



Upcycling Textiles Project

The potential impact of repurposing discarded resources.

Student X 9Y



The design brief

- ▶ The brief for this project is to design and produce a garment from discarded textiles products. That is, products that have been used for another purpose and no longer needed, for example old clothes or linen.
- ▶ At least 90% of the textiles used for this project should be from reclaimed textiles, with only 10% from new materials (this includes thread, buttons, zips etc).
- ▶ The final product is to be appropriate for display at school and should also appeal to my own unique style, that is be something that I would be happy to wear myself.

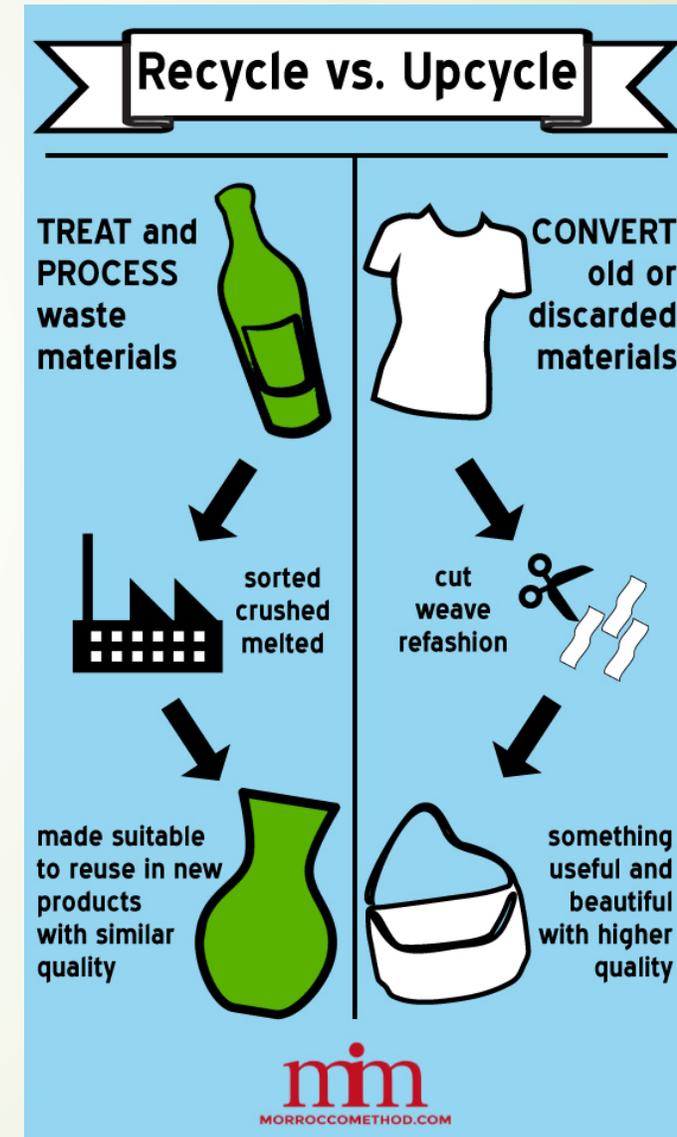
Investigation – Fast Fashion

- ▶ The textiles and fashion industry is one of the highest producers of waste and a major contributor to global warming.
- ▶ Fast fashion refers to the constant changes in the industry as to what is 'in fashion' – often new clothing lines being released every 6 weeks!
- ▶ This has resulted in cheaper and cheaper clothing becoming available and huge amounts of textiles waste being produced – both by the industry and by the consumer.



Investigation – What is upcycling?

- The point of upcycling textiles and fashion is for “the reduction of landfill mass with its associated materials waste and emission burden, as well as the slowing down of unnecessary virgin textile production by the effective recovery and recycling of textile and fashion waste.”
- Upcycling is different to recycling because it takes an old product and *adds value* to it by turning it into something new. Whereas recycling breaks down discarded products to create a different product.
- Recycling creates more carbon emissions as it requires a lot of processing. It can also produce further waste.



Upcycling examples

- Upcycling has been around for decades, but has only recently become more popular with the growing understanding of *sustainable and ethical fashion* industry. Here are some examples of upcycled garments.



