6-26-2019

"I Should Probably Know More:" Reasons for and Roadblocks to the Use of Historic University Collections in Teaching

Sara Marcketti
Iowa State University, sbb@iastate.edu

Jennifer F. Gordon
Iowa State University, jfgordon@iastate.edu

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Abstract

Collections of dress and textiles can make subjects such as history come to life. However previous studies have shown that many collections are underutilized within university settings. The purpose of this paper is to examine contributing and detracting factors for use. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with curators and collection managers (n = 15) at twelve institutions. Respondents were then asked to recommend faculty members who did (n = 9) or did not use the collection (n = 6). Through data analysis, four major themes were related by the collection managers including: 1) ambiguous roles and unknown collections, 2) continual need for collection management maintenance, 3) lack of process and access to the collections, and 4) misperceptions about the collections. Faculty that used the collection (n = 9) stated previous knowledge of the collection and the importance of material culture to student knowledge and understanding. Barriers as identified by those faculty that did not use the collection (n = 6) included lack of access and difficulty in scheduling time to use the collections.

Keywords

Disciplines

Education | Fashion Design | Fiber, Textile, and Weaving Arts | Museum Studies

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Collections of dress and textiles can make subjects such as history come to life. However previous studies have shown that many collections are underutilized within university settings. The purpose of this paper is to examine contributing and detracting factors for use. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with curators and collection managers (n = 15) at twelve institutions. Respondents were then asked to recommend faculty members who did (n = 9) or did not use the collection (n = 6). Through data analysis, four major themes were related by the collection managers including: 1) ambiguous roles and unknown collections, 2) continual need for collection management maintenance, 3) lack of process and access to the collections, and 4) misperceptions about the collections. Faculty that used the collection (n = 9) stated previous knowledge of the collection and the importance of material culture to student knowledge and understanding. Barriers as identified by those faculty that did not use the collection (n = 6) included lack of access and difficulty in scheduling time to use the collections.

The 19th century witnessed the emergence of university and art museums in Europe and the United States. Collections within these museums were often started through personal objects or bequests for the improvement of the university and its constituents, serving an important part of the research and teaching mission of these institutions (Boylan 1999). The collections, or groups of objects stored in one location, often focused on a particular subject, such as fine art, botany, zoology, etc. Or in the case of the Courtland Institute of Art of the University of London, a collection of textiles and French Impressionist works donated by textile industrialist Samuel Courtauld (Boylan 1999).

Today, academic collections of historic dress and textiles can range from small groups of objects to multiple collections housed and exhibited in world-renowned institutions such as the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising in Los Angeles (Welters and Ordoñez 2011). The use of objects from collections of dress and textiles can make subjects such as dress history come to life. As stated by Riello (2011: 1): 'At an analytical level, the study of fashion and the history of fashion in particular, includes both abstract concepts and material objects'. It is the critical reflection on the material culture object that is a pivotal element in the repertoire of skills for industry professionals (Ryan and Brough 2012). As Sauro (2009: 1939) noted,

the study of real garments was often considered 'essential' when teaching techniques and construction to apparel students. Even with the plethora of online and digitized images of historic textiles and clothing, the material object provides a tactile example that deepens the knowledge base contributing to more complex scholarly interpretation (Riello 2011). Indeed, previous scholars have found that examining historic textiles and clothing provides students with experiential learning opportunities to increase their creativity, enhance their understanding of fashion history, and provide connections between coursework in dress history and apparel design (Gam and Banning 2012).

Historic dress and textile collections serve as valuable resources that help support the teaching, research, and outreach mission of many colleges and universities (Welters and Ordoñez 2011). Additionally, collections can be used as a fundraising tool for private donors. Managing these collections is a challenge however, particularly due to lack of time, money, and expertise. As such, in their seminal monograph Welters and Ordoñez provided ten guidelines to aid managers and administrators of such collections in the areas of mission, staff, organizational system, storage, policies for accessioning, deaccessioning, loaning objects, classroom use, exhibition, emergency response and recovery, and documentation of a collection's value to the university. Despite the amount of work and resources necessary for the proper functioning of historic textile collections and museums, the close examination of clothing can enrich understanding of society. As

Iowa State University, US
Corresponding author: Sara Marcketti (sbb@iastate.edu)

stated by Mida and Kim (2015: 16), 'garments incorporate functional elements, as well as symbolic and aesthetic qualities that echo the cultural norms of a particular time and place', thus enriching our understanding of the relationship between garments and people.

