

CONFERENCE PROGRAM



DEFYING PERCEPTIONS

Conference – **Friday 31 July 2026**

Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre

Presented by  **heia(Q)**
Home Economics Institute of Australia (Qld) Inc.

Sponsored by



Early Bird registration closes Friday 19 June 2026

AT A GLANCE

7:30am - 8:25am	Registration Desk Open + Trade Exhibitors				
8:30am - 9:50am	Conference Opening, Awards and Opening Keynote: Ben Rennie (Rennie Lab)				
9:50am - 10:35am	Morning Tea + Trade Exhibitors				
10:40am - 11:40am	1.1 Applying First Nations connections to middle years food programs Andrew McVittie & Tennille Bainbridge (Chancellor State College) #FirstNationsperspectives #australiancurriculum	1.2 Reshaping the classroom with immersive resources Michelle Fitton (Blueprint Career Development) Hospitality in action: Planning for the real world Chene Malan & Emma Dunleavy (Corinda SHS) #hospitality #teacherpractice	1.3 Designing capability Rashan Senanayake (Inspired Education Australia) #designthinking #GAI	1.4 Sew what? Rethinking sustainable fashion education Ellen Chandler and Michele Chandler (Clothes Minded) #fashion #sustainability	1.5 Breaking down barriers to representing ideas Dee Bek (Mountain Creek SHS) #sketching #designandtechnologies
11:45am - 12:30pm	2.1 Taste of Country Ngaire Mayo (Woodcrest State College) #FirstNationsperspectives #foodtechnology	2.2 More than the sum of its parts: A systems view of children's dietary behaviours Kiara Too (Centre for Community Health and Wellbeing, University of Queensland) #nutrition #systemsthinking	2.3 New IFHE UN STEAM Position Statement Dr Jay Deagon (CQUniversity) Innovators co-creating the HEBDAIR Framework with Generative AI: A tool for teachers Prof. Donna Pendergast AM (Griffith University) and Dr Jay Deagon (CQUniversity) #STEAM #GAI	2.4 Industry to classroom: Bridging the gap between real-world design and school practice Prue Rainey (Illystrate) and Justine Hawkins (Mt Alvernia College) #sketching #fashiondesign	2.5 Food and fibre resources in the classroom: Connecting resources to practice Luciano Mesiti (PIEFA) with collaborative discussion chaired by Rosie Sciacca (Moreton Bay College) #foodandfibreproduction #australiancurriculum
12:30pm - 1:15pm	Lunch + Trade Exhibitors				
1:20pm - 2:25pm	3.1 The art of traditional weaving Miranda Pires and Kirsty Singh (Woodcrest State College) #FirstNationsperspectives #materialstechnology	3.2 How the language we use in our classrooms reveals the sustainable potential of home economics Carolyn Mittra (Beaconhills College) Defying perceptions: how OzHarvest uses food education to empower the next generation Rebecca Donovan (OzHarvest) #foodtechnology #sustainability	3.3 Powerful plastics Rosie Sciacca (Moreton Bay College) #materialstechnology #sustainabledesign	3.4 From environment to ensemble: Exploring the language of design through colour, texture and silhouette Mandi Meise and Georgia Meise (Fairholme College) #fashion #designinspiration	3.5 From idea to impact: Designing services people use Catherine Stickland (Grace Lutheran College, Caboolture) #servicelearning #australiancurriculum
2:40pm - 4:00pm	Closing Keynote: Dr Emma Beckett (Australian Catholic University), Prize Draw, and Conference Close				



Subject Matter Presentation



Interactive Session



Practical Workshop



Demonstration

KEYNOTE SPOTLIGHT

Opening Keynote

Where Does Creativity Go? 7 Ideas That Just Might Change the World

Ben Rennie, Rennie Lab

NASA tested 1,600 kids for creative thinking. 97% scored at genius level. Test the same people 15 years later and that number drops to 2%. So what happened? This talk explores where creativity goes and how we get it back. Ben shares 7 ideas that will challenge how we think about creativity, confidence, and what it means to truly live a creative future. Redefining what it means to be creative.