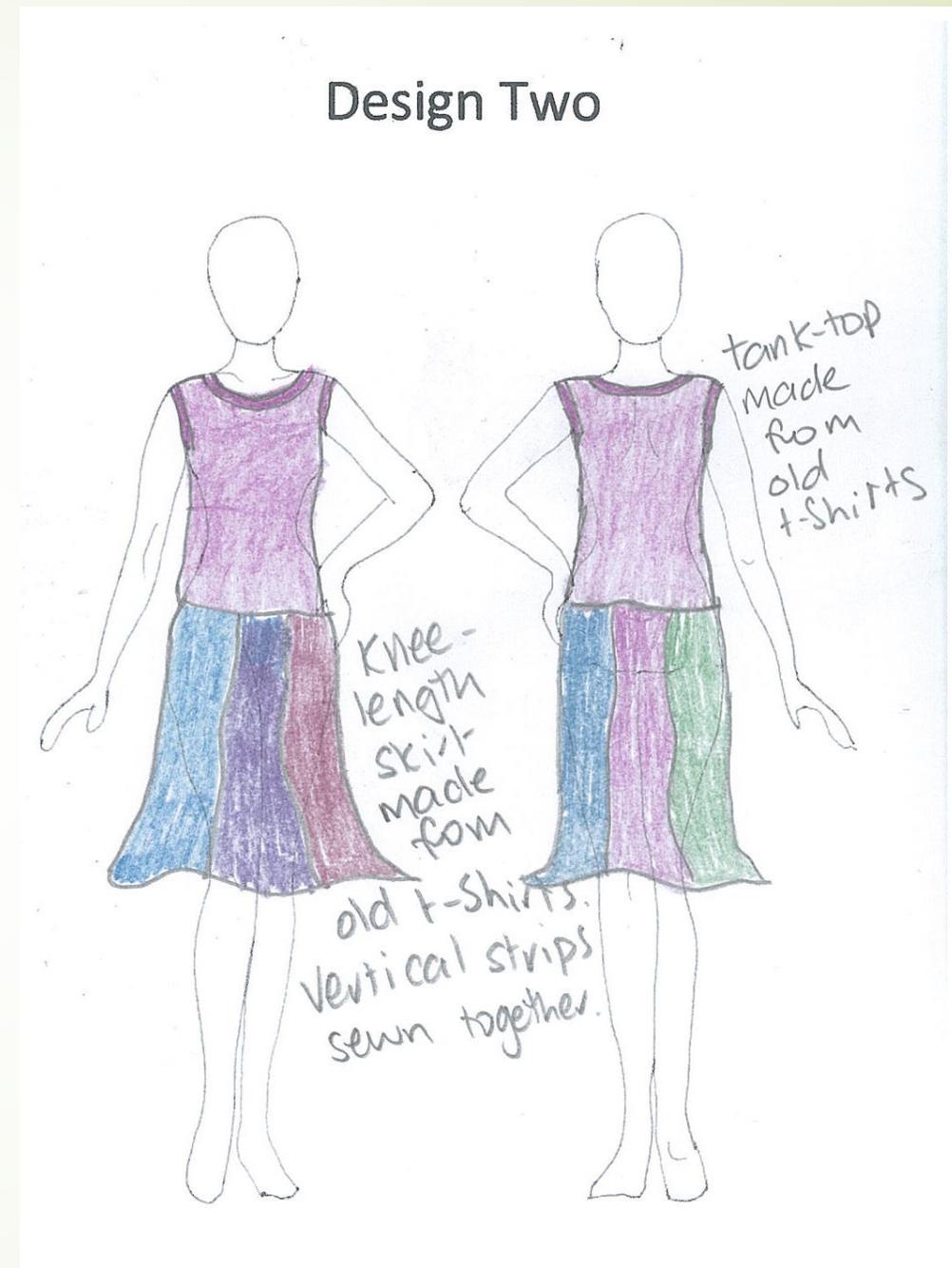
Design Ideas

- My ideas were based around cutting up strips of old t-shirts and tops, and sewing them together to create new fabric for cutting out my patterns.



Final design

- I decided to go with my 2nd design as I couldn't find enough t-shirt fabric I liked to create the long skirt. As I thought the skirt might take a lot of time to create, I wanted to go with the simpler top that should be easier to make.
- The skirt will be made from triangles cut from old t-shirts to create an A-line skirt.
- The top will be made from one large size t-shirt so all the fabrics are the same.



Planning and Management - Skirt

Step	Overview	Detail – Production plan	Time	Class
1	Find T-shirts	Go through discarded textiles products to find the T-shirts I like	90 mins	1-2
2	Create template	Use paper to create the template of the triangle to use to cut up the T-shirts for the skirt	30 mins	3
3	Cut fabric triangles	Use the template to cut out the 6 T-shirt triangle panels for the skirt	90 mins	3-4
4	Sew triangles together	Use the sewing machine to sew pairs of t-shirt triangles together (right side together). Overlock each seam.	45 mins	5
5	Sew triangle pairs together	Use the sewing machine to sew the pairs of t-shirt triangles together (right sides together) to form one long strip of triangles. Overlock seams.	45 mins	6
6	Sew into circle skirt	Using the sewing machine to sew the final seam to form the circle skirt. Overlock seams	30 mins	7
7	Hem skirt	Overlock the bottom of the skirt and hem it by turning it up 1cm. Sew around the hem.	30 mins	7-8
8	Waist band	Overlock the top of the skirt and turn it over 3cm, creating a tunnel for the elastic to go through. Sew the tunnel. Thread the elastic through and sew it together	30 mins	9

Production – Photo journal

- My final design was to make a skirt from old t-shirts.
- Step 1: Find T-shirts. I wanted to choose blue and grey t-shirts for my skirt – colours that I thought would go well together, but create contrast.



Production – Photo journal

- Step 2: Cut out T-shirts into triangles. I created a paper template to cut all the t-shirt fabric from.



