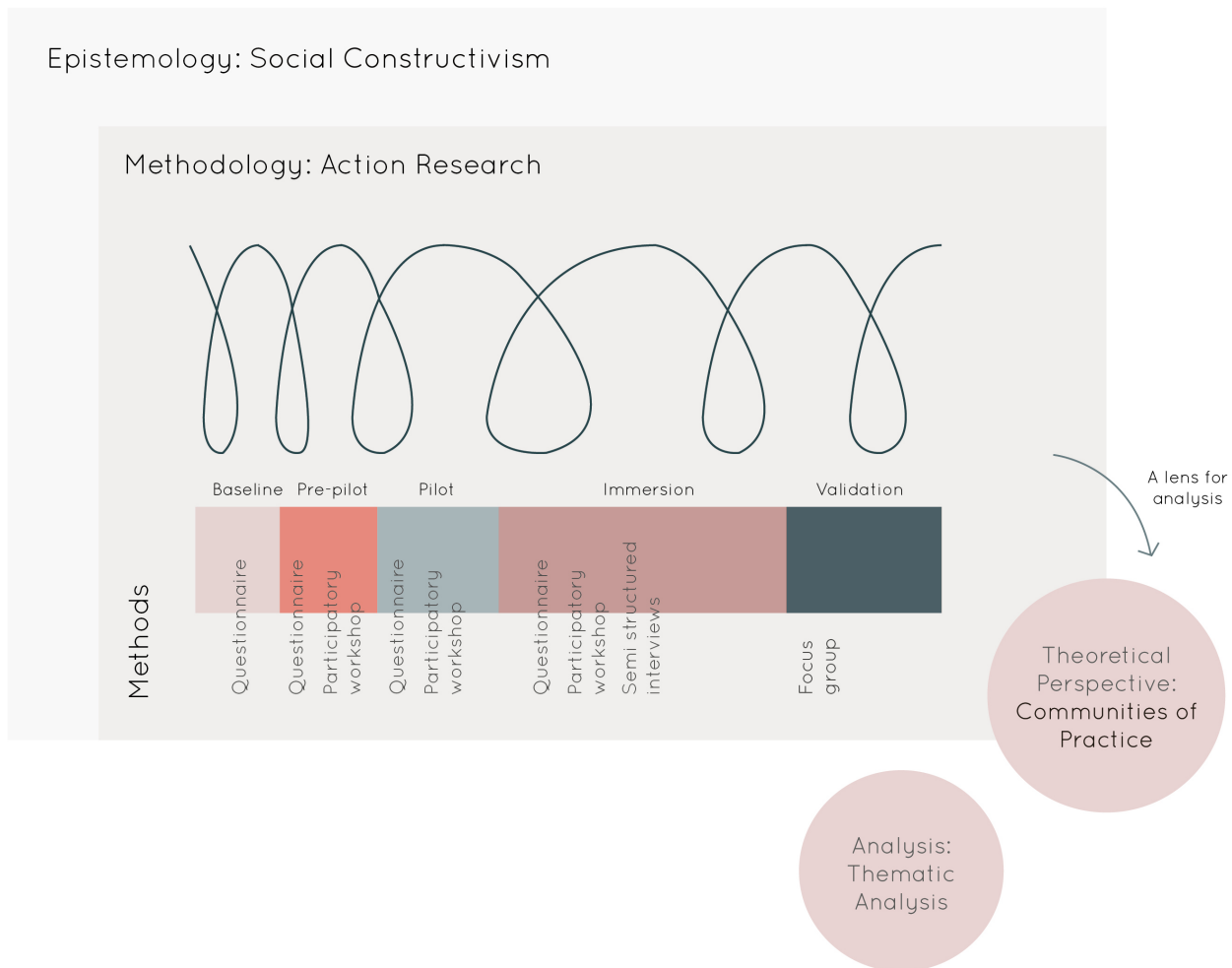


Figure 9. Archibald, H. (2019) Hierarchical research structure. Diagram. Source: Author's own



## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines how this study will be implemented and situates my practice in a research context, through identifying the theoretical perspective and exploring how an Action Research methodology reflects the emergent and iterative nature of this research. Subsequently, the methods used in the fieldwork will be summarised, and the decision to use Thematic Analysis to analyse the resulting data will be set out. This practice-based study is situated within my teaching practice and therefore has ethical implications. Hence, I will outline how the project was implemented to ensure ethical rigor. Figure 10 below provides an overview of the research design.



Figure 10. Archibald, H. (2019) *Overview of Research Design*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

## 3.2. Practice-based research

Following Earley (2016), as a designer's role has changed from simply designing products, so too has an educator's roles, which has shifted beyond merely teaching designers to design products, to encourage designers to develop skills as 'facilitators, change makers, and activists' (2016:44). This practice-based research, by nature, has the potential to generate new insights and pedagogical approaches (Grennan, 2015). By building on these insights and reflections from my teaching and design practice, the practice forms the basis of the inquiry, learning and knowledge development.

Practice-based research can be defined as gaining knowledge from practice and the outcomes of practice (Candy, 2006). In the field of fashion design, where sustainable developments are commonly focused on process or material advances, this project strives to design new approaches through practice. This could potentially change approaches to teaching sustainable design in the fashion curriculum. Steen highlights the power of practice-based research in moving from where we are to where we would like to be, where 'practice-based enquiry becomes a form of research on what could be as opposed to what is' (2011:48). The unpredictability and iterative nature of practice-based research has been seen to encourage innovation (Barnet and Bolt, 2016:3), and this innovation could support the development of responsible designers, ethical practices and ensure pedagogy in the FE context is driving the change.

## 3.3 Social Constructivism

The epistemological perspective of this study follows a social constructivism model. Social constructivism is a theory based on an understanding that knowledge is constructed in social contexts by individuals engaging with each other and making sense of their world together (Lincoln and Guba, 2013). A social constructivist approach is valuable when researching how communities develop and to review their values, perceptions and attitudes.

Within an educational context, constructivism is the basic premise that students learn by doing together rather than observing. Vygotsky (1978) considers the role of social interaction as fundamental in learning and believes strongly in the role that community has in developing meaning. Vygotsky views learning as an active process, and Dewey (1997) emphasises this hands-on approach and believes by working collaboratively students have the opportunity to think and communicate ideas. Vygotsky and Dewey (1978, 1997) believe active learning can help to construct more meaning for learners, by asking designer-makers and user-makers to engage collaboratively, participants are able to learn together. The social constructivist perspective was therefore particularly relevant for this participatory study.

### 3.4. Theoretical Perspective: Communities of Practice

By engaging in and developing fashion design processes as a shared practice, this research explores the effectiveness of this approach in developing responsible practices. Communities of Practice focuses on learning as a social practice, and learning through participation (Wenger, 2008). Key theorist, Wenger believes communities '*learn how to do it better as they interact regularly*' (2018). Participants in these communities are connected by what they do and what they learn together, and the community's focus is on areas of concern for its members (Wenger, 2000). Communities of Practice can help to provide a powerful incentive for participation and learning. These communities are expected to be sustained if participation has value to its members (Wenger, 2000).

Participation in Communities of Practice helps to construct identities and shows the significance of these identities in what members participate in (Wenger, 2000). At this early stage in designer-makers' education, it is interesting to explore if participation in these communities can develop a responsible designer identity. Wenger believes Communities of Practice can provide an inventive way of engaging learners in

meaningful practices (Wenger, 2008). While the research project takes place within an educational institute, communities are not simply within the structures of institutes (Farnsworth, Kleanthous, and Wenger-Trayner, 2016). Wenger (2000) believes that Communities of Practice have several stages of development: engagement by designer-makers and user-makers in the project may not have immediate effect on participants and their practices, but has the potential to have memorable impacts and form a part of participants' identities beyond the FE context.

### 3.5. Methodology: Action Research

Action Research provides a framework for practitioners to act, record data and experiences, then reflect on practice and make changes based on these reflections. Rather than issues merely being considered, practitioners can take action on issues and have the ability to create change (McIntyre (2008, xi). Action Research is appropriate for this experimental and explorative study, centred on my teaching practice, to develop pedagogical approaches to encourage responsible fashion design practices.

The cyclical nature of Action Research (Lewis, 1946., Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988) has many benefits to an iterative study, as it is responsive to the emerging needs of the project; it is flexible to allow space to develop an appropriate approach; and its immersive nature allows for deep reflection and refinement. As will be set out below, earlier phases, such as the pilot and pre-pilot, allowed a chance to experiment; while later phases were more refined. Furthermore, the social nature of Action Research means it can be a transformative tool for innovation, creating change by being connected to 'actionable issues' (Lewis, 1946: 35, Townsend, 2014: 7). The participatory nature of action research is a distinguishing feature (Reason and Bradbury, 2001) and McTaggart (1988) emphasises the importance of collaboration for the empowering nature of Action Research.

Action Research is particularly relevant for educators and Lin Norton believes that action research is the concept of investigating your own teaching (2009). Critical reflection is key for educators who seek to regularly improve their practice (Badia, 2017). Similarly, Donald Schön (1983) has investigated the connection between improving practice and 'reflection-in-action' by practitioners as a way to continually improve future performance. Brookfield believes involving others in the reflection process is essential (1995). He believes in exploring varying perspectives including: practitioners' experience; students' feedback; colleagues' comments and published literature.

There are clear links between the Action Research model of knowledge construction and models of active learning. The Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) 'plan – act and observe – reflect' cycle is closely linked to Kolb's experiential learning cycle (1986). Kolb viewed knowledge as being generated by having an experience and then learning from that experience: 'learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience' (Kolb, 1984: 38).

### 3.6. Justification of Research Design

As part of the research design, other methodological frameworks were considered. While both Grounded Theory and Action Research are emergent and use an iterative process (Strauss and Corbin, 1998), this project is participant-centred and aims to give equal weighting to the researcher and the participants. In this respect, Grounded Theory places more emphasis on the researchers' views (Boivin and CohenMiller, 2018), and actions are left to the participants. Action research in contrast, sees the researcher as a key participant in the research process, working alongside participants to bring about change (Checkland 1991, Hult and Lennung 1980).

While this research is participatory in nature and could be considered Participatory Action Research (PAR), the focus on my practice and the approach to participation situates the research within an Action Research methodology. Within PAR, participants help to shape the research agenda, including: planning, implementing and disseminating research (McIntyre, 2008: 5). The boundary between participant and researcher can often be seen to blur as the 'researched becomes the researchers' (Baum, MacDougall and Smith, 2006: 854), however, the research process has not been designed jointly.

### 3.7. Research Design

In the context of this study, action research provides an appropriate model as the earlier phases, such as the pilot and pre-pilot, allowed a chance to experiment; while later phases were more refined. Reflection was designed for each phase, and these reflective approaches helped inform the next workshop iteration. The cyclical action research process for this study is outlined in Figure 11.

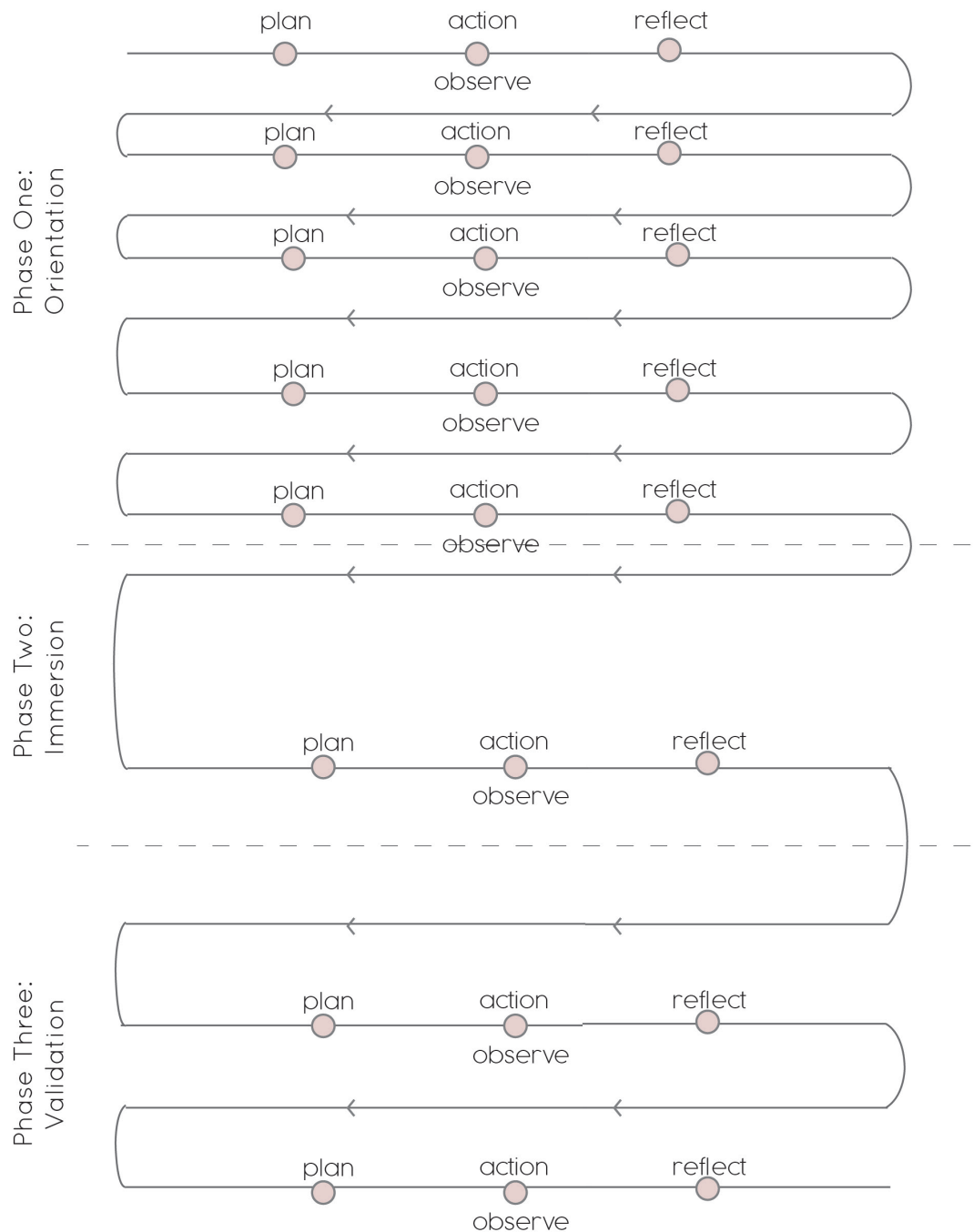


Figure 11. Archibald, H. (2019) *Cyclical action research structure*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

### 3.8. Methods

The methods used to gather data during fieldwork included: questionnaires; participatory workshops; semi-structured interviews and focus groups. These methods were used iteratively, reflected on and refined during the fieldwork (see Figure 12).

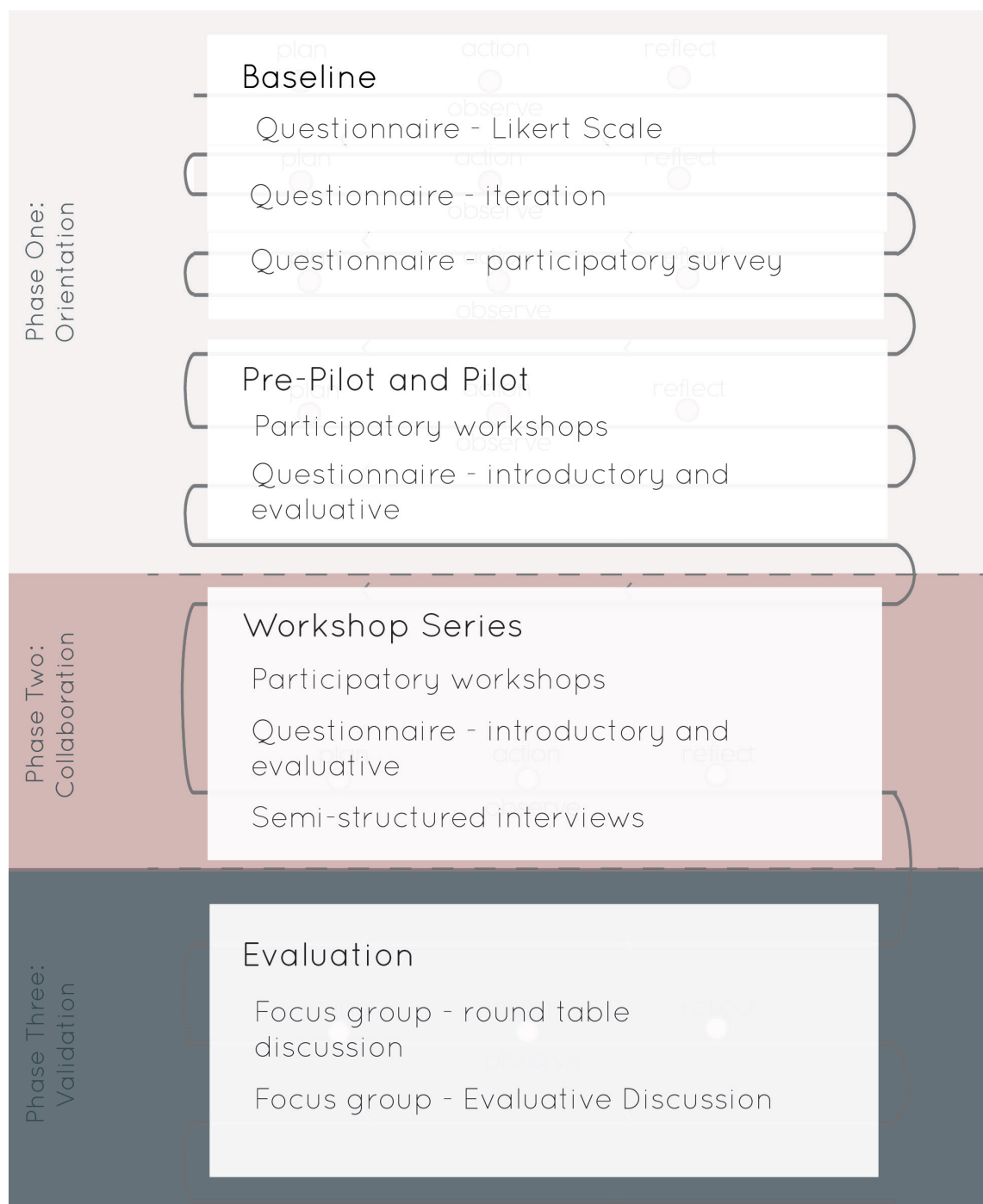


Figure 12. Archibald, H (2019) *Research design: Methods used during fieldwork*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.



The data gathered in this study is qualitative, which aligns with the social nature of the research, where rich data emerges from the methods used (Figure 13). Qualitative approaches are often used by practice-based and educational researchers as they can be creative, flexible, and dynamic (Newton Suteh, 2012).