About Ben Rennie

Ben Rennie is a Strategic Company Director, author, speaker, and Creativity Activist. He co-founded and led Reny Studio, a B Corp-certified creative agency with studios in Sydney and Los Angeles, working with Nike, Patagonia, Chanel, and the NBA. His book *Lessons in Creativity* (Wiley, 2025) won the Australian Business Book of the Year Runner-Up. He chairs Design Declares Australia and has spoken at SXSW Sydney, TEDx, the Obama Foundation, and Australian Parliament House. He now leads Rennie Lab, a creative advisory studio focused on systemic design and creative transformation



**Keen to learn more about nutrition science?
Then make sure you visit Dr Emma Beckett's
exhibitor table to grab your copy of her book
*You Are More Than What You Eat***



Closing Keynote

Defying perceptions: Rethinking truth, trust and talk in nutrition science

Dr Emma Beckett, Australian Catholic University

Food, nutrition, and eating are shaped by perceptions – from our sensory experiences to beliefs about health, morality, identity, ethics, and even how we interpret science itself. These perceptions can be informative, helping us navigate complexity, but they can also be limiting, misleading, or harmful. This talk explores how defying perceptions in food and nutrition is not just about correcting others, but about examining and challenging our own beliefs, biases, and assumptions. It considers how science is communicated and understood, and the role we all play in shaping that narrative, empowering Home Economics professionals as frontline changemakers in food and nutrition spaces today.

About Dr Emma Beckett

Dr Emma Beckett is a nutrition scientist, educator, and science communicator with a passion for making complex ideas accessible, meaningful, and relevant. With a PhD in food and nutrition science and extensive experience across research, teaching, and public engagement, she works at the intersection of science, communication, and culture. Emma is known for her evidence-informed, inclusive approach to food and nutrition, challenging misinformation while fostering trust and critical thinking. She is an experienced speaker and writer, contributing to media, industry, and academic audiences, and is dedicated to empowering others to navigate nutrition with confidence, curiosity, and compassion in an increasingly complex information landscape.



CONCURRENT SESSION 1

1.1 Applying First Nations connections into middle years food programs

Andrew McVittie and Tennille Bainbridge (Chancellor State College)

Engage with Aboriginal knowledge through the exploration of Aboriginal foods, with a focus on sensory understanding and cultural connection. This hands-on session integrates sensory analysis, cultural learning, and practical application, offering a meaningful and curriculum-aligned experience grounded in Aboriginal perspectives. Centred on culturally significant Aboriginal foods, we will explore connections to language, place, land, relationships, time, and cultural practices to gain insight into the role of food in sustaining community, identity, and knowledge systems and develop an understanding of appropriate protocols when working with Aboriginal food products. Participants will take part in a guided taste-testing experience, analysing key sensory properties, (appearance, aroma, flavour, and texture) to deepen their understanding of native ingredients and then apply this learning in a practical cooking session aligned with Australian Curriculum and QCAA requirements.

1.2 Reshaping the classroom with immersive resources

Michelle Fitton (Blueprint Career Development)

Assessment conditions remain one of the most frequently misunderstood—and highest-risk—areas of compliance for RTOs, particularly those delivering VET in Schools programs or using simulated and immersive learning environments. This session is designed to build confidence and clarity around what assessment conditions actually require, and how immersive resources can be used effectively without compromising compliance. Drawing on real-world validation, moderation, and audit experiences, we will unpack common misconceptions surrounding industry environments, foundation skills, and simulation and explore how immersive resources—when thoughtfully designed and contextualised—can strengthen assessment environments and address practical challenges such as limited access to real workplaces, low literacy and digital capability among learners, and evidencing compliance when assessment occurs outside traditional industry settings.

Hospitality in action: Planning for the real world

Chene Malan and Emma Dunleavy (Corinda State High School)

How can we challenge traditional perceptions of hospitality in a school setting by immersing students in authentic, industry-aligned experiences? Together we will delve into how strong industry connections and exposure to relevant hospitality environments can enhance students' exploration of practical culinary skills while developing a professional mindset. The session will showcase examples of how we empower students to step confidently into the hospitality world, bridging classroom learning with real-world practice.

1.3 Designing capability

Rashan Senanayake (Inspired Education Australia)

How can Home Economics be intentionally (re-)designed to build student capability through the safe and ethical integration of AI and innovation practices (design thinking). Using design thinking as a framework, we will unpack practical ways to embed AI tools that support creativity, critical thinking and inclusive learning, while remaining aligned to curriculum and assessment requirements. This session will also share industry applications, trends and future-focused skills requirements, challenging the traditional perceptions of Home Economics and positions it as a future-focused, interdisciplinary discipline that equips students with the capabilities needed for contemporary life.