Object Based Learning

Art historian Jules Prown (1982: 7) posited that we can form an understanding of people by examining their cultural artifacts, and established a method: description, deduction, and speculation for object analysis that is applicable across disciplines. Earlier work by E. McClung Fleming (1974: 156) described a similar systematic look at objects using the following steps: identification, evaluation, cultural analysis, and interpretation. According to Prown (1982: 1–3), 'artifacts are primary data for the study of material culture, and, therefore, they can be used actively as evidence rather than passively as illustrations'. He argued that artifacts are more 'representative', or democratic, than the written word. Fashion scholar Valerie Steele, a former student of Prown, applied his framework to the analysis of an historical fashion object. Prown, Steele (1998: 329) wrote, taught her 'how to "read" a dress'. According to Steele (1998: 330), one of the values of object analysis is that it can remedy incorrect notions; otherwise such misinformation 'can persist unchallenged for years'. In this way, object analysis and the discussion of experiential learning share particular commonality. Kolb (1984: 26) observed that 'ideas are not fixed and immutable elements of thought, but are formed and re-formed through experience'. Likewise, our understandings of clothing fashions of the past are continually adjusted through the examination of extant examples.

Scholar Lou Taylor (1998: 347) argued that object analysis requires a unique skill set. She wrote, 'object-based research focuses necessarily and unapologetically on examination of details of clothing and fabric'. Other camps in the study of fashion offer debate as to whether objects are wholly necessary in fashion research, advocating theoretical or conceptual approaches (Riello 1998: par. 20). According to Taylor (1998: 338), there has persisted a disagreement, or a divide, between 'the object-centered methods of the curator/collector versus "academic" social/economic history and cultural theory approaches as practiced in the university world'. Riello (2011: 4–5) noted a key difference, the former is inductive, while the latter, deductive. Yet, there seems to be a growing consensus that both methodologies are important and useful to the study of fashion (Steele 1998; Taylor 1998; Riello 2011). Steele (1998: 327) argued that fashion scholars should not neglect study of the physical object in favor of other sources, while Taylor (1998: 355) advocated a 'multi-disciplinary' perspective. Indeed, object-based and theoretical methodologies can work in tandem (Riello 2011: par. 6).

One of the generally agreed benefits of object-based learning is the value of physical touch and sensory engagement (Chatterjee 2008; Duhs 2010; Marcketti 2011). Chatterjee (2008: 5) explored the positive benefits

of touch involving hospital outreach and evaluation of patients' emotional response to object-handling sessions. Referencing previous literature in support (Romanek and Lynch 2008: 284; Biggs 2003: 80), Duhs (2010: 184) noted that through sensory engagement 'working with objects strengthens learning, as the sense of touch can lead to a more memorable learning experience'. In relating object-based learning to the teaching of fashion history, Marcketti (2011: 551) reinforced the learning potential derived from sensory engagement with a fashion object, including 'lifting the object for weight, touching the fabric, hearing the sound the fabric makes when moved'. Through a pilot of test activities involving object interaction, Marie (2010) emphasized the connection between object handling and the transfer and building of other kinds of skills. Similarly, Shuh (1999: 80, 85), through his own observation and practice at the Nova Scotia Museum, found that critical thinking was an important by-product of students' work with objects, although it was necessary for their teachers and facilitators to be well-versed in object analysis. As he noted:

> When you encourage people to focus their attention on an object, especially the kind of objects we tend to have lying around museums, they generally respond with enthusiasm and begin to generate a whole series of interesting questions themselves' (Shuh 1999: 81).