	Engagement	Method	Data Gathered
Phase 1: Orientation	Baseline - Likert	Questionnaire	Stickered posters, photographs, Question results
	Baseline - iteration	Questionnaire	Questionnaire results
	Baseline - participatory survey	Questionnaire	A2 stickered posters, field notes, photographs
	Pre-pilot	Participatory workshops Questionnaire	Questionnaire/ evaluation results, photographs, artefacts, field notes,
	Pilot	Participatory workshops Questionnaire	Questionnaire/ evaluation results, photographs, artefacts, field notes,
Phase 2: Immersion	Workshop Series	Participatory workshops Questionnaire Semi-structured interviews	Questionnaire/ evaluation results, photographs, artefacts, field notes, audio recordings, video recordings.
Phase 3: Validation	Evaluation - round table with educators	Focus group	Audio recordings, field notes
	Evaluation - with participants	Focus Group	Audio recording, field notes, photographs

Figure 13. Archibald, H (2019) *Data Gathered during field research*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

## Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used throughout the fieldwork (Figure 12). Questionnaires offered insights that helped to shape each phase of the research. Participants were asked to complete an initial questionnaire after completing consent forms. Their responses would give an understanding of each participant's personal view on fashion, sustainability and garment value. At the end of the six-week workshop series, questionnaires asked participants to reflect on and evaluate the workshops and to consider the workshops' impact on value – designer-makers and user-makers had different questions, to give understanding from each perspective.

Written questionnaires allowed participants time to give feedback, which was important within the diverse context where there are often language barriers or literacy issues. This can mean the researcher has little control over whether participants have completed questionnaires independently (Collins, 2015).

## Participatory workshops

I implemented a workshop series that sought to bring together user-makers and designer-makers. In design research, participatory approaches that engage users in the research process to encourage collaboration are becoming more common (Binder and Brandt, 2008). Participatory Design (PD) actively involves users in the design process as a way of better understanding their needs (Robertson, 2012). PD is concerned with developing potential practices for 'researchers, designers and users to jointly explore and envision alternative practices and situations' (Steen, 2011: 50). In the case of this project, this experiential research starts from participants' own lived experiences of garment value and sustainability in fashion, and the participants are actively engaged in finding alternative design processes. Rich data was gathered from the workshops, exploring participants' observations and thoughts. This data was gathered in field notes, recordings and photographs (Figure 13).

Participatory approaches were adopted to develop a workshop series that allowed wearers to play an active role in the designing and making of garments, which could instil responsible approaches and challenge the mindsets of designers of the future. This approach considered user-makers and designer-makers to have equal roles and input in designing, developing, and evaluating their ideas (Robertson and Simonsen, 2013: 28). The scope of context highlighted the power of participatory approaches in promoting sustainable fashion practices (Zhemchuznikova 2017, Niinimäki and Koskien 2015, Hirscher 2017), but also highlighted that participation is not always

accessible. Pairing each user-maker with a designer-maker reduced concerns about garment quality that could have arisen if user-makers did not have the support of a designer-maker, and where making together could lead to more innovative outcomes than working independently (Trischler et al, 2018., Mitchell et al, 2015). While active participation by the users has many benefits towards creating change (Sanders and Stappers, 2008), Steen notes the tension in PD practices of getting a balance between the knowledge and ideas contributed by the user, and those of the designer (2011:44). He suggests critical reflection by designers is especially important to deal with these tensions.

Working closely with potential users in the making process can highlight unexpected insights for the designer (Stappers, 2010). In this case, designer-makers and user-makers working collaboratively encourages two-way learning (Binder, Brandt and Sanders, 2012). Designer-makers were able to learn about the wearers' needs and perceptions of value – an area that can have less emphasis within pedagogical practices. The user-makers acquired knowledge about the fashion design process and technical possibilities from the designer-makers. This mutual learning also took place between myself, as the researcher, and the designer-makers and user-makers, as set out in Figure 14. The learning environment also allowed for learning between designer-makers or user-makers. Ensuring respect for participants' varied skill and experience can ensure equal power and decision-making by participants (Brandt, Binder and Sanders, 2012).

Binder and Brandt (2008) explored the idea that participant attachment to a PD study is reliant on participants becoming accountable during the process, while the research area should also be of concern to the participant. By taking part as designer-makers, the fashion students are becoming accountable for their input and investment of their own time, encouraging participation.

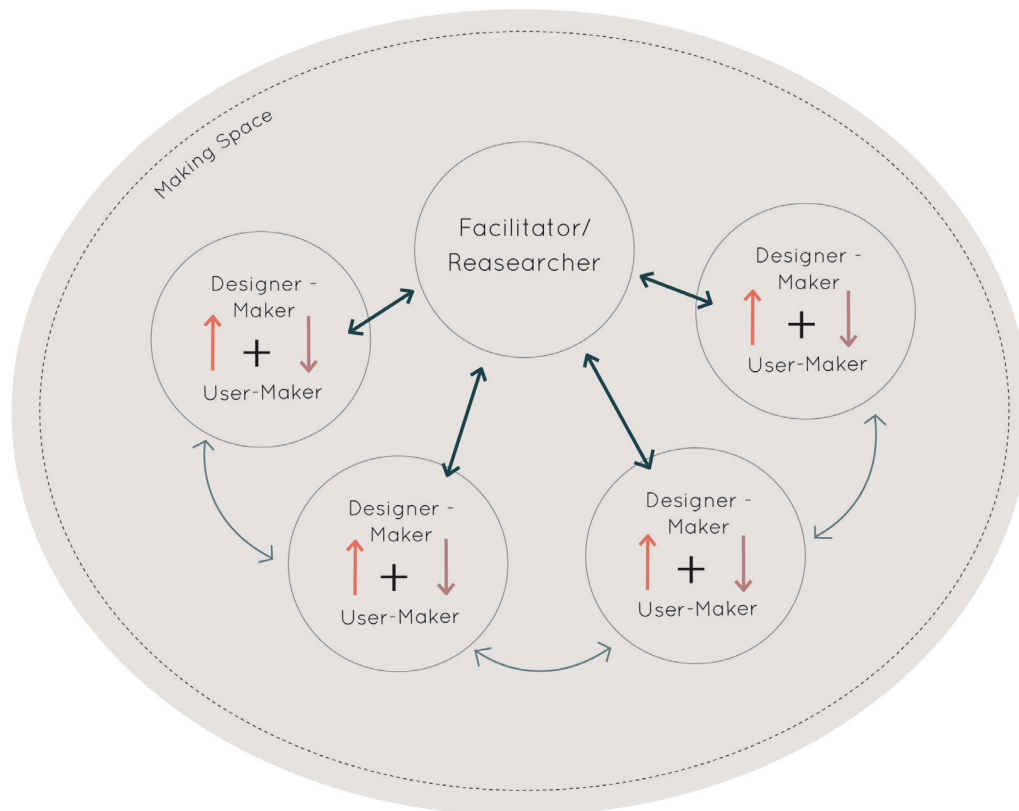


Figure 14. Archibald, H. (2019) *Workshop design: mutual learning*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Tools were developed to help inexperienced user-makers to participate in the design and making process (Sanders and Stappers, 2014). The pre-pilot and pilot phase of the project helped to identify and resolve potential problems of the project: testing tools and approaches, refining the research area, and understanding if the project was feasible (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2002:33).

## Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were held with each pair of designer-makers and user-makers. These interviews allowed participants to expand on their experience in more detail, allowing me to understand participants' observations more clearly. The paired interviews also allowed for discussion to happen between designer-makers and user-makers on the process of working together. Semi-structured interviews offer a balance between flexibility and structure, allowing time for follow up questions, and focus on

areas of participant interest (Collins, 2015: 134). Whilst participants have freedom to guide the discussion, the interview can become lengthy and more difficult to analyse as the discussion can go off topic. An interview guide was developed to help keep the interview focused (Appendix 2.4).

### Focus Groups

To validate the project, focus groups were designed in Phase Three of the study: one with fashion design educators within an FE setting, and the second with participants from the workshop series. Focus groups allow for in-depth discussion and this group interaction can provide valuable insight into the area of study (Smithson, J, 2007: 357). Validating the project with educators would gather feedback on the research project, the appropriateness as an approach for pedagogical practices, and would draw on the experience of educators. As with semi-structured interviews, focus groups can be challenging to keep on topic as answers can be lengthy and discussion is openly encouraged. Topic guides were developed to help with this challenge (Appendix 2.5). Three months after the workshop series, a focus group with participants allowed for considered feedback and reflections from all participants.

### 3.9. Analytical Framework

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data as it emerged during each phase of engagement. The practices and experiences from the participatory workshops have been analysed to determine if the study has answered the research question and aims. Thematic analysis is a rich and detailed method for identifying and analysing themes within data (Clarke and Braun, 2006). Thematic analysis is also recognised as a flexible tool for researchers to discover patterns to develop new constructs and theories, 'providing a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data' (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas 2013: 400). Within this research, thematic analysis was effective with different forms of data: evaluation questionnaires, and interview transcriptions.

Ongoing informal analysis took place during the fieldwork. Reflections informed adjustments to the project design to develop an approach best suited to the project aims. The focus of this practice-based study was exploring if a participatory approach, with designer-makers and user-makers working collaboratively, can lead to the development of more responsible practices of designing, buying and owning garments. This study therefore had an emphasis on process, so the artefacts made within workshops are outcomes of the process rather than being analysed to answer the research question. The data generated from observations and field notes gave insights into the workshop experience, with my practice as a fashion design educator foregrounded. This data gives insights into the aspects of the making communities: the participatory environment; relationships between designer-makers and user-makers; and informal discussion.

The process of thematic analysis is iterative, and continually works between data, codes and the development of possible theories (Saladana and Omasta, 2017). Several iterations of the coding process helped to ensure strong themes were developed that related directly to the aims of the study. Clarke and Braun outline the six stages of thematic analysis: familiarising yourself with the data; developing initial codes; then developing themes. These themes are then reviewed: defining and naming the themes, then writing about them (Clarke and Braun, 2006). Following these six stages, the data went through a further coding process to develop recommendations from the named themes.

Thematic analysis is commonly viewed as not being a stand-alone method of analysis in the way that others such as content analysis are. However, thematic analysis is seen as fundamental to many other types of analysis (Clarke and Braun, 2006; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas 2013).

### 3.10. Participants and Recruitment

Recruiting designer-makers and user-makers within the required demographic was possible within the FE college. Achieving a balance of designer-makers and user-makers for Phase Two was realised with ongoing recruitment at each of the earlier stages of fieldwork. Figure 15 sets out the approaches to recruitment at each phase.

	Engagement	Recruitment strategy
Phase 1: Orientation	Likert scale	New students in SOF, information session about project
	Questionnaire Iteration	Again recruiting new students in college
	Participatory Survey	Public display in college corridor, email and social media, student association
	Pre-pilot	Posters in College and email to SOF
	Pilot	Posters in College, email to SOF and information session
Phase 2: Collaboration	Workshop Series	College students, information sessions, student association, word of mouth
	Interviews	Participants from Phase 2
Phase 3: Validation	Round Table Discussion	Lecturers volunteered their time.
	Evaluation event	Participants from Phase 2

Figure 15. Archibald, H. (2019) *Recruitment Strategies*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

For their role as the skilled hand, designer-makers needed to have experience of designing and making, but could be of any age, gender or background. As Williams (2016) argued, fashion design students have the potential to create lasting change in the industry, and therefore played a significant role in the study. Designer-makers were recruited from the SOF cohort, where I held information sessions at break times. This resulted in several students volunteering to take part in the research.

The user-makers were chosen to be young female millennials as they have grown up with the current consumer culture. A more in-depth rationale for this choice of participant is provided in Appendix 2.2. This group was chosen as research shows

their demand for 'constant newness' (Mintel, 2017). However, young consumers' also have the power to 'drive the shift in attitudes' with reports of 44% of young millennials (Saner, 2017). Young millennials have the potential to support change, but perhaps a lack of approachable ways of achieving this prolongs unsustainable habits. Therefore, taking part in the research as a user-maker would give young millennials an understanding of the lengthy design process that could potentially have an impact on the wearer-garment relationships and habits of consumption. To achieve an accurate reflection of this demographic, user-makers would ideally have little or no experience of fashion design processes. User-makers were recruited through the Student Association and by speaking to other lecturers from different departments. Several students also approached me with friends or family who would like to take part. In the pilot stages, experienced fashion students acted as user-makers and could give more informed insights to help plan an appropriate approach to the immersive phase.

As is often found with Action Research, sustaining participation for the duration of the project was a challenge. As a way to limit disengagement, I encouraged an open and novel working environment, and offered time to socialise with food before the workshops. Initially, after the first week, participant numbers dropped by four, however numbers then remained consistent for the remainder of the workshops.

### 3.11. Ethical Implications

The participatory nature of the fieldwork and working closely with participants and with my own students, meant I had a responsibility to address ethical issues that may emerge. The GSA Research Ethics Committee approved the field research proposal before fieldwork was initiated. As part of my teaching practice, I am also registered with the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme. At every phase, participants were given information sheets that outlined the study, their role within the study and my role as the researcher and facilitator. After agreeing to take part, participants were asked to complete consent forms that included photographic consent (Appendix 2.1). Participation in the baseline phases was anonymous, and any photographs were



anonymised to respect confidentiality. To remove implications of an unbalanced power dynamic based on my role as a lecturer, I assured students that participation, or non-participation, in the research study was entirely voluntary and not part of their coursework. Participants were also given the opportunity to ask questions about the research before each intervention started.

Participants had roles as either designer-makers or user-makers, which meant that issues could arise regarding authorship and ownership of the artefacts made. To limit this, shared authorship was discussed at the start of the study. From the outset, the dissemination of the artefacts was clear - user-makers would keep the garments that were designed for them, and designer-makers took away the valuable skills learned, and photographs for their portfolios.

These ethical approaches have been employed to ensure quality and integrity of the research, to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants, and to ensure participants took part in the study voluntarily.

### 3.12. Summary

This chapter has outlined the research design including the theoretical and methodological positioning. Communities of Practice provide a powerful incentive for participation and learning, and acted as a way to engage students in these meaningful practices. The cyclical and participative nature of Action Research (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988) was suitable for the emergent and transformative nature of this research project. The methods used in this study to gather a range of rich data included participatory workshops, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. This data was then analysed using thematic analysis to evaluate if facilitated participation in the fashion design process can encourage more responsible practices in designer-makers and user-makers. In the next chapter, I describe in more detail the three-phases of fieldwork that took place.

Chapter 4:

# Fieldwork

## 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will present the fieldwork, which consisted of three phases:

Orientation, Immersion and Validation, and took place from August 2018 until June 2019 (see Figure 16). This fieldwork is in response to the research question, that asked how collaboration between designer-makers and user-makers during the fashion design process could encourage the development of responsible practices. The fieldwork predominantly took place in an FE. The SOF has a diverse student body of over 300 learners, predominantly female. Students have varying experiences of fashion design and creativity. These practical courses educate learners from introductory levels, where no experience is needed, to HND, equivalent to year two of an HE degree. The SOF is committed to inclusive learning and being responsive to the changing needs of students - this study reflects that approach.

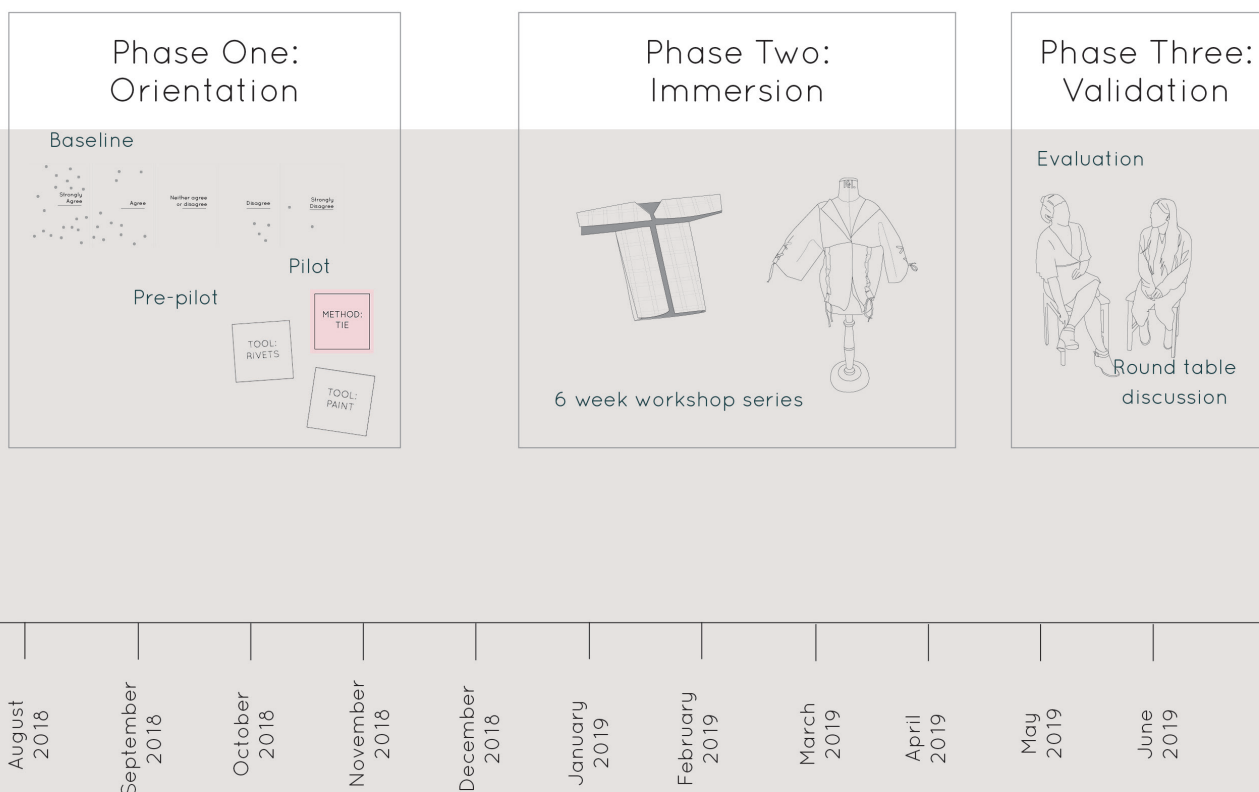


Figure 16. Archibald, H. (2018) *Timeline of field research*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

As the researcher and facilitator of the study, and an educator within the fieldwork context, there are ethical implications of unbalanced power dynamics, which were discussed in Chapter 3.10. The investigation into my own practice means writing in the first person acknowledges my positionality and role as the researcher and facilitator of workshops. While key insights have been taken mainly from the immersive workshop phase, learning happened during each phase of the fieldwork, which informed the following phase, fitting with the Action Research approach.

## 4.2 Phase One: Orientation

The Orientation Phase provided insights into the participants' perceptions of sustainable fashion practices and garment value, and gave the opportunity to test and refine the participation approach for the workshops series. This phase included the Baseline, Pre-pilot and Pilot workshop, as illustrated in Figure 17. The focus for these was informed by insights from initial scoping of the field.