1.4 Sew What? Rethinking sustainable Fashion education

Ellen Chandler (Clothes Minded)

Fashion and textiles education is often associated with hands-on garment construction and practical skill development. While these foundations are important, this interactive workshop highlights how fashion can also function as a powerful, interdisciplinary platform for teaching systems thinking, ethics, sustainability and design. This session invites you to shift the narrative around Home Economics and Design and Technologies — from tradition to transformation — and champion fashion education as preparation for modern sustainable life. Drawing on the 'Wear the Future' program, we will engage in hands-on activities that demonstrate how traditional practical skills can become entry points to complex problem-solving and real-world learning, using low-cost strategies suitable for diverse classroom contexts.

1.5 Breaking down barriers to representing ideas

Dee Bek (Mountain Creek State High School)

From refined fashion illustrations and product design concepts through to rough food plating ideas and design sketches, the ability to represent ideas is pivotal in the design process across the range of Design and Technologies contexts. However, when it comes to representing ideas, there are a myriad of barriers that hinder students' (and sometimes teachers themselves!) ability and willingness to graphically communicate their ideas. Whether it be perceptions about the purpose and context of the idea, the resources available, or the perceived ability of the 'sketcher', this practical session aims to debunk these misconceptions and equip you with the tools to enhance visual representation in your classroom. We will get hands-on in an immersive drawing workshop that demonstrates how to achieve quality sketches using accessible drawing tools and straightforward techniques.

CONCURRENT SESSION 2

2.1

Taste of Country

Ngaire Mayo (Woodcrest State College)

Join us for a cuppa and yarn about bush foods. In this session, we'll discuss ways to spark cultural connection and creativity in your classroom. Inspired by a prac demo assessment that challenges our students to design a recipe showcasing Australian native flavours, you'll get hands-on by tasting native herbs and spices, experimenting with flavour combinations, and creating your own custom bush foods blend. You'll leave with practical resources, fresh ideas, and a new appreciation for Australia's incredible native pantry.

2.2

More than the sum of its parts: A systems view of children's dietary behaviours

Kiara Too (Centre for Community Health and Wellbeing, University of Queensland)

Children's dietary behaviours are often explained through individual, environmental, sociocultural and economic factors in isolation, but what if dietary behaviour is more than the sum of its parts? If it was as simple as knowledge determines behaviour, then why are we not seeing meaningful and sustained population improvement from education-driven initiatives? Join us as we delve into a research approach focused on conceptualising the factors and relationships shaping children's dietary behaviours, and determining how to stimulate meaningful change. We will introduce the concept of a complex adaptive system, and explore the application of systems science to navigate the complexity of children's dietary behaviours. By moving beyond traditional socio-ecological models, this research illustrates how dietary behaviours are shaped within complex systems, offering deeper insights into leverage points for meaningful and sustainable change.

2.3

New IFHE United Nations STEAM Position Statement

Dr Jay Deagon (CQUniversity)

Curious about the IFHE United Nations STEAM Position Statement? Released by the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) in January 2026, this globally endorsed statement—developed by 15 international academics—recasts Home Economics as a discipline that defies long-held perceptions and stands as a vital contributor to contemporary STEAM education. The Position Statement informs and influences Member States, national governments, educational institutions, policymakers, school leaders, industry partners, and global education networks about the essential role Home Economics plays in cultivating future-focused STEAM capability. Far from traditional stereotypes, Home Economics is a strategic, innovation-driven field that delivers holistic and applied STEAM learning. It builds technical expertise, ethical reasoning, systems thinking, creativity, and sustainable innovation—capabilities that propel learners from the classroom into industry, community, and policy leadership. Dr Jay Deagon, lead author of the statement, is advancing this work through the development of a Teacher's Guide for implementing STEAM in Middle Years Home Economics classrooms, offering practical approaches that empower teachers to continue defying perceptions of what the subject is and what it can achieve.