The integration of historic fashion objects into the clothing and textile curriculum can lead to many positive results for students. Both Birk and Saiki (2017) and McKinney and Cho (2018) have detailed the usefulness of historic apparel in teaching the hands-on skills associated with making of clothing, respectively with flat patternmaking and the fabrication of internal structures for eveningwear bodices. Similarly, Marcketti (2011: 560) found that artifacts forged deeper connections for students in an historic costume course, raising questions about the wearer's lifestyle and the historical period. According to Mida et al. (2017: 121, 124), the observation and the drawing of historic objects can strengthen students' abilities in terms of visual literacy, resulting in artifact descriptions that are 'more thoughtful, nuanced, and complete'. While they have been used most frequently to support the teaching of fashion history, clothing and textile collections provide opportunities for collaboration across departments in the university. Jablon and Sanders (2016), for instance, outlined the value that university theater departments derive from research access to historic costume and textile collections.

Despite the wealth of benefits to using historic textiles and clothing within the teaching environment, previous studies and anecdotal evidence have shown that many collections are underutilized within university settings (Marcketti and Fitzpatrick 2013; Were 2010). As such, during continued times of downsizing, many historic collections struggle to prove their value within the higher education setting (Boylan 1999; Marcketti et al. 2011). Those in other disciplines have likewise faced similar

issues. Professor of history and biology, Joe Cain (2010: 197) detailed a number of obstacles to the regular and successful use of collection objects in higher education, beginning simply with the observation that 'teaching through objects is hard work'. Incorporating objects into course design was time-intensive, and for many instructors required a deviation from styles of teaching with which they were more comfortable. The comparative ease of use and adaptability of other formats such as digital images at times made 'museum objects seem luxurious choices' (Cain 2010: 197–8).

Given the known benefits of using material culture objects to student knowledge and growth, and the seeming lack of interest shown by some instructors, we sought to better understand reasons why some instructors used a collection and why others did not. Ultimately, the purpose of the paper is to determine the factors that influenced the use of costume and textile collections in the university classroom, and to ask whether there are specific barriers in place that prevented more frequent use of these resources.

Method

Following exemption from the University's Institutional Review Board (#14-460), in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with curators and collection managers (n = 15) at twelve institutions. Questions asked included: what is your position and breakdown of responsibility within the Collection/Museum; what are your major job responsibilities within the collection; how would you rate the visibility of your collection within the university community; are there certain categories of courses (e.g. fashion history, illustration) that you feel utilize the collection to a greater degree. Curators and collection managers were also asked to recommend one faculty member that frequently utilized the collection and one faculty member who teaches a course where it would make sense to use the collection but it is not utilized for instruction.

A total of 9 individuals were interviewed that used the collections. They were asked questions such as: How and when were you made aware of the university clothing and textile collection as a resource for teaching; have you been able to use the collection for your own research; what factors encourage your use of the collection; are there any factors that discourage your use of the collection.

A total of six respondents that taught subjects that lent themselves to the use of material culture, but for whatever reason, did not use the collection were also interviewed. They were asked questions such as: What categories of courses do you teach; how many students are usually in these classes; are you aware of the university clothing and textile collection; if you have not used the collection in your teaching, what are the factors that influence you choice not to use the university clothing and textile collection.

A semi-structured interview schedule was used and each interview was audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Following the transcription, those interviewed were provided the opportunity to read the transcript and offer edits and corrections. Their suggestions were incorporated within the transcript documents. Pseudonyms were assigned to both the individual and to their institutions. Identifying information, such as names of buildings, programs, or focus areas of the collections, were deleted throughout the transcripts to protect the confidentiality of the informants.

Each transcript was read multiple times by both authors during and after data collection. Initial codes or short words were applied to the text. Through multiple readings of the transcripts and discussions between authors, the data were categorized into themes and concepts. The quotes within each theme were copied into a Microsoft word document with the narrative or research story built around the patterns found in the data (Saldana 2013). To ensure trustworthiness of our data analysis, our interpretations of the data were shared with the collection manager and registrar of our university as well as presented to an audience of collection managers and curators at the *International Textile and Apparel Association*, a professional disciplinary conference. Attendee comments in support of the key findings provided further validity to the study.

Results

The collection managers and curators interviewed included individuals with faculty rank and status with a percentage of their position responsibility statements (PRS) from 10% to 50% devoted to the collection, as well as individuals with staff status with sole (100%) responsibilities devoted to the collection (**Table 1**). There were four major themes identified in the interviews with collection managers and curators that may contribute to potential barriers to using the collection. These included: 1) ambiguous roles and unknown collections, 2) continual need for collection management maintenance, 3) lack of process and access to the collections, and 4) misperceptions about the collections.