### 4.2.1 Baseline Likert Scale

A group of 40 participants responded to statements on a Likert scale, which assessed common assumptions of fast fashion, throwaway culture and sustainability, with answers ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree (Figure 19). The participants were new students meaning they were not influenced by previous college level study of design. The full results from the Likert can be seen in Appendix 2.3. Responses to the Likert made clear that participants were familiar with key concepts of fast fashion and a throwaway culture. Participants perceived that fast fashion trends led to a throwaway culture; however, many participants did not see themselves individually as being influenced by these trends. A number of participants indicated that they do not throw clothes away quickly, but did acknowledge that they did have garments which were only worn once. Two significant results for the design of the next phase are shown below: Figure 18 illustrates participants' perceptions of garment value when a

# Phase Two: Orientation

A summary of the Orientation Phase

1

## Likert Scale

Assessing common assumptions of fast fashion, throwaway culture and sustainability



+

2

## Iterative Questionnaire

To refine and explore further the findings from the Likert

3

## Participatory Survey

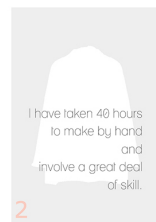
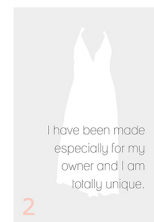
Pop-up engagement to gauge participants' views why garments become valuable

*'What makes a garment valuable?'*

4

## Pre-Pilot Workshop

Less structure to experiment with levels of participation



5

## Pilot Workshop

Structured participation to refine workshop design

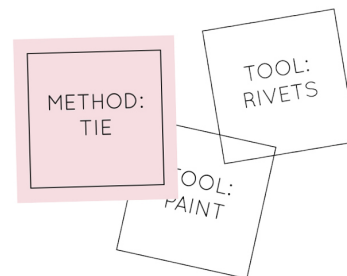
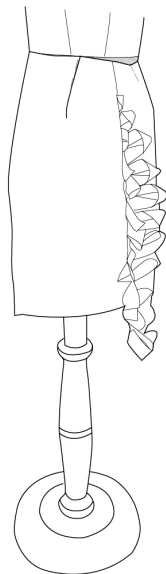


Figure 17: Archibald, H. (2019) *Overview of Orientation Phase*. Image. Source: Author's own.

## Skilled Hands

garment is handmade; and participants considered whether an understanding of the design process would increase their perception of garment value (Figure 19).

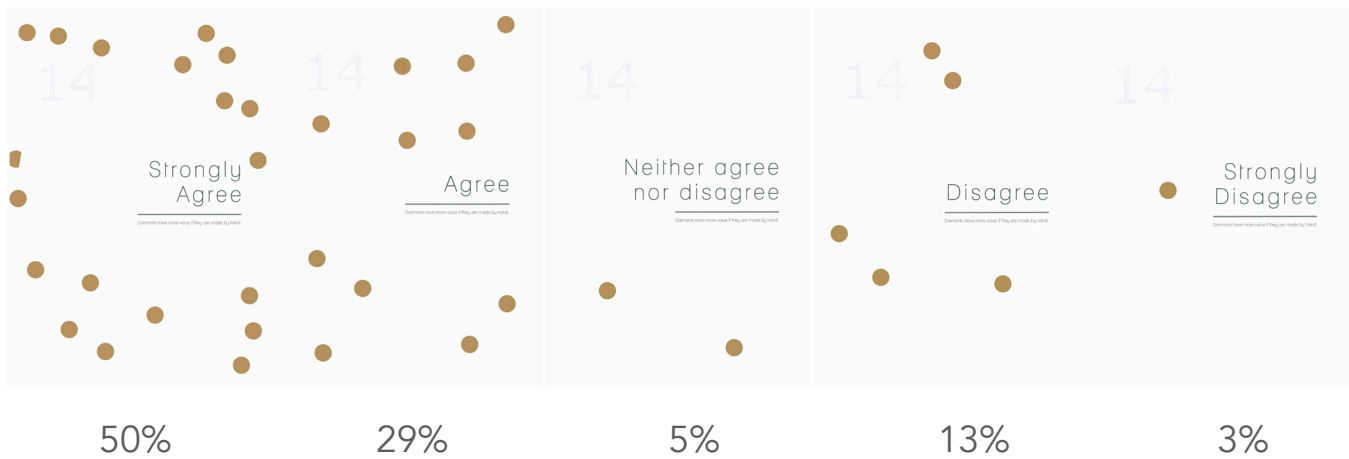


Figure 18: Archibald, H. (2018) *Likert responses to statement 14: Garments have more value if they are made by hand.* Image. Source: Author's own.

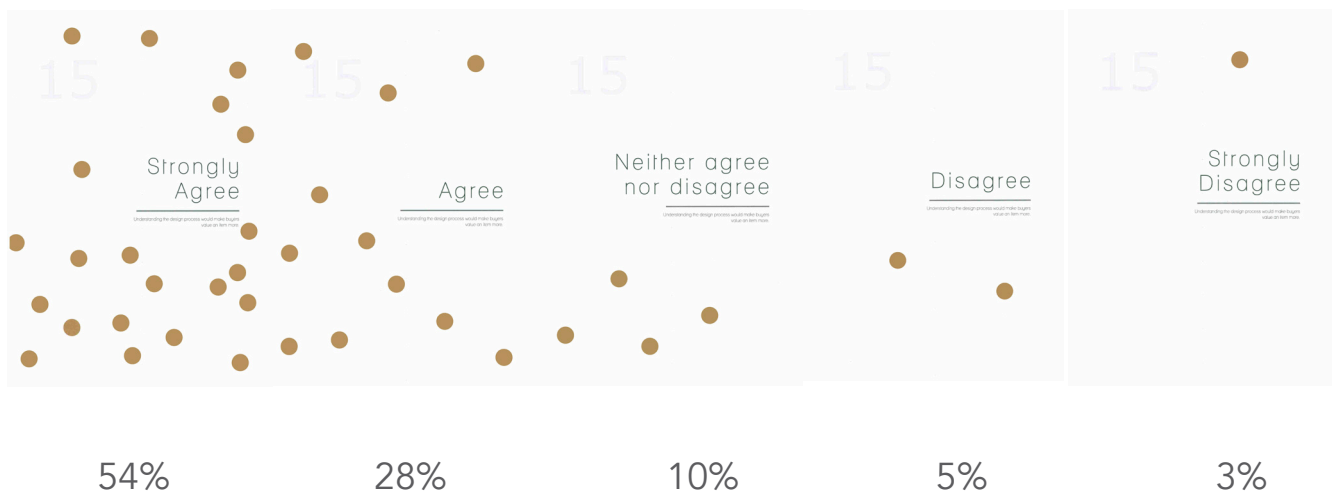


Figure 19: Archibald, H. (2018) *Likert responses to statement 15: Understanding the design process would make buyers value an item more.* Image. Source: Author's own.

Following the Likert, participants also answered the question 'What makes you value a garment?'. The results were analysed and organised into themes using thematic analysis (Appendix 3.1.1), and the key themes are represented in Figure 20.

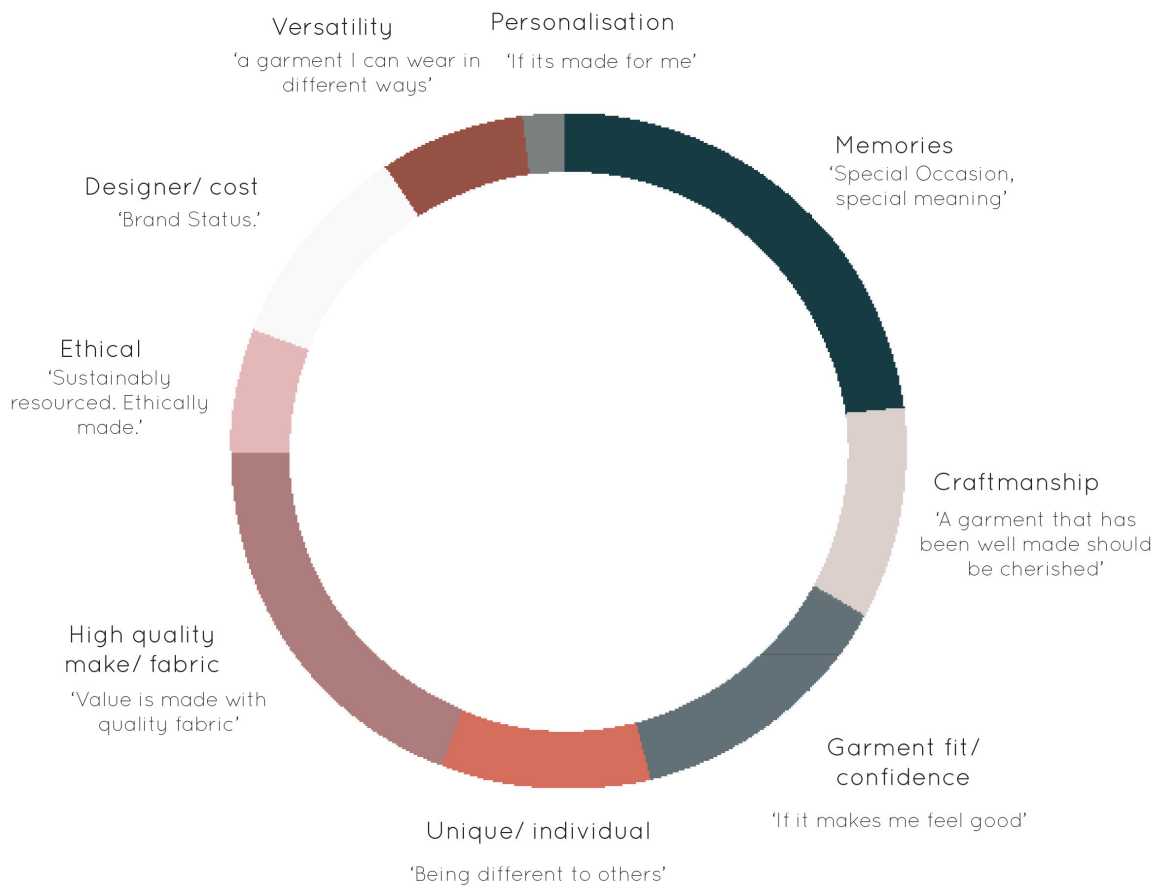


Figure 20: Archibald, H. (2019) *'What makes a garment valuable?' - key themes*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

## Iterative questionnaire

The Likert scale gave an overview of consumer perceptions, but a further questionnaire allowed emerging themes, such as the impact of money on garment value, to be further explored. A copy of the questionnaire and results can be found in Appendix 3.1.1. Over 70 participants from the SOF completed the written questionnaire, with almost 80% either agreeing or strongly agreeing more wearer input in design decisions could increase a garment's perceived value - showing the potential value of a more participative approach to fashion design. Overwhelmingly, almost 90% of the participants agreed that items made by themselves or someone they know would lead to stronger perceived value of garment and could lead to increased wearer-garment attachment.

Responses to the Likert and the iterative questionnaire were constructive in beginning to identify key themes relating to perceptions of value. The majority of participants agreed value is added in the following ways: when garments are made by hand; with an increased understanding of design processes; having more input into design processes; and when garments are made by themselves or by someone they know (for a full analysis see Appendix 3.1.1.). These insights were used to design the next phase of fieldwork.

## Participatory Survey

Initial engagements have shown wearers perceptions of garment value can vary, and these perceptions can develop following participation in the design process. Therefore, gaining an understanding of why garments become valuable to wearers was significant. Codes were generated from responses to the question '*What makes a garment valuable to you?*' (Figure 21), and a pop-up participatory survey incorporated the key themes from these codes. Each poster contained statements relating to a theme, and participants were asked to respond to the theme that resonated most with them when considering garment value. The posters were displayed in a public corridor in the SOF allowing for wide-ranging participation. To eliminate the possibility of participant responses being driven by aesthetic preferences, minimal garment silhouettes were drawn to ensure the focus was on the significance of the statements (Figure 21).

This pop-up visual survey acted as a quick way to gather data, engaging 81 participants in total. The posters also acted as a way to raise the profile of the study: where it developed strong student engagement and opened up discussions about the project.





Figure 21: Archibald, H. (2018) *Participatory survey 'Which garment is most valuable?'*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

## Skilled Hands

The results (see Table 1) help to verify that participation in design processes has the potential to add value to garments. The themes with the highest responses were: garment craftsmanship (21%), unique/ individual garments (30%), ethically made garments (20%).

Theme	Statement	No. of stickers	%
High end Designer brand + monetary	'I am made by a high-end designer and my price reflects that'	4	5
Craftsmanship/ skill of maker	'I have taken 40hrs to make by hand and involve a great deal of skill'	17	21
Unique/ individual + personalised	'I have been made especially for my owner and I am totally unique'	24	30
Versatility/ functionality/ cost per wear	'I am versatile, functional and a classic which can be worn in many different ways'	10	12
Memory/ sentimental	'I am 30 years old and have been treasured by my previous owner'	10	12
Ethics/ Made in Scotland	'I am made in Scotland and every person in the supply chain has been given a fair wage'	16	20

Table 1: Archibald, H. (2018) *Interactive questionnaire 'Which garment is more valuable?'* Source: Author's own

This research project centres on developing teaching approaches to engage wearers, alongside designers, in fashion design processes. Developing these approaches could lead to greater understanding of craftsmanship and making processes, and so lead to the greater appreciation of garment value, which could in turn have an impact on consumption behaviours.

## 4.2.2: Pre-pilot Workshop

The pre-pilot provided an opportunity to refine the workshop approach and experiment with levels of participation by the designer-maker and user-maker. During the Pre-pilot and Pilot, I acted as the experienced designer-maker. The Pre-pilot workshop had four participants, allowing for more in-depth observation of the participant journey. The pre-pilot tested some participation tools and allowed varied engagement in fashion design processes. The open-ended nature of the task offered participants freedom of expression; however, the comparative lack of structure was daunting for some participants. (find full details of the Pre-pilot in Appendix 2.3)

Participants used mannequins, tools, drawing templates and collage techniques to develop a design in half-scale (see Figures 22). By designing within the limitations of a theme with a specific garment, participants had boundaries to work within, and working half-scale on mannequins ensured the ideas could be completed within the workshop time constraints. Participants had varying levels of design and creative experience, however more directed instructions were needed for user-makers who had less experience of fashion design processes. At this initial engagement, participants felt they gained valuable skills, and believed these insights could impact on their future buying decisions. One participant said:

*I think I'm more likely to try and make my own clothes or perhaps try to find a maker who can help me to realise a design that I've created.* (Pre-pilot participant)

While feedback was largely positive, and participants indicated the process was enjoyable, one experienced maker felt the workshops were quite conceptual and believed they could be difficult for inexperienced makers:

*Not certain that without a design background I'd be as understanding.* (Pre-pilot participant)

Another less experienced maker felt the experience could become overwhelming for participants. Feedback from workshop participants was key to the iterative workshop design process.



Figure 22: Archibald, H. (2018) *Pre-pilot images from workshop*. Image. Source: Author's own.

### 4.2.3. Pilot Workshop

The Pilot workshop was designed to develop more structured participation and refine the process of participation. I recruited students who were willing to engage with the study. Harnessing this creative experience meant participants could offer informed observations. The explorative nature of this fieldwork gave me an opportunity to reflect on my practice, and test out different approaches with varying degrees of participation, while developing the participatory workshops for designer-makers and user-makers. This explorative process helped the workshop design evolve holistically: from unrestricted participation in the Pre-pilot to very controlled participation in

the Pilot. Adopting a halfway design approach removed more daunting technical challenges, allowing user-makers to actively participate in design development. Designing an accessory was more achievable within the time restrictions of the workshop. For the Pilot workshop, I designed five stages of participation to make the process clear for all participants (Figure 23).



Figure 23: Archibald, H. (2018) *Pilot: Workshops steps of participation*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

Through the use of tools and design parameters it was possible to work towards a balanced user-maker/ design-maker input. Research in Chapter 2.4 highlighted the value of tools to encourage more successful participation and allow participants to express themselves (McQuillan et al. 2018; Sanders and Stappers 2008). Design cards (see Figure 24 and 25) were developed to give participants options of how to participate, while also acting to limit some choices. One participant noted the benefits of these boundaries:

*It was interesting to have time and material constraints – made decisions more quickly. Made me think about how to add value and interest to a simple object.* (Pilot participant)

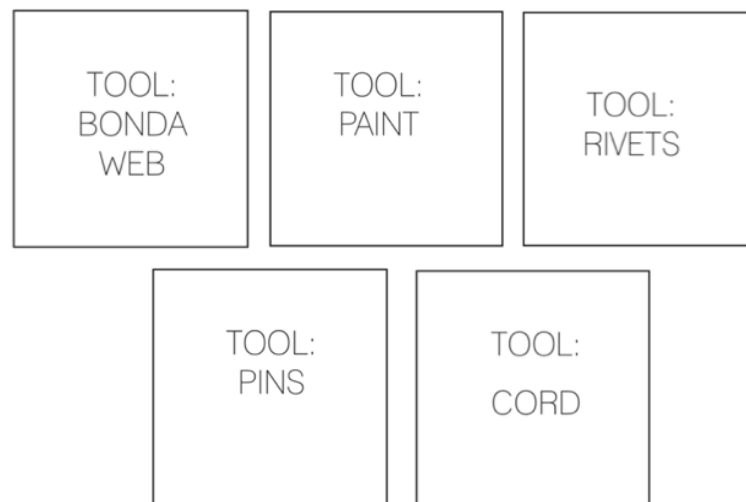


Figure 24: Archibald, H. (2018) *Pilot: workshop method cards*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.



Figure 25: Archibald, H. (2018) *Pilot: Tool cards from workshop*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

The participants were provided with a limited range of materials, such as needles, cords, paint, rivets and pins. I designed a moodboard that offered visual inspiration to participants, guiding design choices such as colour, shape and texture (Figure 26). The outcomes of the workshop seen in Figure 27.