Innovators co-creating the HEBDAIR Framework with Generative AI: A tool for teachers

Professor Donna Pendergast AM (Griffith University) and Dr Jay Deagon (CQUniversity)

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into everyday life is reshaping knowledge production, access, and perception across disciplines. Home Economics—an interdisciplinary field encompassing food, nutrition, textiles, family studies, and financial literacy—faces unique challenges in this context. Generative AI (GenAI) is a subset of AI with capabilities to generate content, such as text, images and code. This, in turn, is utilised to create lessons, activities, and images for the delivery of Home Economics; however, the accuracy, inclusivity, and disciplinary integrity of these representations remain underexplored, and risks, fear, and ethical dilemmas remain a concern for many. This research undertakes a critical examination into how Generative AI portrays Home Economics, highlighting the potential for bias, oversimplification, and devaluation of its holistic nature, and then innovates with Generative AI to co-create a tool of inquiry for practitioners to reflect on the artefacts created. By addressing this critical intersection of technology and education, this research contributes to broader discussions on AI's role in shaping disciplinary identities and underscores the importance of actively guiding AI representations to reflect the values and complexities of Home Economics in the 21st century.

2.4

Industry to classroom: Bridging the gap between real-world design and school practice

Prue Rainey (Illystrate) and Justine Hawkins (Mt Alvernia College)

What happens when industry expertise meets everyday classroom reality? This hands-on session invites you to participate in a guided design activity, engaging with fashion illustration and drawing with the Illystrate tool, while exploring how technical drawing can become an inclusive gateway rather than a barrier. Together we will challenge assumptions about creativity and capability, actively trialling the process and reframing perceived 'limitations' as opportunities for innovation. Prue and Justine will demonstrate a structured, accessible drawing approach and provide adaptable strategies for diverse school settings, sharing real classroom outcomes.

2.5

Food and fibre resources and services in the classroom

Luciano Mesiti (PIEFA) with collaborative discussion chaired by Rosie Sciacca (Moreton Bay College)

PIEFA offers a range of curriculum-linked resources to help teachers break down traditional barriers and perceptions related to engaging with food and fibre production contexts. Join us as we explore a range of new PIEFA food and fibre resources and make connections with authentic classroom practice. The session will transport us to food, fibre and agricultural environments and beyond as we challenge ourselves to consider how the processes and technologies involved in food and fibre production can support the wellbeing and sustainability of individuals, families and communities. We will unpack examples of classroom learning experiences and assessment tasks to facilitate conversations about how to immerse students in engaging learning across food and fibre production contexts.

CONCURRENT SESSION 3

3.1

The art of traditional weaving

Miranda Pires and Kirsty Singh (Woodcrest State College)

Keen to intertwine more cross-curriculum priorities into teaching and learning across a range of materials contexts? Then join us for this practical workshop where you will learn traditional Aboriginal weaving techniques to create a pair of earrings (or similar) from upcycled fabrics. As we progress through the workshop, we will explore how to combine the cross-curriculum priorities Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives with Sustainability in a project that you could use in junior classes, or as a skill for senior Fashion.

3.2

How the language we use in our classrooms reveals the sustainable potential of home economics

Carolyn Mittra (Beaconhills College)

How can the language we use in Home Economics classrooms, particularly in food lessons, help make the sustainable value of the subject more visible? Drawing on everyday classroom learning experiences such as cooking, adapting recipes, managing waste and making substitutions, we will explore how these practices already involve sustainability, decision-making and food systems, even if we don't always name them that way. The focus of this reflective session will be on how small, practical shifts in language can help highlight the rigorous learning that is already happening in Home Economics classrooms. You will be encouraged to reflect on the language you use in your own classrooms, identify practices that may be 'hiding in plain sight', and consider how changing the way we talk about learning can influence how Home Economics is valued by students and schools.

Defying perceptions: How OzHarvest uses food education to empower the next generation

Rebecca Donovan (OzHarvest)

Discover how OzHarvest, through its free, curriculum-aligned FEAST (Food Education & Sustainability Training) program, empowers primary and secondary students to build practical, technological and entrepreneurial capabilities while addressing real-world challenges of nutrition, equity and the sustainability imperative of reducing food waste. This session reframes common "problems" — limited budgets, diverse classrooms, disengaged learners — as opportunities for creativity, agency and transformation, demonstrating how innovation does not rely on perfect conditions, but on purposeful pedagogy, authentic context and student voice. Participants will engage in a live demonstration of a versatile 'Use It Up' recipe using OzHarvest kitchen kits, illustrating how hands-on food education can activate critical thinking, sustainability mindsets and learner confidence. A facilitated Q&A will invite dialogue on reshaping curriculum practice, challenging deficit thinking, and reclaiming Home Economics as a discipline that equips young people to thrive in modern life.

