

USING THE “BRIEF” METHOD IN PREPARING FUTURE DESIGNERS FOR PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract:

This article highlights the use of innovative educational technologies in teaching design project disciplines to students in higher education institutions. It focuses on preparing students for professional situations based on quasi-professional tasks. The effectiveness of developing future designers' marketing and communication competencies through the “Brief” method is substantiated by the results of practical experimental work.

Keywords: “Brief” method, quasi-professional, design education, design project, marketing competence, communication competence.

Introduction

In Uzbekistan, students majoring in fashion design are being trained based on the dual education model. The main goal of this approach is to facilitate students' employment in the future, to prepare them for professional activities by developing practical skills, and to train competitive specialists in line with the demands of manufacturing enterprises [1]. The textile sector was among the first to adopt the dual education system, and the adaptation process is still ongoing for both educational institutions and manufacturing companies.

During our research, we studied all areas of fashion designers' professional activities and developed a methodology for developing students' design competencies within a quasi-professional environment. According to this methodology, the knowledge and tasks given to students are designed based on real professional situations.

Throughout the experimental work, we conducted interviews and discussions with company managers, designers, sample production workshop employees, and individual designers. The conclusions revealed that when working on a clothing design project, a designer must first study the client and develop the design project based on the client's needs and requirements.

Therefore, the author developed the “Brief” method, which is recommended for use in teaching the Design Project course.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A brief (**brief** — guideline, concise information) is a document in which the client and the executor jointly define the tasks, clarify the stages of the work process, and discuss technical details. This document serves to quickly establish a shared understanding and context for all parties involved in the project, ensuring that everyone works in the same direction [2].

A design brief is an initial description of the design problem and a possible outline of the strategy for solving it [3].

The brief is an essential component of many design projects and can perform several functions throughout the project. For example, it helps clarify the scope, objectives, and tasks of the project for the various parties involved in the development process [3]. Alternatively, the brief can define only the general direction of the project, thereby providing participants with freedom and a broad range of possibilities [4].

The “Small Group Work” method helps students understand the importance of learning to work collaboratively. This is because the positive influence of students on each other contributes to optimizing the overall learning process within the group. A number of researchers have emphasized that organizing learning activities using this method is significantly more effective compared to traditional teaching methods [5].

DISCUSSION

The “Brief” method not only significantly contributes to developing students’ marketing and communication competencies, but it also plays a broader role. A brief is a series of clearly structured, targeted questions and answers. Its purpose is to enable close interaction with the client, gain deeper insight into the project context, understand the client’s history, review past work, analyze achieved results and mistakes made, plan future actions, and define key indicators for developing and evaluating a real strategy. Through the brief, the formation of an audience profile begins.

For example, brief questions for identifying the target audience might include:

- What is the gender ratio?
- What is the dominant age group of the audience?
- Why might these people be interested in the company’s products or services?
- What are their occupations, interests, income levels, or fields of activity?
- What steps do they need to take to become customers?

By using this method, students can choose a clear research direction for further work. In classroom settings, students conduct brief interviews in pairs. Based on the skills gained, future designers can then create their collections with a precise sense of the target audience portrait while still focusing on their chosen direction.

In many cases, graduates who create designs solely based on their personal preferences, ideas, or emotions during their studies face significant challenges in their future professional careers. This often leads to conflicts between designers and marketers in manufacturing companies. While marketers focus on studying market demand, designers try to push their own creative ideas. This misalignment demonstrates a lack of professionalism because every product is ultimately produced not to satisfy the designer’s aesthetic desires but to meet customer needs.

This problem also affects young designers, brand owners, and fashion houses working with individual clients. The inability to establish proper communication with the client can even threaten the survival of entrepreneurial activity.

Below is an example of how the brief method is applied (Table 1):

Table 1

Target audience — Women interested in purchasing evening dresses.

Segment 1 — Young women looking for a dress for their graduation party.

Main features	
Gender:	Female
Age:	18–25 years
Location:	Tashkent
Marital Status:	Single or young wife

Additional Characteristics	
Children:	None
Education Level:	Currently pursuing higher education
Employment / Field of Activity:	Student Additional Work: Works part-time but lives with parents
Hobbies and Interests:	Self-discovery, self-development, career building
Information Consumption Habits:	Searches for jobs and internships through company websites, follows bloggers, communicates with friends via messengers, watches short vertical videos

Product Characteristics	
Goals and Objectives: Why does she need an evening dress?	Graduation party, a friend's wedding, or her own wedding ceremony
Motivations: What motivated her to look for an evening dress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduating from an educational institution, the uniqueness of the one-time graduation party, and the desire to stand out among friends • A dress created beautifully for the wedding ceremony, considering that the bride will be the center of attention • To stand out from other girls at a friend's wedding or at least not look worse than them • A dress that looks good in photos to post on social media
Obstacles: What does she fear or what hinders her?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient income to buy an expensive dress • Forced to ask parents for financial help • Utility coefficient of the dress (how many times and where she can wear this dress)
Selection Criteria: What does she pay attention to when choosing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenience of transportation • Proximity of shops and shopping centers • Price proportionality to the value of the dress • Originality of the dress

RESULTS

The research was conducted with the participation of students majoring in Design (Fashion) from three higher education institutions: Tashkent Institute of Textile and Light Industry, Bukhara State Technical University, and Namangan State Technical University (Table 2).

Table 2

N	Name of institution	The number of respondents
1.	Tashkent Institute of Textile and Light Industry	140
2.	Bukhara State Technical University	23
3.	Namangan State Technical University	106
	Total	269

In the experimental study, students were divided into two groups: experimental and control. Both groups were given the same technical task by the instructor — “Developing a design project for a women’s dress”. The students were required to create a proposal sketch for the women’s dress, a technical drawing, and the model construction.

In the control group, the “Brief” method was not used. Students spent an average of 20–30 minutes developing the initial proposal sketch. However, they were unable to justify who the designed dress was intended for or in what situations it might be worn. When asked about the target user for their designs, most students replied that the design simply reflected the first idea or style that came to their minds. Interaction between students during the task was minimal, and their engagement in the process was observed to be relatively passive.

In the experimental group, students also initially developed a proposal sketch (average 20–30 minutes). After this, the students were divided into small pairs. The instructor distributed pre-prepared “Brief” method templates. Following the questions outlined in the handout, the students acted as “journalists,” conducting short interviews with their partners. Based on the brief, students identified their target audience and gathered basic information about their “clients”.

After completing the brief, almost all students asked the instructor for permission and clean sheets of paper to redraw their sketches. Using the brief, they developed completely new, alternative proposal sketches. The second round of sketches was assessed to be significantly better than the first, demonstrating clearer alignment with clothing requirements, higher creativity, and improved precision in technical lines.

During the evaluation, the “client” (i.e., the student’s partner) assessed the design project, while the instructor monitored all stages in a supervisory role and conducted the final assessment. Throughout the lesson, students were highly engaged, and a sincere, collaborative atmosphere was maintained until the end of the class.

CONCLUSION

Based on the conducted experimental study, it can be concluded that the use of the “Brief” method in teaching the Design Project course produced positive results. While students in the control group spent considerable time thinking about the idea and concept of the garment after

receiving the technical assignment, students in the experimental group were able to develop their sketches much faster based on the brief.

This method not only helped students save time but also enabled them to clearly understand the purpose of their work, which in turn significantly increased their motivation. Moreover, the design projects developed based on the brief were considerably more thorough and demonstrated a higher level of creativity compared to the initial versions.

From the above, we can conclude that incorporating the “Brief” method into the learning process is an effective approach for enhancing the readiness of future designers for real professional situations.

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