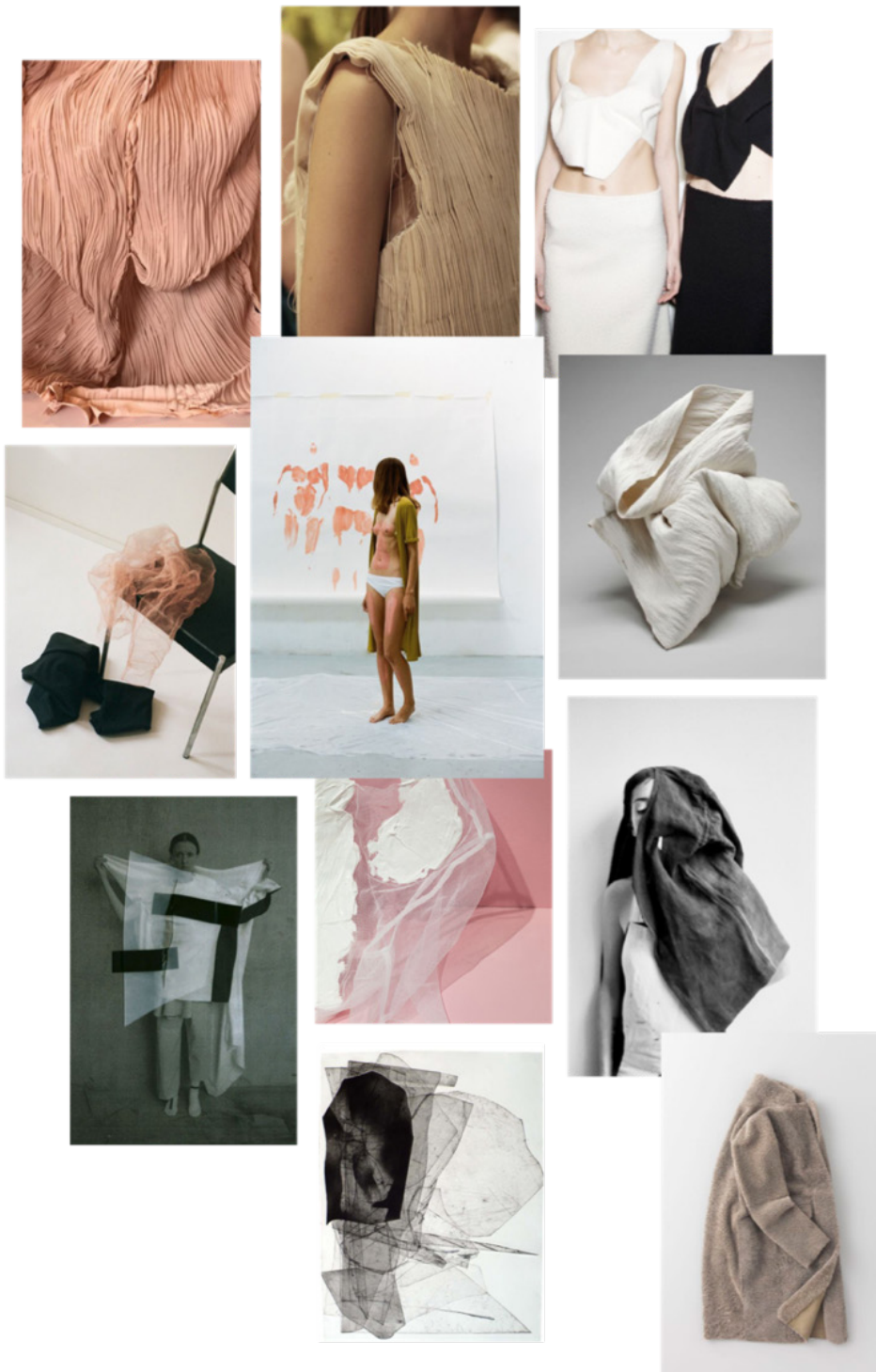


Figure 26: Archibald, H. (2018) *Pilot: Moodboard*. Image. Source: Author's own.



## Skilled Hands

Feedback from the Pilot was very positive from the user-makers. The structure and design of the workshops supported the participants to be actively engaged, have an enjoyable and rewarding learning experience, and reconsider their framework for perceiving garment value.



Figure 27: Archibald, H. (2018) *Pilot: workshop outcomes*. Image. Source: Author's own.

The majority of participants felt that the workshops changed their views of garments' disposable nature and led to increased value of garments:



*[...] I like a personal touch on a garment. It will most likely be kept forever*

(Pilot Participant).

As with the Pre-pilot study, feedback from the participants indicated the workshop's potential to encourage buying from trusted sources rather than on the high street, and to encourage making garments themselves. However, reflections from the workshops echoed McQuillan's (2015) views that halfway garments often lead to garments that are poorly constructed:

*I would be wary of using it in case it broke but value the experience I had whilst making it.* (Pilot participant)

While the inexperience of makers can impact garments' practical longevity, McQuillan et al. (2018) highlight that mistakes they make can become part of the narrative of the garment. The introduction of the one-on-one support of an experienced designer-maker at the Immersion Phase could help limit these issues.

### 4.3. Phase Two: Immersion

The research question asked how collaboration between designer-makers and user-makers during the fashion design process could encourage the development of responsible practices. The Immersion Phase built on insights gained from the Pilot phase on appropriate levels of participation by designer-makers and user-makers. This Phase consisted of the main workshop series, that explored: sustained participation by user-makers in fashion design processes; the user-maker/ designer-maker dynamic; gauging participants' perceptions of value; and their resulting relationship with the artefacts created. Over a six-week period, user-makers and designer-makers participated in weekly workshops. Each workshop had clear aims and focused on a different part of the design and making process (See Figure 28, and teaching plan in Appendix 2.4). Developing an approach where wearers worked in conjunction with skilled makers removed the need for making experience, and so the workshops

## Phase Two: Immersion

A summary of the weekly schedule



Figure 28: Archibald, H. (2019) Immersion: *workshop plan*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

focused on designer-makers working in collaboration with user-makers. The designer-maker acted as the skilled hands and the user-maker was able to provide essential insights into what they needed and wanted from a garment.

The participant group started as a group of 15, and after the first week became a group of 11 who all participated for the duration of the project. Two of the designer-makers had taken part in the Pilot workshop. The group were of varying ages, predominantly female, with one male designer-maker (for an overview of participant groups, see Figure 29). All the user-makers were within the planned participant demographic - females aged 16 – 25, as discussed in Chapter 3.6. To encourage strong working relationships and sustained participation, participants were offered the option to come half an hour early to the workshops to share some food. This allowed a chance for discussion, and for the group to get to know each other out with the workshops. Field notes highlighted the significance of this, and the warmth participants showed to each other after a week apart. Each week, I observed this rapport grow and it began to feel like a strong community of participants (see Appendix 3.6).

Most of the participants were able to build relationships naturally, and as a result were able to choose a partner without difficulty. However, for some participants, where language or confidence was a barrier, I actively supported participants to connect with a designer-makers or user-makers. In the FE Context, and specifically within the SOF, the demographic is varied. Some students had English as a second language, others were mature students, and two participants had shared interest developmental disorders. Maintaining a supportive learning environment which accommodated the diverse learning needs of participants ensured inclusivity. To respect the confidentiality of participants, the designer-makers and user-makers names have been anonymised for the purpose of this study.

For both designer-makers and user-makers, meaningful participation in the workshops had the potential to promote collaboration, innovation and encourage learning

together. The workshops' focus on process encouraged an open environment, encouraging free creativity that was participant-led. As the researcher and facilitator, it was my role to encourage a supportive and positive environment; provide tools and approaches to nurture active participation; and optimise learning opportunities for the participants and myself.

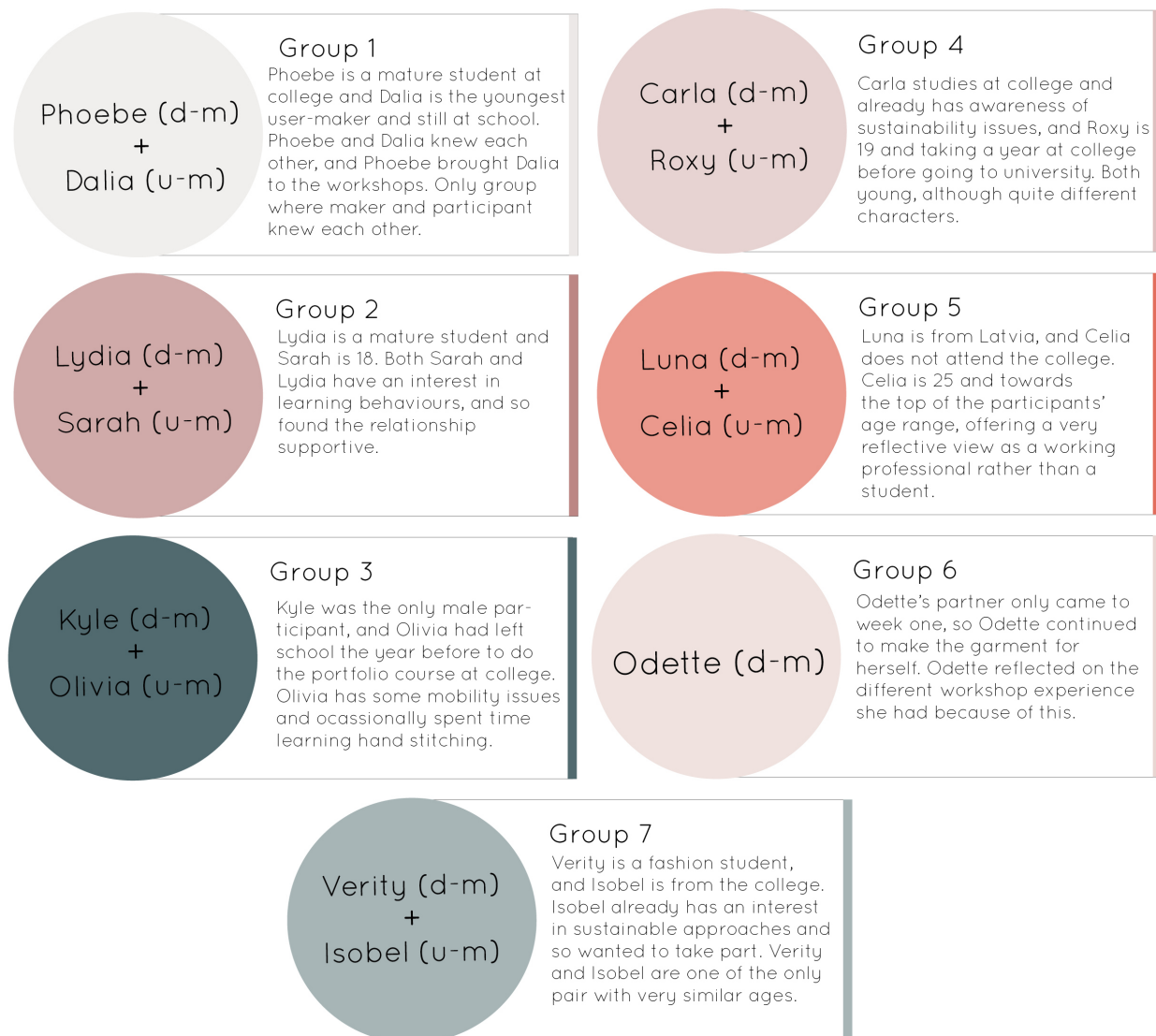


Figure 29: Archibald, H. (2019) *Immersion: participant group profile*. Diagram. Source: Author's own.

### 4.3.1. Workshop One: Theme

The first workshop introduced the project and the design process to the participants; matched designer-makers and user-makers into groups; and gave me insights into participants' perceptions of value. Reflections in my field notes drew attention to the nervous yet excited atmosphere at the start of the first workshops (see Appendix 3.6). Some of the students were looking forward to working on a project outside of their course work.

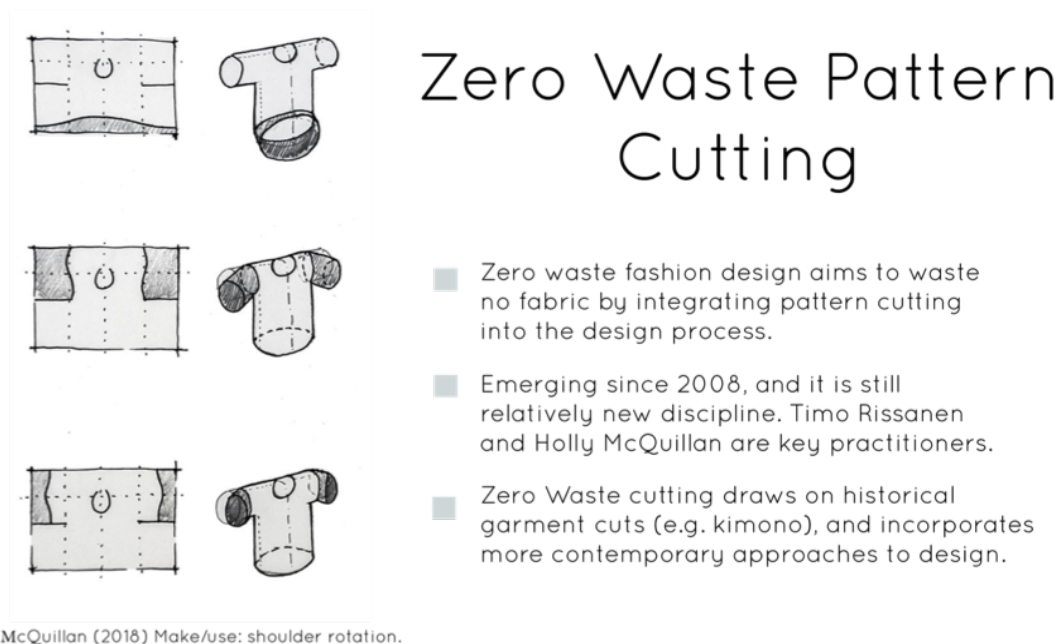


Figure 30: Archibald, H. (2019) *Workshop: Week 1 presentation*. Image. Source: Author's own.

I began by introducing the project to the participants, and provided them with an overview of the weekly schedule (Figure 30). A questionnaire introduced concepts of garment longevity, value and attachment (Appendix 2.4). The questionnaire was effective in opening up discussion, allowing participants to begin thinking about their own views on sustainability and consumption. As an ice-breaker, participants were asked to create a zero-waste garment using a paper template (Figure 31). Zero-waste pattern cutting was a new concept for the designer-makers as well as for the user-makers, so this activity was a chance for the participants to help each other and share resources.



Figure 31: Archibald, H. (2019) *Workshop zero-waste paper manipulation*. Image. Source: Author's own.

With my support, the designer-makers and user-makers were grouped into pairs for the duration of the project. In these pairs, participants talked about factors impacting their attachment to garments, and elements of a garment the user-makers found important. This helped to establish the design-maker in the role of offering their expertise and knowledge of the design process, and encouraged the user-maker to share their tastes and aspirations. Using these insights, the participants developed a moodboard using theme images, fabrics and words provided (Figure 32).

This process was participant-led, which enabled me to observe and then facilitate an evaluation discussion at the end of Workshop One (see Figure 33). Here also the participants were asked to reflect on the workshop activities and, with those insights in mind, to choose a garment they valued to bring to Workshop Two.





Figure 32: Archibald, H. (2019) *Workshop one*. Image. Source: Author's own.

## Skilled Hands



Figure 33: Archibald, H. (2019) *Workshop one: moodboards*. Image Source: Author's own.



### 4.3.2. Workshop Two: Design

At the beginning of week two, another presentation gave a chance to recap on week one, and set goals for the second workshop – with a focus on further developing design ideas. Lower attendance at the workshop meant Odette, a designer-maker, had to work independently to complete the design for her partner.

During the workshop participants discussed the value of their personal garments, giving insights into the attachment they have to their own garments. Different themes came from these discussions surrounding memory of a person, place or event; enjoyment of wearing and feeling good; and versatility of a garment (see transcriptions in Appendix 2.4). Others reflected on the ability for garments to be worn in lots of different ways. One participant reflected on the value of narrative in keeping garments for longer:

*I can't even get rid of them now [...] I don't like getting rid of things that have a story* (Lydia, designer-maker)

The discussions allowed for ideas to be shared, while giving other participants an insight and understanding of varying perceptions of value. After seeing half-scale samples and a demonstration of alterations that could be made to the zero-waste patterns (Figure 34), participants continued with their design process and used the moodboards from the previous week as inspiration (Figure 33).

Participants worked with half-scale mannequins and patterns which helps to reduce waste from toiles and paper patterns. Zero waste toiles can be created more easily using fabric with minimal waste. Participants could use a range of drawing templates that I developed to give more confidence to less experienced drawers, or designer-makers could help user-makers to realise their ideas (Figure 35).

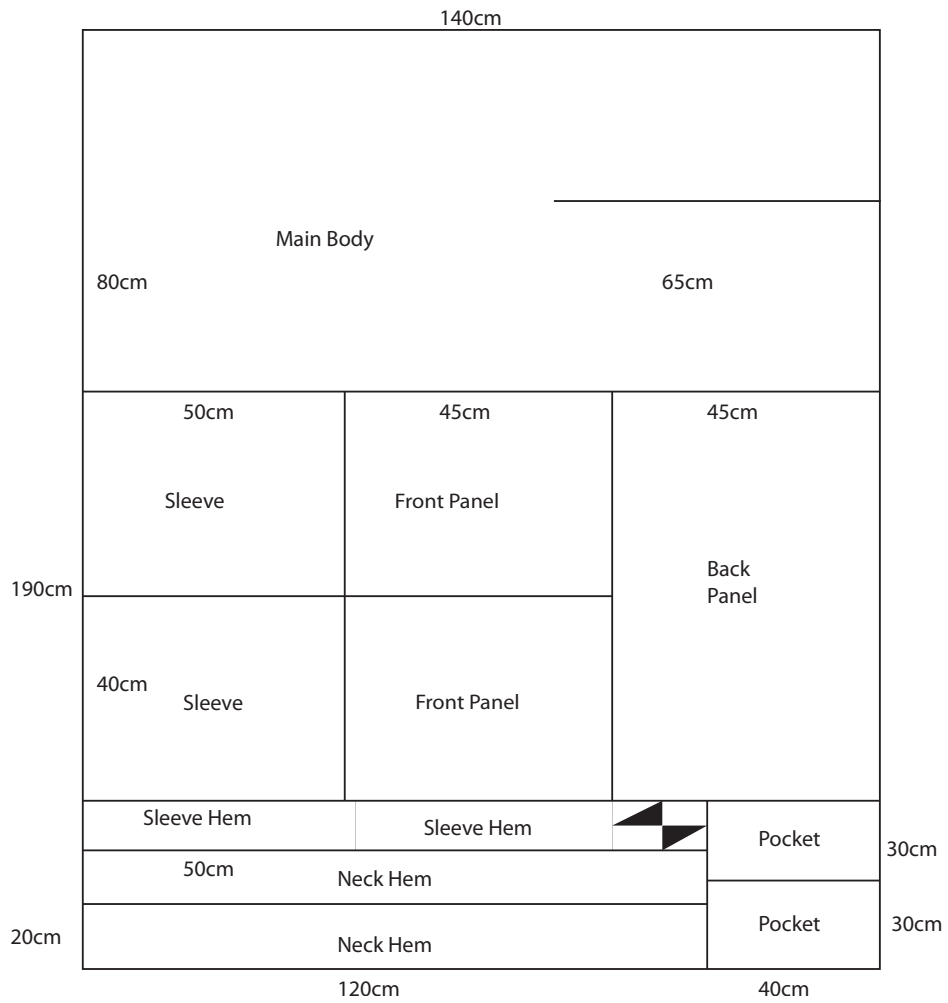


Figure 34: Archibald, H. (2019) *Zerowaste patterns*. Image. Source: Author's own.