3.3

Powerful plastics

Rosie Sciacca (Moreton Bay College)

Dive into the surprising ways how plastics, when used purposefully, can reduce waste, extend product lifecycles, and contribute to creativity and innovation in food and textiles product designs. In this practical workshop, you will experiment with materials and accessible (cost and easy to use!) equipment, discovering how easy it is to meld plastics into design and technologies curriculum from junior years all the way through to senior. Together, we'll unpack misconceptions about plastics and explore how their unique properties—flexibility, durability, and safety—enable new possibilities to spark students' imagination and deepen their understanding of sustainable design. Be prepared for a hands-on session of creating, open discussion, and fresh thinking about how we can design with intention across food and textiles contexts.

3.4

From environment to ensemble: Exploring the language of design through colour, texture and silhouette

Mandi Meise and Georgia Meise (Fairholme College)

What are the different environments all around us and how can they inspire innovative fashion design ideas? This hands-on workshop showcases strategies for how teachers can guide students to observe natural and built environments and use these as a rich source of design inspiration. Participants will explore strategies to help students translate visual observations into design concepts, focusing on the elements of colour, texture, and silhouette, and applying these ideas to croquis development.

3.5

From idea to impact: Designing services people use

Catherine Stickland (Grace Lutheran College, Caboolture)

Designing in Design and Technologies is not always just about the designed product. How can we move beyond a focus on the quality of a product and shift our priorities to products as part of services that support the wellbeing of individuals and groups? This session will explore service-learning concepts as a framework for designing for others. We will unpack service-learning initiatives from a design and technologies lens, discovering how units can be developed that develop students' capacity to design with empathy whilst still providing opportunities to produce solutions. Examples of learning experiences and assessment tasks will be showcased to demonstrate how food and textiles products can form a meaningful part of a service for others as well as fulfil the objectives of the Design and Technologies curriculum. We will adopt the roles of a student and an educator as we engage in learning experiences and consider opportunities to enhance service learning in our contexts.

EXHIBITORS



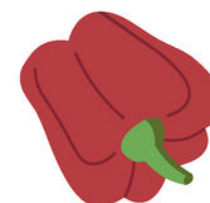
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* Only available to conference delegates



HEIA(Q) Fashion Masterclass

Saturday 1st August, 2026

9:00am - 4:30pm

Hosted at Moreton Bay College

Join us for a hands-on day of skill-building, learning and connection. HEIA(Q) masterclasses provide educators with an opportunity to enhance their practice across a series of workshops targeted at connecting with subject matter and assessment practices directly aligned with syllabi.

The Fashion Masterclass explores connections with subject matter and assessment across the Senior Fashion syllabus.

Highlights

- Interactive fashion illustration and drawing workshop
- Community of practice focused on implementing the diversity of units and assessments across the Fashion syllabus.
- Practical skills lab to get hands-on with activities that connect with fashion production skills and classroom learning experiences.
- Network with peers across the Fashion Masterclass and the Food and Nutrition and Hospitality Masterclass over morning-tea & lunch

Conference Add-On
\$125

HEIA Member
\$195

Non-Member
\$275

Secure your ticket now to avoid disappointment - limited spaces available! Don't miss this opportunity to expand your knowledge, build your skills, and nurture your professional networks.

HEIA(Q) Food & Nutrition and Hospitality Masterclass

Saturday 1st August, 2026

9:00am - 4:30pm

Hosted at Moreton Bay College

Join us for a hands-on day of skill-building, learning and connection. HEIA(Q) masterclasses provide educators with an opportunity to enhance their practice across a series of workshops targeted at connecting with subject matter and assessment practices directly aligned with syllabi.

This year's masterclass explores connections with both the Senior Food and Nutrition syllabus and Senior Hospitality Practices.

Highlights

- Presentation from special guest speaker Dr Emma Beckett
- Community of practice focused on developing and implementing units and assessment. Participants can elect to engage in either the Food and Nutrition group or the Hospitality Practices group.
- Practical skills lab to get hands-on in the kitchen with activities that connect with syllabus subject matter and classroom learning experiences.
- Network with peers across the Food and Nutrition and Hospitality Masterclass and the Fashion Masterclass over shared morning tea & lunch

Conference Add-On
\$125

HEIA Member
\$195

Non-Member
\$275

Secure your ticket now to avoid disappointment - limited spaces available! Don't miss this opportunity to expand your knowledge, build your skills, and nurture your professional networks.