Production – Photo journal

- Step 3: Sew the triangles together. I started this process by sewing two triangles together at a time.



Production – Photo journal

- Step 4: Sew skirt together. One my triangle pairs were sewn together, I began to join all the pieces together to create the circle skirt.



Production – Photo journal

- Step 4 continued. The skirt circle complete.



Production – Photo journal

- ▶ Step 5: Overlock. Overlock all the seams and top and bottom ready for hemming.



Production – Photo journal

- Step 6: Hem the skirt. Using the sewing machine, take the hem up at the bottom of the skirt.
- Step 7: Create waist. Using the sewing machine, create a 3 cm waist band, leaving a gap to allow for the elastic to be inserted.



Production – Photo journal

- ▶ Step 8: Try it on!





Production – Modifications



- ▶ When I started sewing the pieces together, I didn't like the colours of some of the t-shirts I had selected so I went back to the discarded textiles products and chose two different t-shirts to cut up.
- ▶ I had originally wanted a skirt that was longer, but when I was going through the discarded t-shirts, I realised the pieces wouldn't be long enough to create a skirt to the floor. Therefore I decided to make my skirt knee length instead.
- ▶ I had originally thought I might make a separate waist band for the skirt, but as time went on, I started to run out of time to do this, so I modified my design to do a simpler elastic waist version of the skirt.



Evaluation



- ▶ In what ways does your product fulfil the design brief? In what ways does it not meet the brief?
 - ▶ My product fulfils the brief because it was almost entirely made from discarded textiles products. The only new products I used were the thread and the elastic for the waist. I am not sure whether I would actually wear the skirt, but I do like it and I do find it aesthetically pleasing.
- ▶ What do you think of your overall design? What changes would you make?
 - ▶ I think the skirt turned out pretty well. I would have liked it make a full maxi length skirt as I had originally planned. It would be good to try this again with the stripes going on angles rather than vertical.
- ▶ Are you happy with the textiles you chose? Would you make adjustments next time? Is the colour scheme exactly what you expected? How would you change the scheme if remaking your product?
 - ▶ I would ideally like the fabric colours to be different, maybe purple, but the blue and grey were easier to find in the discarded textiles products.



Evaluation



- ▶ How were your time management skills during the investigation, design and creation of your product? Make recommendations for future productions — what might you do differently in your production plan?
 - ▶ I think I could have used my time more effectively during the investigation stage. I was not very focused and if I did this project again, I would do the investigation stage faster so I had more time to create my product.
 - ▶ I found designing my garment really hard. I didn't know where to start and I think I wasted too much time looking through all the discarded textiles products trying to find ideas. I probably could have spent more time looking for ideas online rather than looking through old clothes.
 - ▶ I really enjoy creating, so I think I used my time more effectively during the production phase. I was on task most of the time and made the best use of my time.
 - ▶ In future plans, I would make better use of my investigation and design planning, trying to focus my research to help inform my ideas.



Evaluation



- ▶ Did the project take too long to make? Would this alter the cost of manufacture? Would it be easy to set up a production line for the manufacture of your product?
 - ▶ It took quite a long time to make this the first time around, however, I think if I made the same thing again, it would be much quicker. It would be easy to set up a production line to create this skirt, but finding the discarded textile products to make the skirt out of would be more challenging.
- ▶ Are the techniques (eg. cutting, machine sewing, overlocking, hand sewing etc.) you used to make your solution adequate/suitable? How would you improve these techniques? Will the product be durable? Were the techniques well executed?
 - ▶ I am very happy with my construction techniques. I think the skirt will be very durable and will wear well.



Evaluation



- ▶ Is the product the right size/shape?
 - ▶ The skirt is the right size as it fits me. As I said, I would have liked to make it longer, but time and resources didn't allow me to make it ankle length. I am still happy with the result though.
- ▶ What are the views of other people regarding your design and final product?
 - ▶ I have shown my friends my skirt and the process of how I made it. They think it's really good, although no one is certain whether they would actually wear it themselves or not.
- ▶ Does your product work? What changes are required?
 - ▶ Yes, my product works very well as a skirt. No changes are required for it to be wearable.



Reflection



- ▶ My progress has been relatively good through the semester. I enjoyed learning how to make the zippered case – I have always wanted to learn how to sew zips. The upcycling project was a huge challenge. I was overwhelmed at first as I didn't know where to begin. However, as I went through the process, I found the ideas started to flow, especially as I saw examples on line and looked at the discarded textile products available.
- ▶ My strengths in textiles are knowing how to use all the equipment. I find this is essential when trying to expand my knowledge and understanding of designing and creating.
- ▶ I found the biggest challenge was coming up with the designs of what I could create from discarded textiles. I think my biggest weakness is my drawing skills. I feel like I am not able to communicate my designs properly and I feel that others aren't able to understand what I am drawing. I know that annotating my diagrams helps improve the communication. In the future, I could spend more time practicing my drawing skills.
- ▶ I am proud of my achievements in textiles this semester. Although I had a slow start, I feel like I was able to pick up the pace during the production phase and I really enjoyed the process.