Choosing the most appropriate zero-waste pattern to adapt, designer-makers created changes to suit the user-makers' chosen design. Notably, the user-makers found the pattern-drafting stage and the environment of the sewing production rooms interesting. Several user-makers had no previous knowledge of pattern cutting and seeing the process first-hand gave valuable insights into the wasteful nature of pattern cutting. The pattern cutting process also acted as a reminder to designer-makers, who may not have acknowledged the impact of discarded paper and fabrics. My field notes describe a discussion between some designer-makers about the large quantity of wasted materials from classes (see Appendix 3.6).

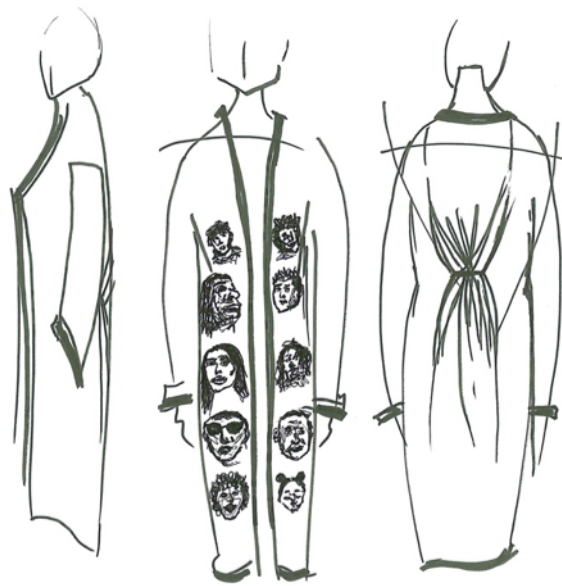


Figure 35: Archibald, H. (2019) *Week two: designer-maker sketch*. Image Source: participants.

As part of the design process, the designer-makers and user-makers were asked to work together to develop a detail user-makers could have an input in - either sewing or pattern cutting. Research had shown achievements were important to encourage deeper attachment, and so I wanted the user-makers to feel a sense of achievement by playing a role in the garment production. The design-makers, on the whole, seemed eager to pass on skills to the user-makers. User-makers benefited by learning new skills, and designer-makers benefited by solidifying existing skills during the passing of knowledge to the user-makers. Participants ended the workshop by

completing design sheets, including drawings, fabric type, and fabric meterage (Figure 36). These design sheets helped to clarify what was needed to make the design, including the meterage of fabric and any fastenings.

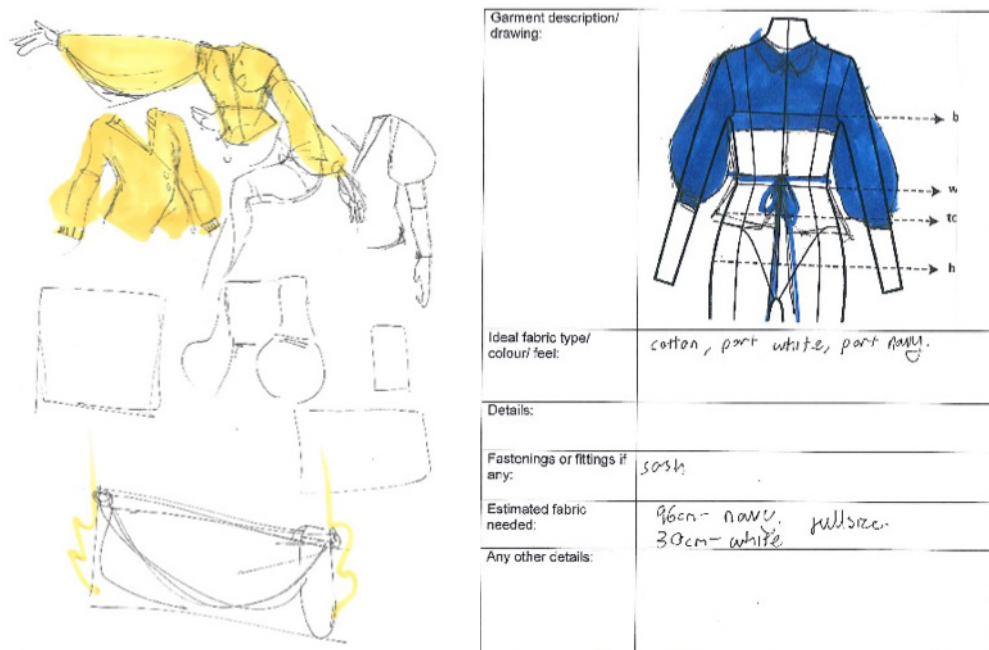


Figure 36: Archibald, H. (2019) *Week two: garment design sheets*. Image Source: participants.

### 4.3.3. Workshop Three: Toile

During the third week, half-scale toiles were sewn, and samples of the finishes were created by participants (Figure 37). Half-scale garments allow for changes to the silhouette and proportions to be made and executed quickly.

Discussions between designers-makers and user-makers were really valuable at this point in the process. Technical experience could be shared by the designer-makers, and user-makers could share what they liked the look of. Participants were actively engaged and proactive in problem solving, which was highlighted in my field notes from this week, while participants reviewed toiles on the half-scale mannequins:



Figure 37: Archibald, H. (2019) *Workshop three*. Image. Source: Author's own.



Figure 38: Archibald, H. (2019) *Workshop Three: toiles*. Image. Source: Author's own.

*[...] designer-makers were keen to understand the elements that user-makers wanted to change and how to create an outcome that suited the moodboards, and participant (Appendix 3.6, p.302).*

The engagements were a collaborative process and there was mobilised creative energy in the room as each pair of participants worked together to develop a final toile (Figure 38).

#### 4.3.4. Workshop Four, Five and Six: Manufacture

Week four, five and six focused on the production of the full-scale garments (Figure 39). Some designer-makers spent time teaching user-makers to use the industrial machinery, allowing user-makers to sew elements of the garments.

Occasionally participants were absent, which impacted on the garment making progress and their partner's workshop experience. When user-makers were not available, designer-makers could continue a garment's production, however, when designer-makers were absent, progress was often slower and tasks were completed to a lower standard. Isobel, a user-maker, spoke about how difficult tasks were without her partner's experience. In the final week, after requests for extra sewing time, I started the final class early to give more opportunity to complete the garments. It was notable how dedicated participants were to the project. Many designer-makers gave up their own time between lessons to complete the manufacturing details (see Figure 40 for an example of a finished garment).

Designer-makers and user-makers were asked to give written evaluative feedback at the end of the workshops. Feedback had the potential to improve the research design, while also stimulating students to think more about what they have learned during the





Figure 39: Archibald, H. (2019) *Workshop four, five and six*. Image. Source: Author's own.



Figure 40: Archibald, H. (2019) *Workshop artefact: final garment*. Image. Source: Author's own.

process of participation. User-makers and designer-makers had different questions, to give feedback from their different perspectives. These varying questions allowed for additional insights from each participants perspective, outwith the partner interviews, where the pairs were together. In this written feedback, participants could respond without peer pressure from their partner. The results are discussed further in Chapter Five. Questions asked how participants found the process; explored the impact, if any, of the participation on how they valued the items made; asked if participants had learnt about the making process during participation; and importantly asked if this experience would have any impact on future consumption (see Appendix 2.4).

Initial thematic coding took place, and results of this are in Appendix 3.2, where key themes began to emerge from the user-maker and designer-maker responses. This coding identified that participants recognised the potential for immediate and longer-term impact on responsible practices.

Interviews with each pair of designer-maker and user-maker acted as a conclusion to the six week project, and gave participants a chance to discuss their experience of working together (Figure 41). These interviews had varying levels of success - for some, the conversation flowed well and for others, particularly in the case of Phoebe and Dalia, language barriers made conversations more challenging and generated fewer insights to gather data from.

Analysis of the transcripts are in Appendix 3.2. Several of the interviews revealed the value of working in collaboration with someone. Isobel (a user-maker) and Verity (a designer-maker) explored this relationship during their interview:

*Verity: I really enjoyed it [...] - not working with the students doing the same course as me.*

*Isobel: I think I definitely learnt a lot from watching you do all the sewing and stuff.*



## Chapter 4: Fieldwork

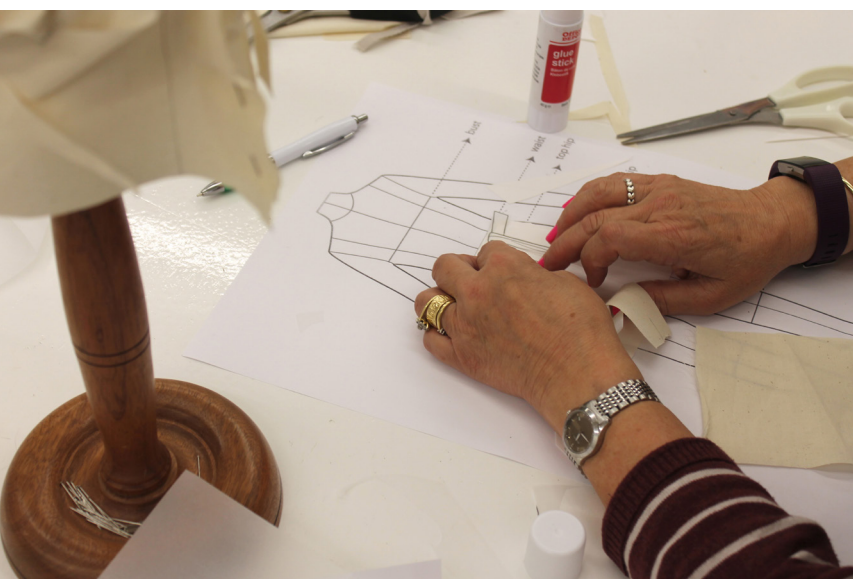
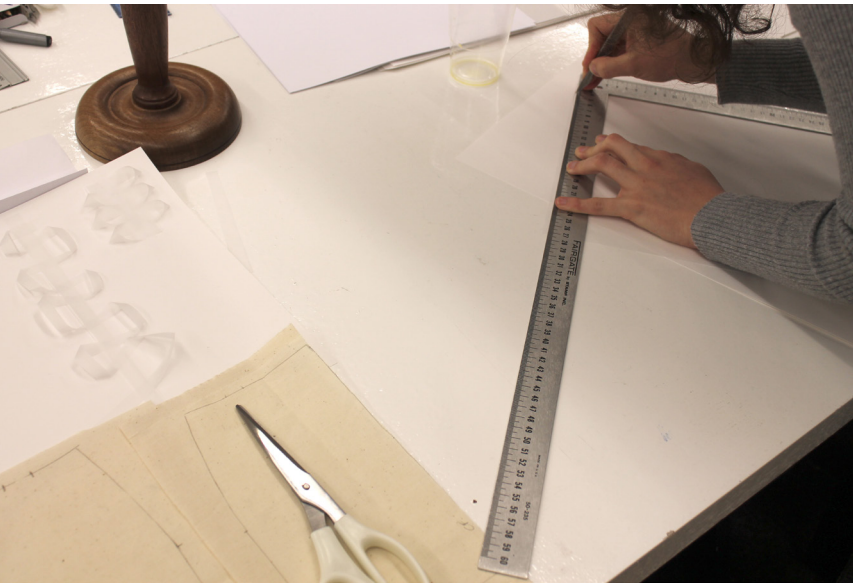
*Verity: Yes, it was good because I'm not generally a good team person, I quite like being on my own... it was good to have her opinion and then just to have to even out jobs as well as – it's not always if I can do something then I just go away and do it. You can actually share the moment and show them.*

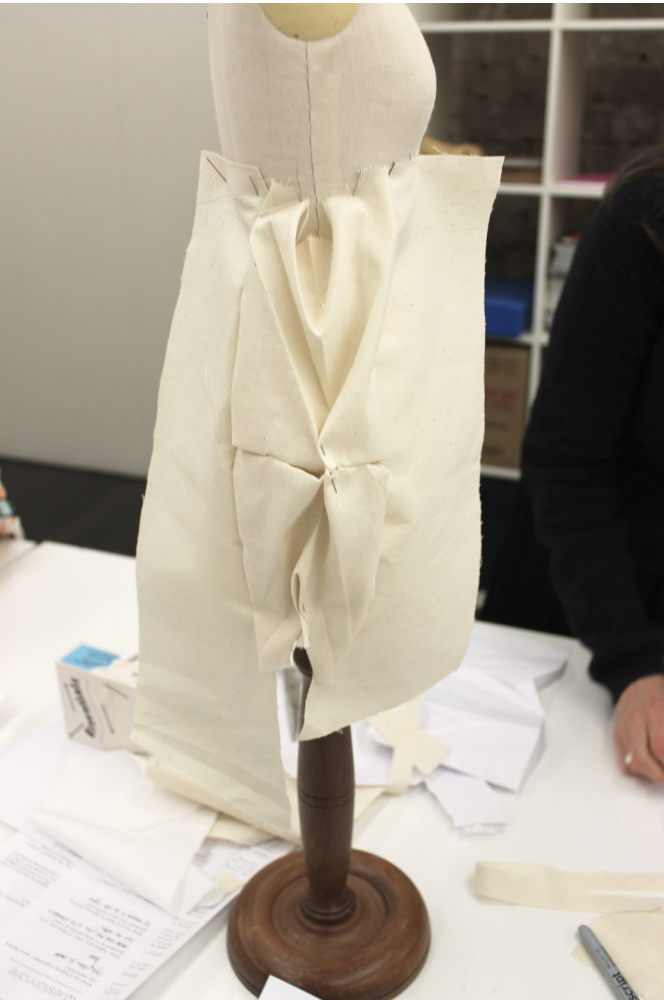
Additionally, the uniqueness of the garment and the memorable process of making appeared to have had an impact on perceptions of value and were explored in several interviews. Some students were unavailable for interview due to coursework demands.



Figure 41: Archibald, H. (2019) *Semi-structured interview – Carla and Roxy*. Image. Source: Author's own.

## Skilled Hands

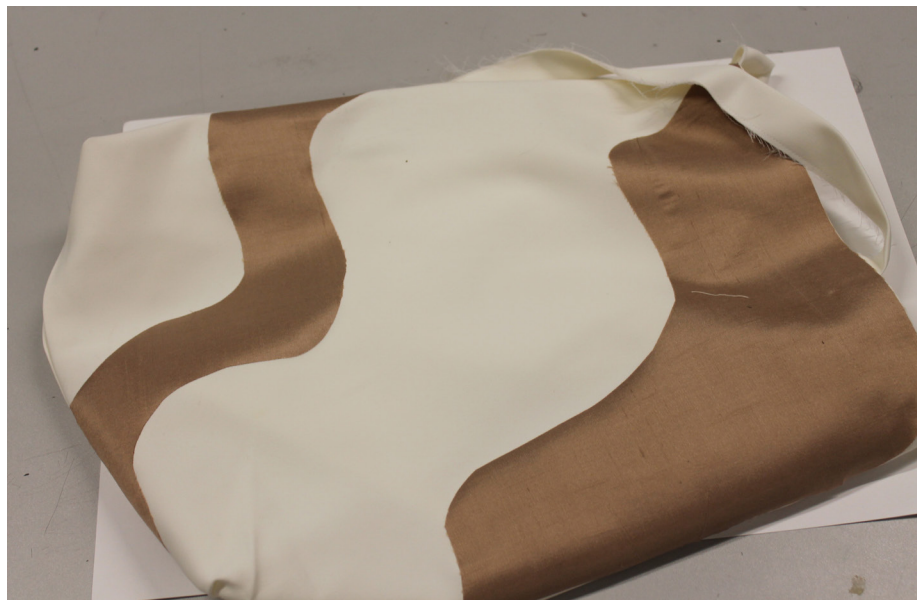






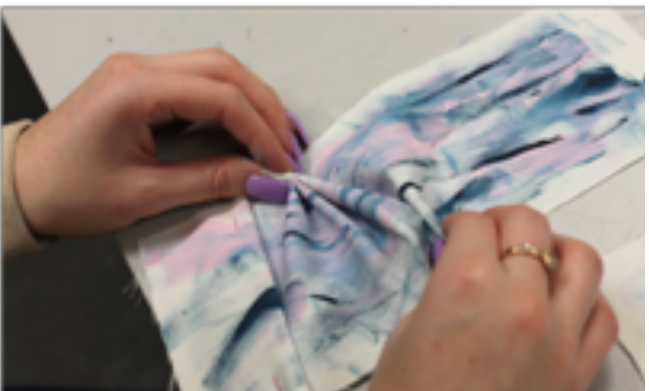
## Skilled Hands







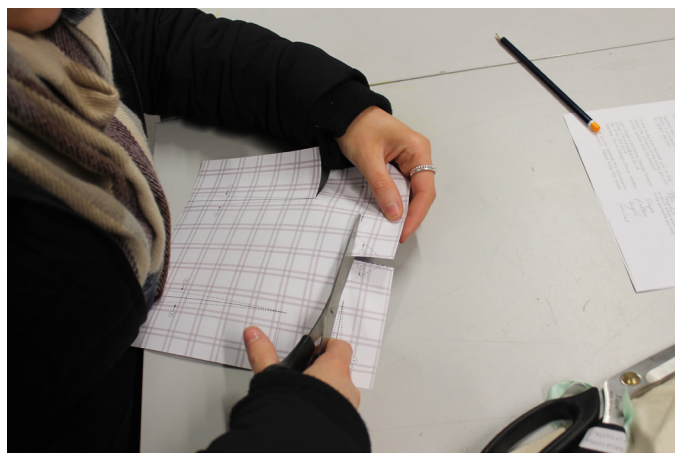
## Skilled Hands







## Skilled Hands







## Skilled Hands







## Skilled Hands







## Skilled Hands



## Phase Two: Toiles





## Skilled Hands

















## 4.4. Phase Three: Validation

The Validation Phase acted as a way to validate the research. This included a Round Table focus group with fashion educators as a way to assess the value of the research within an FE setting, and a final Evaluation Event took place with all the participants three months after the workshop series. Only through the iterative process of coding and developing themes was it possible to see that the impact of the workshops was multi-layered. The workshops provided learning and increased understanding of sustainability issues, and participation provided insights into designing and making processes.