REGISTRATION

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Registration type	Early bird (up to Friday 19 June)	Standard (from Saturday 20 June)
HEIA member	\$350	\$410
HEIA member (Student / Not in Paid Employment)	\$235	\$ 300
Non-HEIA member	\$460	\$520
Non-HEIA member (Student / Not in Paid Employment)	\$315	\$375

Add-On

Masterclass

\$125



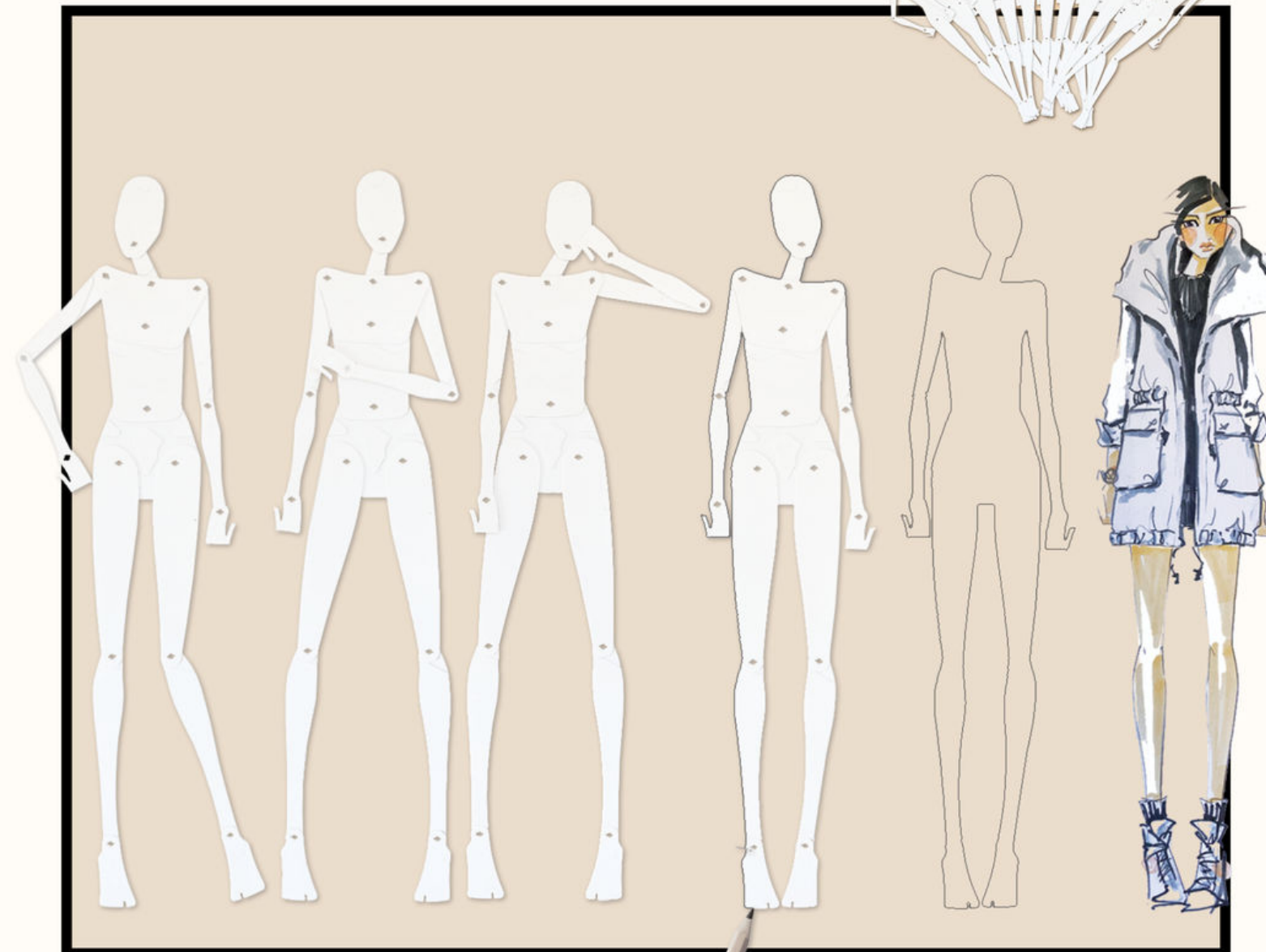
Registration terms and conditions are available at registration and on our website.

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Teachers - Why Choose Us?

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