



MAKING THE CONNECTION: HISTORIC COSTUME AND MERCHANDISING

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The purpose of this project was to create an assignment for a history of costume class consisting primarily of fashion merchandising majors that required applying merchandising knowledge and skills along with problem-solving skills and the ability to synthesize historic costume information based on a real-life situation.

Part one of the project required students to utilize the World-Wide-Web to research effective costume preservation and care techniques. Next, the students were to assume that they had been hired by the curator of the museum to plan a special exhibit featuring hats. The show was to be planned around a spring luncheon with approximately 50 guests attending. Each team gave a professional presentation which included a plan and layout for the exhibit centered around a theme, a sample of an invitation to be sent to the guests, a listing and identification of the historic hats to be exhibited, and a creative means of providing written analysis of the hats. Creativity and the ability to implement were considered in the final analysis. The class voted on the best plan and assisted in the execution of the actual luncheon exhibit. The third phase of the project involved using the Internet to conduct a search of companies that produce, sell, or use hats in their displays. Students were to identify similarities and differences between the current fashions and the historic hats used in the exhibit.

This real-life learning project gave students an opportunity to integrate applicable merchandising concepts (promotion, presentation, display, etc.) while exploring factors that influence the planning and execution of an historic garment show. Although the project focused on relevant historic costume and merchandising competencies, the students benefited from the teamwork approach to learning new technologies.