The Round Table focus group provided an opportunity to explore issues arising from the workshop approach used in the research, and wider questions about sustainability in fashion education. The discussion took place with six experienced fashion and textiles educators, who could give a broader perspective and substantiate the findings. Two further colleagues asked to give written feedback on the proposed questions (see Appendix 3.3). Both lecturers were responsive to the project approach and commented on the need for students to be more aware of who they are designing for, and both noted the need for changing behaviours of both designers and wearers to begin to drive change:

*Absolutely, it must come from both sides. It is something of a catch-22 situation, consumers demanding cheap and readily available products at all times, and companies providing and encouraging that. If consumers speak up more and demand more ethical practices and products, companies will have to start changing their ways. It will take a huge shift in our thinking and behaviour which we have become so used to in recent years. (Fashion educator)*

This shift could potentially be linked to the teaching of fashion design processes, where one lecturer agreed participatory approaches could:

*[...] provide a greater insight and understanding to all sides of the process.*

(Fashion educator)

The Round Table also explored issues of sustainability, students' understanding of sustainability, and how this is tackled [if at all] in FE. The focus group format allowed ideas to emerge spontaneously, highlighting the need for education across all levels – consumers, students, designers and educators:

*[...] we're on the cusp of it but until it actually becomes the norm it's not going to be because it's all about education.* (Fashion educator)

For both students and consumers, consideration was given to issues regarding how change could be encouraged, what makes change difficult and what the educational issues are. For students, key issues identified were current unsustainable behaviours, how to create change to these behaviours, what is already being done to create change in curriculum, why change in education is difficult, and broader questions about the role of education. In relation to consumers, key areas identified included what the sustainability issues are for consumers, why garments lack longevity, the possibility that society may be on the cusp of change, factors that bring about change, why change in consumption patterns is difficult, and the need to educate consumers (see Figure 42 for further details). One lecturer believed in the potential of students, but the need for more guidance:

*[...] students have their own personality; they bring new things to the table; just think they need to align that with the bigger picture.* (Fashion educator)

Participants in the Round Table discussed the potential impact of greater focus on education in the development of responsible practices: giving an understanding of the impacts of the design process; more awareness of the end user of a garment by designers; and the need for curricula innovation to drive change. The need

was discussed for designers and brands to move away from attempting to simply incorporate sustainable practices, towards instead encouraging changing buying behaviours:

*But do you know what, I think even companies that are like sustainable companies and the new companies that have come out, they've still got that attitude but they want people to buy. (Fashion educator)*

As well as discussing the current issues and approaches, colleagues also discussed the potential impact of the workshops on participants and the development of responsible practices, which will be unpacked further in Chapter Five. The Round Table discussion gave valuable insights from fashion educators, those that could use this approach to encourage a change in current design practices. It is worth noting that the research project took place during a period of increasingly prominent media coverage of the global climate emergency. Given this context, it is not surprising that the validation discussions identified strong concerns about sustainability issues.

The Evaluation Event allowed a chance for all available participants to celebrate the project and reflect on the process of engagement. While most participants were able to attend, by this time a few participants had moved away from the area and were unable to attend. The discussion also provided me with an opportunity to understand the thoughts and experiences of all the designer-makers and user-makers who had participated in the programme. This event took place three months after the final workshop, allowing me to identify key themes concerning the effect of participation in the study. There was a very open and engaging conversation about the workshop process; its impact on participants; accessibility to sustainable practices; and how responsible practices could be used more within an education setting. Participants also identified three key areas which could bring about change (see Figure 48). Firstly, changing buying mindsets around how people value garments. Secondly, changing the approach or practices of consumers and designers. Thirdly, changing education in terms of skills and knowledge exchange.





Figure 42: Archibald, H. (2019) *Evaluation Event: key factors to encourage change*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

## Skilled Hands

Responses from the participants showed that while the workshop approach and outcome of this approach was valuable to them, this increased value could come from the impact of participation:

*I think looking at clothes beforehand, that (sewing) always seemed like it was really scary, a really difficult thing, that I'm like, oh, well, I don't know how to do it, but looking at somebody doing it makes it seem more realistic and like, oh, yes, okay, maybe I could have a go at it. (Isobel, user-maker)*

Participants felt that knowledge and skills learned from the workshops could make fixing or reworking garments on their own easier. The workshops offered an understanding of the time and labour involved in making, which could lead to more valuing of things, potentially beyond garments, that have been or will be bought. At the end of the discussion, and before the user-makers took their garments away, I took photos of them wearing these garments (see Figure 43, and Appendix 2.5).



Figure 43: Archibald, H. (2019) *Evaluation event*. Image. Source: Author's own

## 4.5. Summary

The field research was an iterative process of developing an approach, implementing the approach, then reflecting on the approach. A Baseline helped to gauge common assumptions about sustainability, and the Pre-Pilot and Pilot workshops supported the development of the workshop series in the Immersion Phase. The six-week Immersion Phase consisted of the workshop series which, from week two, had sustained participation. Participation in each iteration of the workshops allowed participants to engage with the following themes relating to perceived value:

- Designer-makers and user-makers were actively involved in the craftsmanship process. Transparency of the making process ensured ethical production processes.
- Participation in the making process ensured the garment was personally suited, as it incorporated the user's input.
- Understanding the need for approaches to design processes which encourage responsible practices was inherent in the workshops themselves.
- These Participatory Design approaches adopted in the fieldwork recognised the importance of process as much as the end product.
- There was mutual learning throughout the field research for participants and myself as the facilitator and researcher.
- Participants are learning skills and knowledge, which can help drive change, and I am learning about participants' understanding and perceptions of this approach.

As will be explored further in the next chapter, evidence from the fieldwork suggests that developing an approach where students can act as designer-makers and consumers can act as user-makers can be of mutual benefit to both. Developing an approach where the making process empowers user-makers with creative agency relieves the problem of non-experts achieving poorly constructed garments. The Validation process offered a chance to evaluate the impact of the workshops for

participants, and to consider implications for fashion design pedagogy. Particularly within this phase, the development of a community of like-minded people became evident.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the analysis of the data gathered from the field work and discuss the themes that emerged from the data to answer the research question.

Chapter 5:

# Analysis and Discussion

## 5.1. Introduction

Having reported the fieldwork in Chapter Four, I will begin this chapter by presenting the analysis, discussing the insights that inform the findings, and setting out the five themes that emerged from two iterations of thematic analysis. Please refer to Appendix 3.2 for the results of the first round of coding. I will conclude with an overview of the five recommendations from these themes. This research aimed to develop a range of pedagogical fashion practices with a focus on the development of responsible designer-makers and user-makers. In Chapter 2, I highlighted the aim of understanding the impact of participation in fashion design processes on extending the wearer-garment relationship. Research has shown working in partnership with a skilled designer has the potential to accelerate understanding of the design and making processes, so increasing accessibility of the design process for users. A further aim of this study was to gain a better understanding of the relationship between designer-maker and user-maker. Therefore, a focus on the process of participation rather than workshop outcomes has led me to analyse insights from participant feedback rather than the artefacts themselves.

The iterative process of thematic analysis, as set out in section 3.7, and ongoing reflection on the process of participation allowed for the workshop approach and boundaries of participation in the design of the workshop series to be continually refined. While insights for the analysis are mainly being taken from the Immersion and Validation Phases, the Orientation Phase helped to situate the research within its context, providing insights into the perceptions of participants in the chosen fieldwork location – an FE college. Significantly, this phase also provided an opportunity to refine the workshop approach and to develop tools that allowed for appropriate levels of participation from participants. The feedback and insights from participants were critical to the design of the Immersion Phase. The Orientation workshops identified that participation had the potential to foster changing attitudes towards responsible practices.

Responses from user-makers indicated the 'enjoyable and inspiring' workshop experience had positive impacts, and working with designer-makers allowed user-makers to feel listened to. User-makers believed the workshops had a natural structure, although for most user-makers the fashion design process was entirely new. Designer-makers reflected the user-makers' thoughts that participating in this approach would make the experience memorable, with increased input in the design process and understanding of effort potentially leading to an increased value of the garment and possibly leading to the participant slowing their consumption patterns.

Following the process of coding and developing themes from the evaluative questionnaire and interviews, it was evident that the immediate impact of Immersion workshops led to increased wearer-garment attachment, and participants valued the making process more. Feedback also showed potential workshop impacts that could lead to longer-term responsible practices for all participants. After a further round of coding, a set of five themes emerged as significant to encourage the development of responsible practices (see Figure 44 and 45, and the entire process in Appendix 3.5). These were:

- The importance of (active) user-maker input
- Valuing the making process
- The experience of participation as memory
- The development of communities
- The potential for responsible trajectories following engagement.

## Skilled Hands

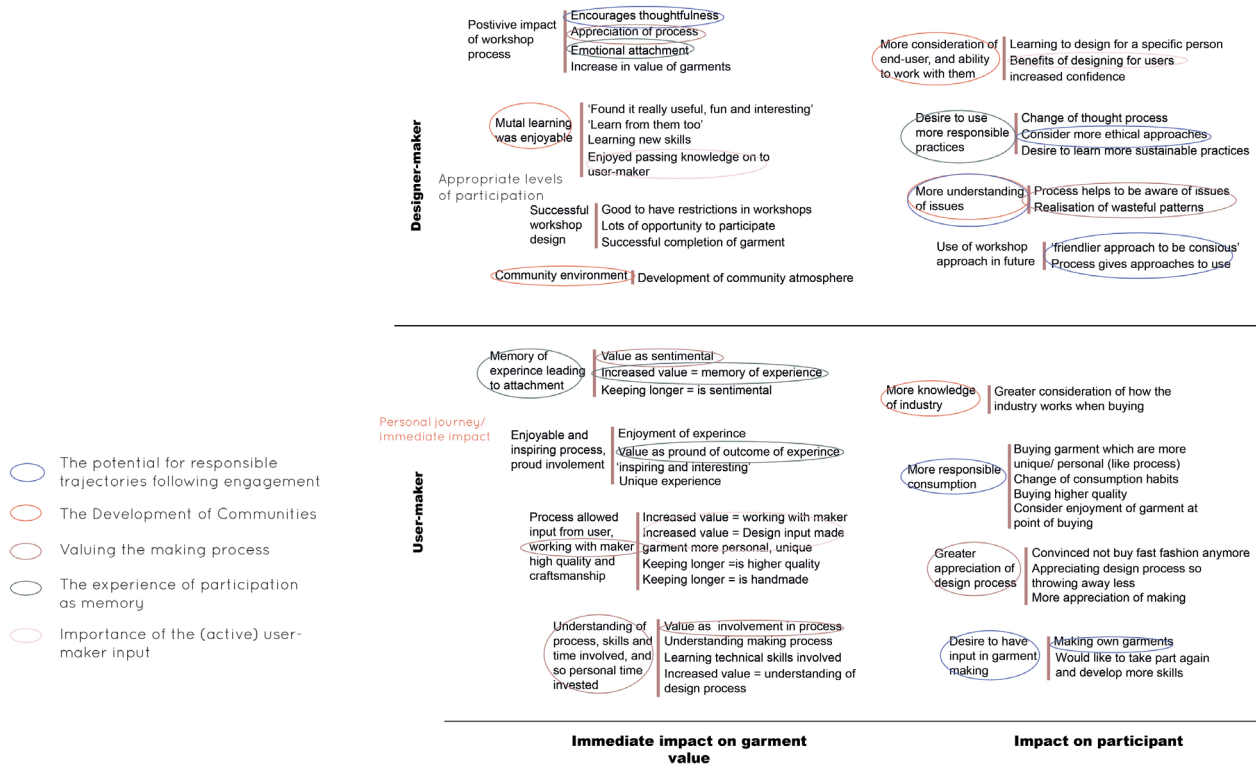


Figure 44: Archibald, H. (2019) *Analysis: Re-coded themes*. Diagram. Source: Author's own



Figure 45: Archibald, H. (2019) *Analysis: Grouping recoded themes*. Diagram. Source: Author's own



## 5.2. Theme One: Importance of the (active) user-maker input

Questionnaires highlighted a desire by designer-makers and user-makers to act more responsibly as both designers and consumers. However, during the Evaluation Event participants discussed a lack of knowledge or accessible approaches to engage in sustainable practices, which often meant making change to behaviours was challenging, as evidenced below:

*Sarah: Yes, it's like, give them the accessible, more humanitarian option and let them know, 'That makes you so cool if you do it,' and not, 'You are an actively bad person if you do this other thing,' which just shames people.*

*Isobel: People are like, 'Okay, well, what do I do? I don't have any other options, so you need to provide me with...'*

*Sarah: Yes, I feel like that's the major issue that comes with, like, 'Don't do any of this.' It's the fact that they don't give you another option either.*

Participants recognised a significant issue within sustainable practices – rather than a focus on positive approaches to create change, participants felt approaches were more negative in telling people what not to do. All participants indicated in the questionnaire that they wanted to have more input in a garment's design. This participatory workshop approach supported user-makers to play an active role in decision-making and enabled them to gain a greater understanding of the design process. The user-makers had creative agency and could develop a design which is unique and more personally suited. Odette, and some of the other participants in Figure 46, observed how participation in the design process could lead to increased attachment to a garment:

*If you could decide more or less how you could put your own spin on something, it's always that – you feel like it's more yours kind of thing. (Odette)*

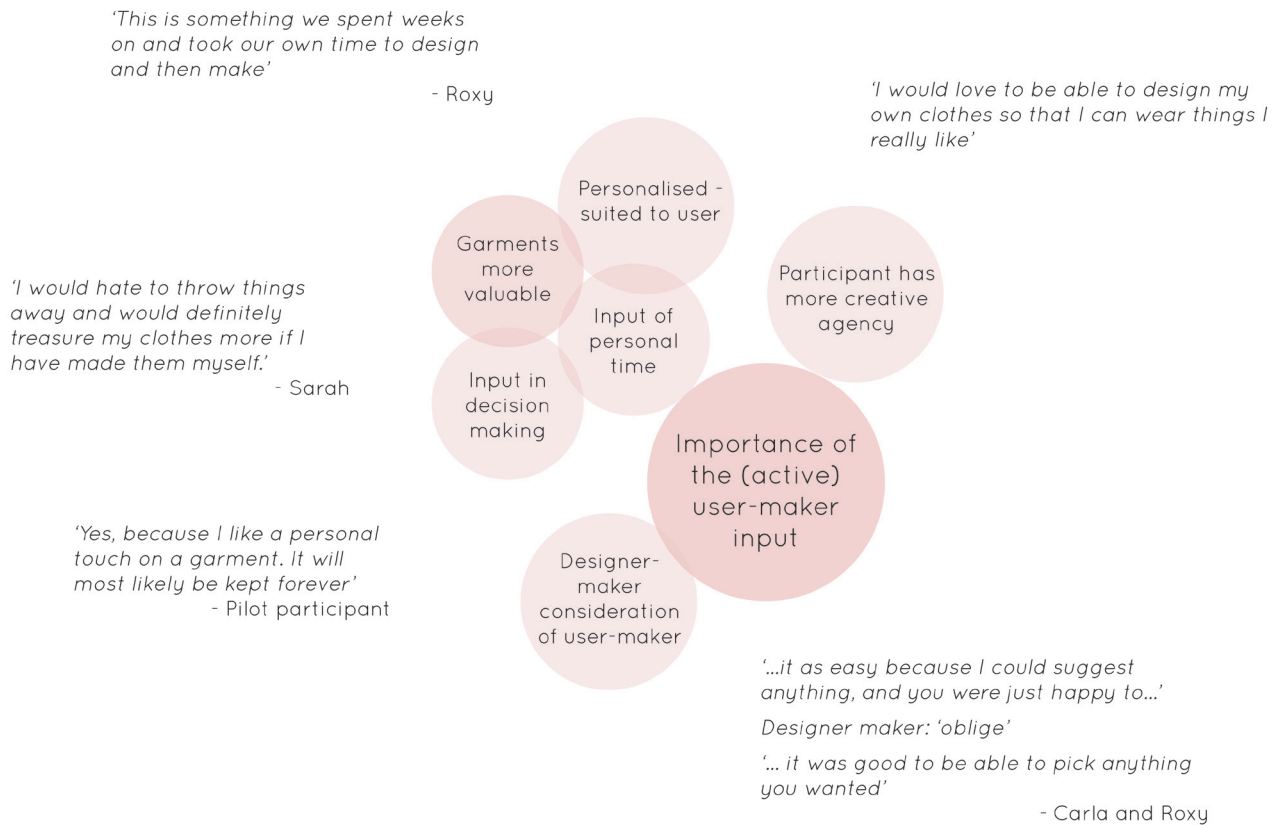


Figure 46: Archibald, H. (2019) *Analysis Theme One: Importance of the (active) user-maker input*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

The interviews also showed benefits beyond having an input in aesthetic decisions. One user-maker stressed concerns with body confidence and anxieties before starting the project, but by working with her partner she was able to design a garment that made her feel less self-conscious. Creating a workshop environment where participants can feel respected and express their views openly was vital. The designer-maker offered one-to-one support to the user-maker during the workshop series, but active participation was necessary by the user-maker to immerse themselves in the experience. Active participation allowed for inclusive engagement in the design and making process, and the input of personal time by the user-maker encouraged greater connection to the garment created. Sampson (2018) highlighted the impact

of participation as a meaningful and memorable experience resulting in greater connection to garment. In the evaluation questionnaires, user-makers expressed their desire to have input in designing garments in future, showing the potential for changed mindsets following participation.

While benefits can be seen for the user-maker by developing a more personally suited garment, it was evident that the designer-makers were also able to learn about the end-user's needs. An awareness of the needs of users is not always fully developed in design students, and designer-makers mentioned the valuable learning that took place from working in partnership with user-makers, and their ability to work with users again in the future. Carla and Roxy developed a relaxed working relationship during the workshop series:

Roxy (user-maker): [...] *it was easy because I could suggest anything, and you were just happy to*

Carla (designer maker): [...] *oblige*

Roxy: [...] *it was good to be able to pick anything you wanted.*

The Pilot highlighted the need for one-to-one support from a design-maker to ensure that the inexperience of the makers did not impact on garment longevity, where the benefits beyond their role as the skilled hand became evident. Mutual learning for all participants was possible, where social interactions and the formulation of relationships were equally as valuable.

### 5.3. Theme Two: Valuing the making process

Participation in the fashion design process can be taught to promote the value of the making process, encouraging the development of responsible practices for participants. Craftsmanship was highlighted in the Baseline as significant to garment value, and through participation the user-makers developed an increased understanding of the lengthy and skilled design process.

