**LCF College Conference 2014: Flexible & Sustainable Learning**

**Creative Connections: Facebook as a Third Space for Learning & Collaboration**

**Dr Natascha Radclyffe-Thomas & Dr Ana Roncha**

A creative college should be at the forefront of pedagogy and practice. The millennial student cohorts who inhabit our classrooms live connected lives through social media. The fashion industry is increasingly globalised yet curricula often remain situated within the home culture. Creativity is a key attribute for fashion industry professionals; learning how to learn and harnessing opportunities for independent, intrinsically motivated engagements are vital for students and teachers alike.

This contribution will focus on exploring key themes raised by an exploratory collaborative project using Facebook as a platform to connect LCF Marketing & Design students with students at City University Hong Kong studying courses in Advertising and Popular Culture. The collaboration took the form of a shared private Facebook group – an International Fashion Panel- where staff and students shared learning resources and current critiques around brand identity, cross-cultural marketing and city branding. The Facebook platform was used both separately and collaboratively to support students’ co-creation of their educational experience e.g. carrying out primary research on the Hong Kong fashion industry. The digitally mediated collaboration allowed for flexibility in when and how education took place, providing a third space for co-creation of learning. Benefits of the collaboration included enhanced digital literacies, the facilitation of research in remote markets and the raising of awareness of cross-cultural issues in product design and fashion marketing. Student evaluations, PPD statements and focus group contributions supplement the tutors’ reflections on the process.

A brief overview of the project will provide a focus for a wider discussion about engagement with public platforms e.g. Facebook and the opportunities and anxieties that surround the opening up of the classroom and the relinquishing of teacher control. Depending on the format of the session resources for discussion could be posted on a conference Facebook page.