## Skilled Hands

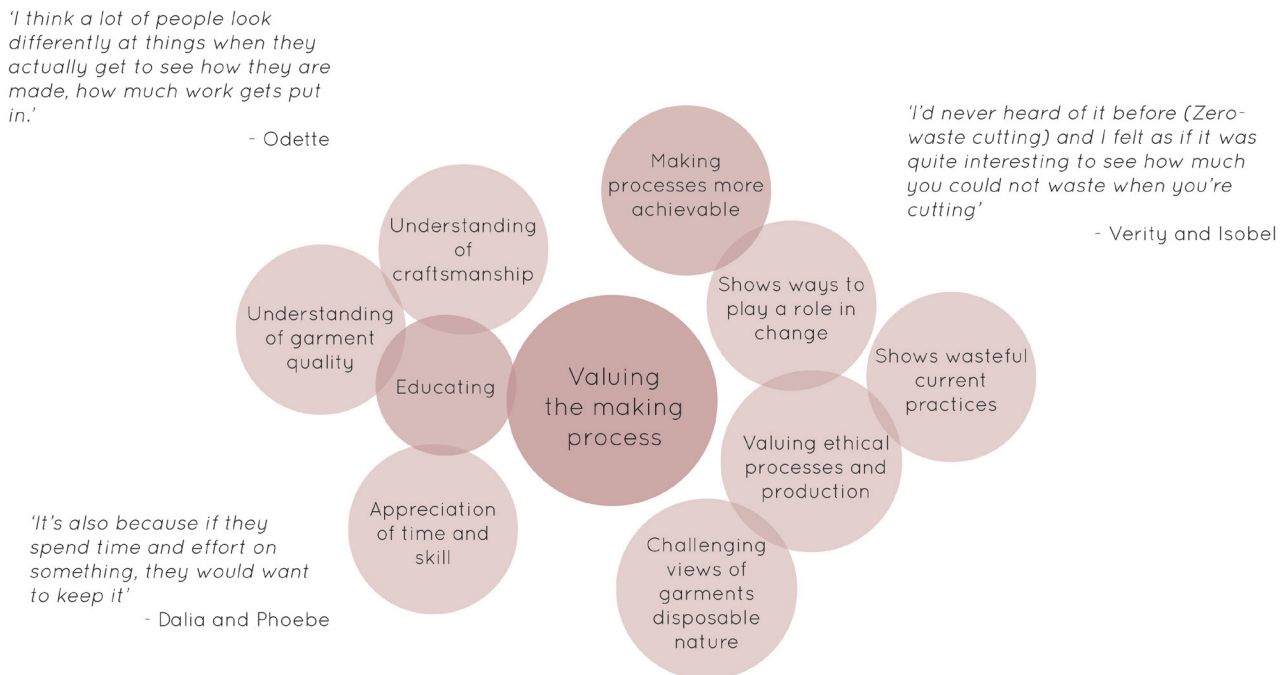


Figure 47: Archibald, H. (2019) *Analysis Theme Two: Valuing the making process*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

The evaluation responses reflected this (see Figure 47), where many of the participants believed understanding of the process, and the skills and time involved in garment development led to the garment made having increased value:

*If they spend time and effort on something, they would want to keep it.* (Dalia, user-maker)

*Yes, beforehand I wasn't very fashion conscious and I thought that it was relatively easy to make clothes but now I know you need a lot of knowledge and skills to do it.* (Roxy, user-maker)

*I love it! I appreciate it more than I normally do an item of clothing because I was involved in the process.* (Sarah, user-maker)

The potential for this increased valuing of the making process to have longer-term impact was discussed during the interview with Lydia and Sarah:

*I think that's maybe what would come from something like this would be showing them [users] how much work goes into it. The amount of time that it takes just to stitch basic seams, never mind anything more complicated. How much time actually goes into planning it out and drafting it... Then it makes you look and say, 'How on earth are Primark selling clothes at £1.50?'*

Designer-makers were able to act as the skilled hand and ensure high quality, and so this understanding of design processes provided the user-makers with a greater awareness of the effort and time that goes into each garment participants buy. The visual example 'Make/Use' described in section 2.4.1, noted the significance of this designer input (McQuillan et al., 2018). Analysis of the data from the evaluation questionnaires, interviews and evaluation event showed the positive impact of participation in the workshop process around the theme of value, and the potential for this greater appreciation to lead to changing habits:

*I think a lot of people look differently at things when they actually get to see how they are made, how much work gets put in. (Odette, designer-maker)*

Several of the user-makers developed the desire to make their own garments and the design process became more approachable following participation in the workshop series – for example, one user-maker, Isobel, felt pattern cutting was more achievable than she had previously realised. Although designer-makers had a prior understanding of design processes, this participatory approach equally provided learning opportunities for them. This learning could have an impact on designer-makers' appreciation and understanding of sustainable practices. While many of the designer-makers already valued the making process, several were surprised by the wasteful nature of pattern cutting. Lydia emphasised the learning she achieved during the process:

*Zero-waste cutting was interesting, but it did limit some of the shapes that you might have wanted to create... I'm used to being able to hack it, I don't know how much calico is lying on the table really at home. But I think that made it more awkward for me also. As far as possible, we used everything. (Lydia, designer-maker)*

Zero-waste cutting gave new skills to develop more responsible making practices, but also allowed for more awareness of waste in current practices. While designer-makers gained practical skills, several of the designers were working with an end-user for the first time. This collaborative way of working supported the designer-maker to more meaningfully understand the user-makers' needs and desires. The process brought about an increase in confidence for many of the designer-makers and gave a chance for designer-makers to value their own skills.

### 5.4. Theme Three: The experience of participation as memory

As described in section 2.3, research has shown enjoyment and happiness can contribute to making memories that can develop a narrative for the making process, which in turn could lead to greater garment attachment (Hirscher, Niinimäki and Armstrong, 2018). As set out in Figure 48, both the designer-maker and user-maker participants expressed that the workshop process was fun, inspiring and a memorable experience. Designer-makers mirrored user-makers' reflections that the participatory approach of the workshop made the experience memorable. Analysis reflected the impact the memory of the workshop experience has had on attachment to the garments made:

*I think knowing the person that made it, and having the input into making it as well, makes it a lot more special. If I'm wearing it I'll always think of the whole design process, and how much fun it was. (Isobel, user-maker)*



Figure 48: Archibald, H. (2019) *Analysis Theme Three: The experience of participation as memory*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

The value of the relationships established during the workshops and the designer-maker/ user-maker dynamic is evident in the development of memories. The garment acts as a reminder of the other participants and the experience of working as a group. The value discussion in week two highlighted the significance of sentimental attitudes towards garments. Many participants linked garments to memories or experiences, and several of the participants placed great value on garments they no longer wore. Significantly, each participant shared a narrative of how they acquired a garment and what that experience meant to them. From the feedback, it was evident that the notion of narrative was critical to garment attachment. Participants noted their enjoyment of the workshop series, and that the garment produced acted as a reminder of this positive experience:



*For me, whenever I buy something, I know exactly where it came from! I always remember that. I'd like this to remind me of the experience because I think it was a good experience, hanging out with new people I don't usually hang out with. (Sarah, user-maker)*

While participants shared feedback on their attachment and of valuing the garment made during the workshops, the narrative of these garments acts as reminders of the workshop experience, holding a degree of significance for the user-makers:

*Oh yes, for sure, I'm going to keep it for sure. It's a bit weird and quirky so I probably won't have too many occasions to wear it, but I'm going to keep it for sure because it was great fun. (Odette, designer-maker)*

It would have been interesting to understand whether this garment narrative can act as a reminder to continue with responsible practices, however, this is outwith the scope of the project. Measuring the long-term effects of this immediate impact on encouraging deeper attachment for the user-makers is another area to develop in further research. This immediate impact, however, can be seen in Sarah's experience, where she was excited to share her achievements with others, stating:

*Yes I definitely think I'll be holding on to it for a while ... I can go, 'Hey guys, I designed this, everyone look at this'. (Sarah, user-maker)*

Sarah was proud of the experience and the outcome of her participation in designing and making. Hirscher, Mazarella and Fuad-Luke (2018) highlighted the value of social making spaces in supporting participants to be proud of their creative input (see section 2.3). Sarah went on to talk about how proud she felt during an interview:

*Yes, like this is forming part of the experience in and of itself, so because I enjoyed that experience and I've told other people about me doing this, I want to be able to be like, 'Hi I've done this and I like it, here you go!' (user-maker)*

Many benefits can be seen in relation to the outcomes of participation in the workshops and consideration of responsible practices. Responses to the questionnaire indicated the participants' perceptions of garment value and attachment, highlighting significant distinctions between perceived value when buying a garment and perceived value and attachment of an owned garment. When buying a garment, design, fit and price were significant in establishing value, however memory and emotional attachment were key to establishing value when owning a garment.

### 5.5. Theme Four: The development of a Community of Practice

*Designer-maker 'But do you think you could now?'*

*User-maker: 'I think I could now. You're very patient with me'*

*Designer-maker: 'You were cutting the fabric too'*

*User-maker: 'I was cutting the fabric. I was doodling. I did that!'*

- Lydia and Sarah

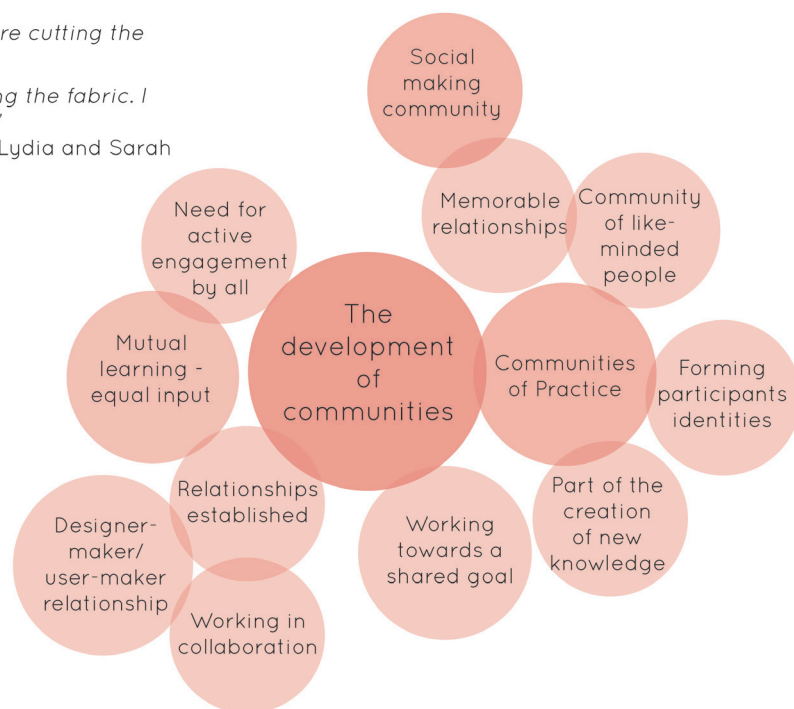


Figure 49: Archibald, H. (2019) *Analysis Theme Four: The development of communities*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

By collaborating together, both in pairs and as a larger group, working towards the creation of new knowledge developed as a community. Working towards a shared goal of more sustainable practices to have a positive environmental impact formed the basis of the participants' project values, which supported the development of relationships within the group. One participant expressed how encouraging she found the experience of collaborating as a community working towards change:

*I definitely think it has inspired me and given me hope that it [change] is possible, and that people are working towards it, and it's something that is in the collective consciousness. Whereas before, I felt hopeless, and like nobody really cared about it. (Isobel, user-maker)*

One of the aims of the study was to understand the benefits of the relationship between designer-maker and user-maker. During the collaboration it was evident that a supportive relationship developed, and for many, friendships became established. Notably during the interview with Carla and Roxy, this close bond was evident with the use of the plurals 'we' and 'our', and during several other interviews the conversations were relaxed, where participants talked to each other about what they had achieved. Lydia and Sarah's discussion gives an example of this supportive relationship:

Sarah (user-maker): *I liked meeting somebody who was more experienced in it because I also am extremely dumb!*

Lydia (designer-maker): *You're not dumb.*

Sarah: *It was nice. It was mostly because I wasn't very confident with using machine sewing before.*

Lydia: *But do you think you could now?*

Sarah: *I think I could now. You're very patient with me.*

The mutual learning environment supported active participation and participants were able to encourage each other to become actively involved. Learning was able to take place between designer-makers and user-makers, the community of designer-makers, the community of user makers and between these communities and myself as the researcher. Participants reflected on how the workshop series enabled them to work with others outside their immediate communities of practice. Verity, one of the designer-makers, revealed that she is not normally good at working with others, but that she enjoyed the process of participation and the development of relationships that came with this engagement. A key longer-term impact discussed in the evaluation event was that the participants experienced being part of a community with an investment in change and that they were a part of the creation of new knowledge. Participants reflected on this positive community environment and reflected on being part of a community of change-makers. As explored in section 3.4, Wenger (2000) believes communities are connected by what they do and what they learn together. There were various emerging communities of practice within the Immersion Phase, including the designer-makers' community and user-makers' community. However, responsible practices also have the potential to emerge as participants form a community working towards sustainability and a change to consumption habits (see Figure 50).

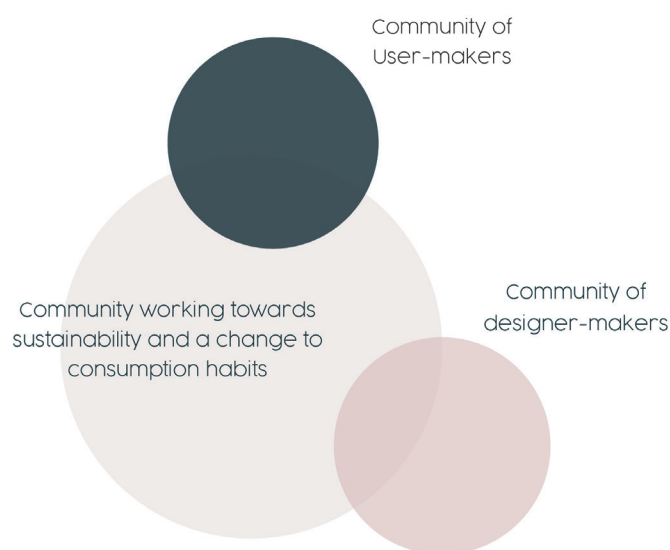


Figure 50: Archibald, H. (2019) *Designer-maker/ User-maker: Communities of Practice*. Diagram.  
Source: Author's own

The memorable workshop impacts for designer-makers and user-makers have the potential to form part of participants' values and this community of like-minded people has the potential to continue to grow and encourage changing behaviours and responsible practices. The community of designer-makers have the potential to impact on their peers who were not part of the project. These designer-makers also have the potential, in the longer-term, to pass these practices on to future colleagues or design companies. Being part of the creation of new knowledge can be significant for participants. This community can be sustained by participants who believe in the significance of developing responsible practices (Wenger, 2000).

During the evaluation event, participants discussed being part of this community with an investment in change, so to some extent participants felt a sense of agency in relation to sustainability. Following the study, a group of participants went on to develop a Sustainability Collective at the College. This group of designer-makers became ambassadors for Fashion Revolution, a global fashion organisation that campaigns for change in the fashion industry, and began developing engagements with other students to promote responsible design and consumption practices. The relationships formed during the workshop series were evidently key here, and this collective shows the powerful impact of participation on developing responsible practices which could impact others. Figure 51 is a poster from the Collective's first event.

The benefits of social making such as happiness, increased confidence and shared learning within a group setting were evident from the participation, documented in field notes and evaluations. Communities of social making are particularly important within the FE context, giving participants positive group experiences. Increasingly social making is being used to foster community identities (Carpenter 2011, Plymouth College of Art 2019, Hackney 2019). Many FE students are learning to be in education after a break or 'unsuccessful' education experiences, and so seeing benefits beyond learning is very valuable. The Pilot and Immersion highlighted the benefit of the social making environment and the experience of participation by encouraging positive

learning experiences. Using Wenger's theory (2000), active engagement by some participants within this community can be seen to encourage all participants to be actively engaged.



Figure 51: Archibald, H. (2019) *Sustainability Collective GCC: event poster*. Image. Source: Student's own

## 5.6. Theme 5: The potential for responsible trajectories following engagement



Figure 52: Archibald, H. (2019) *Analysis Theme Five: The potential for responsible trajectories following engagement*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

### 5.6.1. Responsible trajectories: designer-makers

Participation in the workshops showed both immediate impact and the potential for longer-term impact for designer-makers. The memory of the workshop experience, and increased knowledge and skills in sustainable practices could encourage more responsible trajectories. Several of the designer-makers showed a desire to take part in a similar process again, an appetite to learn more sustainable skills and to employ a more user-focus approach in their future practice. It is interesting to note that fashion students who are familiar with fashion design processes found participation in the



workshops enabled them to reconsider their perceptions of value. This suggests that fashion education within an FE context may not be equipping designers with an appreciation of issues relating to garment attachment and value. During the Round Table discussion, one lecturer summed up the need for approaches like this to be integrated into the structure of fashion curriculum:

*We're on the cusp of it but until it actually becomes the norm it's not going to be because it's all about education.* (Fashion educator)

The workshops had an impact by developing understanding of issues of fashion sustainability by giving time to learn sustainable techniques and practical skills. The approach gave many of the designer-makers their first opportunity to consider the end user. Designer-makers learned to collaborate during the design process and develop a design in participation with the user, helping the user to feel involved. Verity discussed her difficulty working in teams, but also explored the positive experience of working with a user-maker as helping to develop a working relationship. Designer-makers were also able to recognise their skill level by working in collaboration with a user-maker, giving an increase in confidence. Designer-makers, as students, reflected on this increased confidence:

*It has helped me to not be afraid to play with different tools and techniques.*  
(Carla, designer-maker)

A pedagogical approach that focuses on innovation and collaboration has the potential to empower students to develop responsible practices. Designer-makers enjoyed the challenge of reducing waste and working alongside a user-maker, but also showed desire to use more responsible practices in the future. Longer-term impacts of the workshops on the designer-makers included: designer-makers' desire to use the techniques learnt in their own practice; greater consideration of the user in future; and the potential of encouraging students to continue with a focus on responsible practices. Several designer-makers expressed their interest in using both the zero-

waste cutting technique and workshop approach again. Odette noted: 'I think I'll be researching it a bit more on my own and maybe I'll try to do it myself', and Odette went on to join the Sustainability Collective and hopes to teach other students about zero waste practices. Lydia, a designer-maker and previous teacher, noted the value of the process as an educational tool that could be integrated more into the FE curricula. An awareness of the needs of users is not always fully developed in design students, and the designer-makers mentioned the valuable learning that took place from working in partnership with user-makers and the ability to work with users again in the future.

Engaging students in these meaningful practices has the potential to encourage them to continue their learning of sustainable practices. Designer-makers could develop an identity as practitioners in this community based on a shared goal of responsible change-making. This identity could be taken on to Higher Education or into their careers within fashion and textile design, as illustrated in Figure 53.

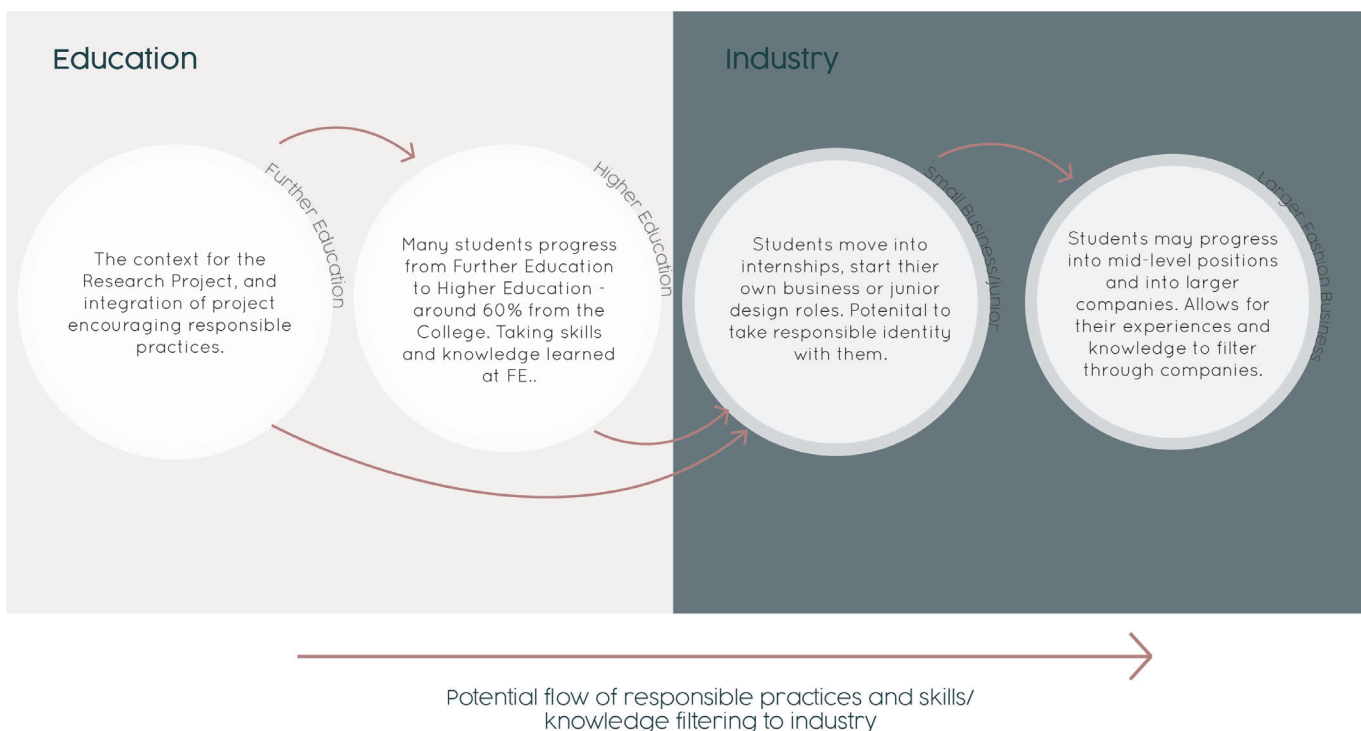


Figure 53: Archibald, H. (2019) *Potential designer-maker ripple of responsibility*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

## 5.6.2. Responsible trajectories: user-makers

As with the designer-makers, feedback demonstrated the ability for user-makers to develop responsible practices and move towards responsible trajectories for the future following participation in the workshop series. The evaluation showed the value of developing greater understanding of fashion design processes:

*[...] being more informed, I do value my existing clothes more.* (Roxy, user-maker)

It is interesting to note that participants indicated that their frame of reference for evaluating garment value had changed as a result of participation in the workshop. Participants commented on their deeper appreciation of the design process, and although the workshops did not provide enough learned skill for user-makers to be independent designer-makers, it did provide an understanding of the difference between a well-made and a not so well-made garment. These insights could have the potential to lead to more responsible consumption, as well as buying of quality items that have the potential to last significantly longer – an area, however, to be explored further in future research. The interview with Sarah and Lydia shows the evolution of thinking about wearer-garment attachment:

*I definitely think that through doing this, it's helped me consider what actually gives certain garments longevity in my wardrobe...What things do I wear the most? What things have I had the longest and what things do those have in common would happen at the start, and then I was like, oh, that's what I enjoy in a garment.* (Sarah, user-maker)

As well as this increased understanding about sustainable practices, user-makers suggested different approaches to potentially change consumption habits, including: expressing a desire to begin to make their own garments; taking part in similar processes to develop garments suited to them; finding a maker to produce garments

for them; and buying from more trusted sources. The impact to consumption habits was also evident with the designer-makers, as Verity noted her preference for having an input in the garment she buys:

*I would prefer that I think, because then you can make things that are unique and individual to your tastes rather than just having to go into a shop and pick whatever's there. (Verity, designer-maker)*

A change towards more responsible practices and trajectories could have longer-term impacts on consumption, potentially encouraging all participants to move away from relying on fast fashion stores. Isobel believed with the skills learnt during the workshops she could have the ability to remake garments as part of a sustainable practice:

*Yes, and you could make it as many times as you wanted, and so if it wore out you could just make another. (Isobel, user-maker)*

The time limited nature of the project meant it was not possible to determine longer-term impact on patterns of consumption. This could be determined by further research, which is explored in section 6.3.

### 5.6.3. Responsible trajectories: Ripple beyond the participants

Analysis from the Validation Phase shows the potential of the workshop approach to lead to the development of responsible practices by user-makers and designer-makers, while also showing the potential to have impact beyond those who participated. The Round Table focus group provided an opportunity for a detailed discussion of the workshop format and its wider relevance for FE pedagogy. Key areas of discussion included detailed consideration of the immediate and longer-

term impact of the workshops on the participants and how this workshop approach could be integrated within FE. Colleagues also feedbacked on the potential for this approach to encourage students to take the understanding and skills learnt into future roles as sustainable designers:

*It's actually opening up other doors and giving them other opportunities.*

(Fashion educator)

Lecturers shared valuable insights on the potential of the approach to create change within the FE context and stressed the importance of innovation and the effect of my role as a researcher working within the SOF department:

*I think it's like collaboratively being more innovative; we all need to be on board to do it.* (Fashion educator)

*... because I think the only way we can do it is to take risks in education and I think we've gotten into a very sedentary place.* (Fashion educator)

With increased innovation in the area of fashion sustainability, the lecturing staff commented on the potential for greater impact on students, but noted the challenge of encouraging students to continue with responsible trajectories.

*It's how you carry the momentum of that forward though so that they will continue to think about that and they'll continue to take that onboard when they're designing something.* (Fashion educator)

However, during the interviews a few participants reflected on discussions they had had with others about the project and plans to continue using the approaches and skills learned. Feedback from other educators evidenced how the students had begun to incorporate sustainable techniques and themes into their own work. These students were not only from the Immersion phase but also from the Pre-pilot and Pilot study.

## Skilled Hands

Concluding comments from colleagues explored the potential of the workshop series to generate a ripple of responsible practices to other designer-makers and user-makers across the college and beyond (see Figure 54).

*You're getting people from outside to come in and see the whole process and then they take that knowledge out and it gets spread wider. (Fashion educator)*

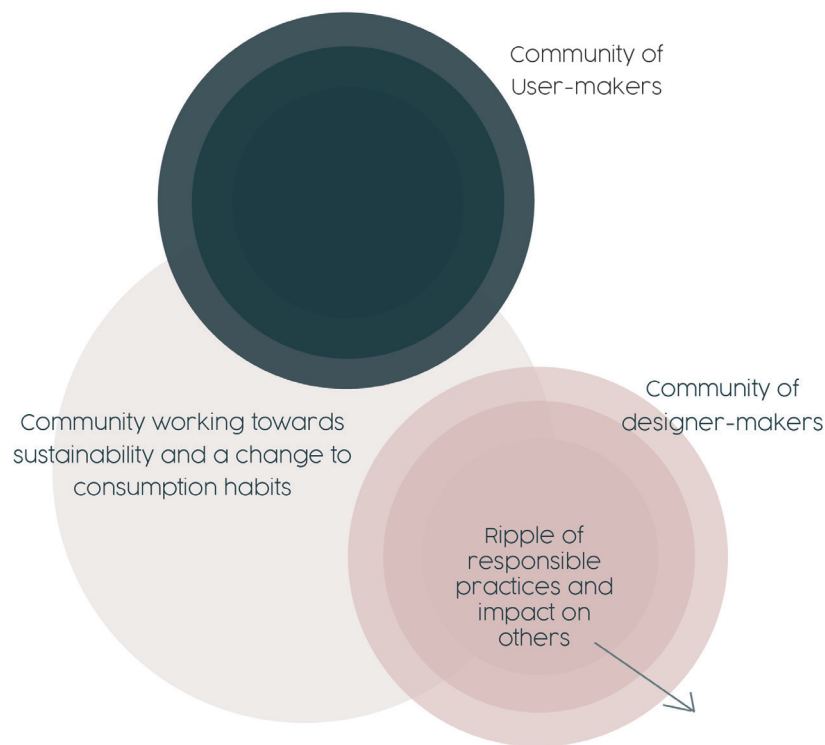


Figure 54: Archibald, H. (2019) *Potential ripple of responsible communities*. Diagram. Source: Author's own

Overall, since the introduction of the research project within the SOF, it is possible to see a greater focus on sustainable practices across the courses. This could be partially due to the increased awareness generally of fashion sustainability issues within society, or perhaps this is partially as a reaction to this research study and the increased discussion and practices generated. Measuring and evidencing this ripple effect is an area I am keen to explore in future research.



## 5.7. Recommendations

Based on this discussion and returning to my research question - *how can collaborative participation of designer-makers and user-makers in the fashion design process encourage the development of responsible practices?* – I have formed five key recommendations for practitioners working in fashion design education in the FE context. These recommendations have been designed in response to the themes that have emerged from the research, and could inform the development of workshops, or as an elective on the fashion programme. It is important to note that designing an elective was outwith the scope of this research project, however, templates and tools developed as part of the research outcome could form the basis for an elective.

### Recommendation One: Active and equal engagement by both designer-makers and user-makers

The user-maker/ designer-maker approach has proven to be very valuable and to have benefits for all the participants involved in this project. The process of participation encourages others to be actively engaged, and the benefits of this inclusive engagement and supportive relationships are evident. User-makers felt listened to, allowing garments to be unique and personal to them – a crucial theme that emerged during discussions around garment value. With active participation, designer-makers are also able to have greater understanding of end-users when designing.

### Recommendation Two: Ensuring user-maker has an input in the making process

By placing emphasis on the value of craftsmanship and the making process, user-makers could observe first-hand, and value the skill and lengthy time involved in designing and making garments. Participants expressed their increased attachment to garments because they could understand these elements, while also highlighting the potential for a change to future buying practices. User-makers were asked to have

an element of input in making, which could be by hand or with the help of designer-makers using the sewing machines. This continued to build the user-maker/ designer-maker relationship and gave several designer-makers confidence in their abilities as skilled manufacturers. The use of appropriate tools and resources can enhance opportunities for learning and facilitate the participation process. These have the potential to empower designer-makers in a role as facilitator and allow user-makers to express themselves.

### Recommendation Three: Ensuring a supportive workshop environment

The approachable workshop environment proved to be essential in allowing open discussions, working and sharing ideas together. Making the workshops enjoyable and inspiring showed the potential to have an impact on creating a memorable experience. The process of working alongside a partner contributed to the narrative of the experience and helped to create a supportive space where participants could feel comfortable. Research has shown the impact achievement of completing the process could have on encouraging deeper attachment to the garments. While the garment holds the narrative of the experience, for both the user-makers and designer-makers memory of their participation has the potential to give a greater connection to responsible practices.

### Recommendation Four: Working towards a shared goal

From the workshops it was clear that by working towards the shared goal of the development of more sustainable and responsible practices, the group were able to form stronger relationships as they became part of the creation of new knowledge. This goal helped the group to become a community centred on an investment in change forming the group's collective identity. It is important to ensure a supportive studio environment where social making and communities can grow, giving space for discussion and reflection on the process and impact on participants in relation

to responsible practices. These communities have links to wellbeing and increased confidence by designer-makers and user-makers. This supportive environment can allow opportunities for learning communities to be self-sustaining and have longer-term impact on practices.

### Recommendation Five: Providing opportunities for engagement beyond the workshop series

The workshop series was of vital importance for the participants, allowing space to work alongside others who are also invested in the workshop process. Wenger notes that participating in communities of practice, in this case, the development of responsible practices, do not happen at the start of the project and instead take time for a practice to develop. Communities of Practice have the potential to have memorable impacts, to form a part of participants' identities, and to influence development of responsible trajectories.

Opportunities beyond the workshop series that proved valuable included: the Baseline Phase and resulting visible engagements in the college; an evaluation event three months after engagement and the addition of further talks that were outwith the scope of research but formed a part of my role as a Fashion Lecturer. The Baseline allowed considerations of garment value, demonstrated the college's investment in working towards change, and allowed the initiation of conversation about sustainability. Further engagements such as the evaluation event and talks gave time for thinking from the workshops to permeate and then opened up discussion with participants about how to continue to incorporate responsible practices into their role as consumers and designers. The sustainability collective was one outcome of this process.

To encourage this ripple of responsible practices, making the workshops and process visible within the corridors of the college and by holding discussions about the research allowed the ripple of impact to go beyond the immediate participants. By acknowledging the value of developing sustainable practices and allowing time for

participation, institutes can encourage participants to take action.

## 5.8. Summary

In this chapter I have evidenced use of thematic analysis undertaken to develop the key themes for discussion before returning to my research question and presenting my findings as five recommendations.

To summarise, these are:

1. Active and equal engagement by both designer-makers and user-makers.
2. Ensuring the user-maker has an input in the making process
3. Ensuring a supportive workshop environment
4. Working towards a shared goal
5. Providing opportunities for engagement beyond the workshop series

In the next chapter, I conclude by giving a summary of the project findings, providing reflections, giving an overview of the limitations of this study and outlining recommendations for future research.

Chapter 6:

# Conclusion

In the conclusion, I will be reflecting upon the entire research process and the outcome of the study. I have highlighted the need for the integration of an approach within FE that encourages collaborative making between designer-makers and user-makers in the fashion design process. As presented in Chapter Five, this approach has the potential to encourage greater garment attachment, and longer-term positive impacts on both the designer-maker and user-maker. In this chapter I will also outline the limitations of the study and set out the potential areas for future research.

### 6.1. Reflections

In response to my research question, a participatory approach incorporating designer-makers and user-makers was designed. Analysis of the workshops and insights from participants indicated that the workshops were effective. The methodological approach, as outlined in Chapter 3.2.3., ensured there was an iterative process of planning, action, observation and reflection across all phases of the fieldwork. The success of this process of reflection can be seen in the example of Carla, who attended both the Pre-pilot and Immersion workshops. Initially Carla's reflections considered the Pre-pilot to be too conceptual, and in feedback from the Immersion Phase Carla reflected that Workshop structure made the process of participation easier.

While participants did not play an active role in designing the research project, participant reflections at each stage helped to shape the research design. Various methods of reflection were designed for each phase, following Brookfield's (1995) reflective lenses, where I reflected on my own practice as a designer and educator, reflected on participant feedback and reflected on colleagues' observations. These iterative reflective cycles informed the subsequent phases in the fieldwork and the over-arching design of the workshop series.

Observing the interaction between a designer-maker and a user-maker showed active participation from both participants, working towards the shared goal of designing



and making a garment. The designer-maker and user-maker approach encouraged mutual learning and passing of knowledge between the participants. Social making led to a relaxed, supportive environment that encouraged increased confidence in all participants. Designer-makers have already shown the impact of participation on their own practices. Several have chosen to focus project work on environmental issues and several others have taken part in the Sustainability Collective, with the aim of educating and increasing discussions about sustainability, to encourage responsible consumption. As well as the direct impact on those involved in the study, it is interesting to note that in the time of the research project there has been a significant increase in the number of sustainable projects being held within the college. This could be related to increased discussion of sustainability with colleagues, but could equally be due to the overall increase in discussion of issues of fashion sustainability in the media.

The significance of the garment in the research evolved during the course of the research. The garment and the user-makers' relationship to the garment acted as a way to measure the impact of the project in leading to increased wearer-garment attachment. However, it is interesting to note that the process itself was of greater significance and that the garment became increasingly incidental.

### 6.2. Limitations and constraints of study

The explorative nature of this study meant there were some challenges to participation and ensuring the rigor of the research findings. As is common with participatory projects with sustained participation, there were difficulties maintaining participation for the duration of the project. The project approach meant there was a need for both designer-makers and user-makers to attend each workshop, allow co-working to take place. In an attempt to limit this and support ongoing participation, participants were offered the opportunity to share food at the start of each workshop. While this encouraged attendance, occasional absences still happened.

A second limitation to recognise was the challenges gathering data at the end of the study. Designer-makers, who were mainly second year students had pressures of university applications and completing work for their end of year show. These unavoidable limitations were due to the timing of the project and the nature of working with students. To limit this, I spoke informally to students about the project and where possible asked for written feedback. To address these limitations in future, the research project could take place earlier in the academic year, and therefore the interviews and focus groups could be held earlier, avoiding a clash with the end of the academic year.

A further limitation was the recruitment process. The college provided a way to encourage participation from the participant demographic, where a large proportion of students are within the age category of 16 – 26 years old. The participants who volunteered to take part in the study may have already had an interest in sustainability, rather than giving a true reflection of the general population. To limit this, participants in the role of user-makers could have been recruited from outwith the college context.

### 6.3. Future research

This project identified a gap in research within fashion design practices in the FE context - specifically practices contributing to the development of responsible teaching approaches. The approach developed focused on participatory approaches where the user is brought into the design and making journey, leading to increased wearer-garment attachment. Discussions with FE lecturers gave insights into how this approach could evolve into an elective for students to participate in. Due to the time constraints it was not possible to design and implement this elective, however, the recommendations from this project could be used to inform the development of an elective. An elective could provide the opportunity to embed these sustainable and responsible fashion practices regularly within FE. Future research could allow for participation to be observed over a period of time and follow the participant journey after taking part, which could validate the impact of the approach further.

Another way to take this project further would be to focus on the artefacts, specifically looking at attachment and memory, linking with the work of Prof McHattie focusing on garments as loved objects (2012). An exploration of the impact of designer-makers and user-makers' joint craftsmanship, and the impact of the memory of the making process could be a factor to further explore in measuring garment longevity.

An area which I am especially interested in considering for future research is exploring the potential for this approach to lead to the development of a network of student-led sustainability initiatives. The development of the Sustainability Collective GCC following designer-makers engagement in *'Skilled Hands'* has highlighted the potential catalyse and empowering effect of finding a community of like-minded people. By engaging students in this approach at other educational institutes, it would be interesting to follow the designer-makers' progress and offer the opportunity to take part in similar collectives. Arguably this could encourage a larger ripple of responsibility in designers of the future. Given the current climate emergency, my next steps would be to consider funding opportunities such as The British Academy Sustainable Development Programme.

### 6.4. Concluding Remarks

In this practice-based research study, I have aimed to answer the question:

*How can collaborative participation of designer-makers and user-makers in the fashion design process encourage the development of responsible practices?*

This research study has given me the opportunity to reflect on my teaching practice, which is not always possible within a busy academic schedule. This study was an opportunity to develop research embedded in an FE context, in collaboration with FE students and lecturers rather than imposing external perspectives. Centrally, the project intention was to develop pedagogical practices that can encourage

responsible designers of the future, and the approach to participation has shown potential longer-term impact for the user-makers and designer-makers. Rather than following tokenistic approaches to sustainability, this study focused on pedagogical practices that could potentially generate lasting change in future designers' behaviours and their approach to practice. The outcome and contribution from this research is a set of recommendations that offer insights into how this approach could be used within fashion education as a way to create positive change to sustainability, in the current era of climate emergency.

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