Ambiguous Roles and Unknown Collections

For many of the collection managers and curators, even those with sole duties to the collection, there was a lack of clarity regarding their positions as well as frustration regarding the lack of clarity surrounding the collection's role within the university. For faculty member Isabel, 50% of her PRS was directed towards the collection. However, she stated, 'my title was given to me by the department chair, who doesn't necessarily know job responsibilities within a museum, so it's just… they put a name on it without regard to what it is exactly a collection manager or a curator actually does'. Staff member Imogene echoed this sentiment and indicated that although her responsibilities were solely devoted to the collection, she was still expected to teach up to 9 credits per year. She expressed, 'officially I shouldn't be teaching that much, but I teach quite a bit. So I feel like I have a full-time curatorial job and then I teach at night. I work 110%'. The lack of knowledge concerning the curatorial and collection management roles meant that many individuals faced unrealistic

Table 1: Description of curators and collection managers interviewed.

Name	Faculty/Staff	General Responsibilities	Position Responsibility Statement related to Collection	Standalone Facility or Affiliated with an Academic Department
Aileen	Faculty	Exhibitions, staff/student supervision, collections management	25%	Academic department
Allison	Faculty	Exhibitions, staff/student supervision, collections management	25%	Academic department
Cecily	Faculty	Exhibitions, staff/student supervision, collections management	10%	Academic department
Isabel	Faculty	Exhibitions, staff/student supervision, collections management, donor relations	50%	Academic department
Lynne	Faculty	Exhibitions, collections management, donor relations	25%	Academic department
Pearl	Faculty	Exhibitions, staff/student supervision, collections management, donor relations	10%	Academic department
Vicki	Faculty	Exhibitions, staff/student supervision, collections management	10%	Academic department
Roseanne	Faculty	Collections management, facilitating research and classroom access	75%	Standalone
Deirdre	Staff	Records management	100%	Academic department
Justine	Staff	Cataloging, collections management, exhibitions, database administration	100%	Academic department
Dina	Staff	Exhibitions, publications, social media, donor relations, collections management, student supervision	100%	Standalone
Imogene	Staff	Collections management, conservation, registrar duties, exhibition planning	100%	Standalone
Marcia	Staff	Collections management, student supervision, curation	100%	Academic department
Renate	Staff	Collections management, curatorial research	100%	Standalone
Teresa	Staff	Exhibitions, collections management, staff/student supervision	100%	Academic department

expectations regarding their workload. Imogene explained that she does everything in the collection:

> Everything. I'm registrar, I'm curator, I'm collections manager, sometimes I'm doing very basic conservation. I also serve as kind of a director in that I'm writing the policies. I'm creating the loan forms. I'm in the middle of writing a strategic plan. I'm defining the mission. I've done and have done everything you can think of. I've done all my dressing. I've done all my installation.

Dina, whose position is part-time, expressed a similarly extensive range of duties:

> I do exhibit design, publications, social media, funding, acquisitions, deaccessions, and training student workers… I do library development; [I] coordinate cataloguing with the cataloguing staff in the library… I've catalogued label copy.

I'm in charge of the buildings. I have to oversee maintenance and custodial services. That's a start! I do everything literally.

Renate's title was so vague in nature, she quipped, 'it's like all other assigned duties—that's the big joke here'.

The ambiguity regarding the curator and collection manager titles and roles was mirrored in the confusion and lack of knowledge regarding the collections themselves. According to Deirdre, a staff member with 100% time dedicated to the collection, there remained confusion on campus between the historic textiles and clothing collection and gallery space and the central university museum. She stated, 'and every week someone says, "Oh, we have a textiles museum?!" And yeah, it opened ten years ago I guess you weren't paying attention'. This attitude was echoed by Imogene who indicated,

> I think most of the university has a vague idea that there's a costume collection, but they don't really

understand what it's all about. And that's being generous. I think the majority have no clue, no clue at all. We're still a mystery and outside of the university, even around campus, it's a puzzle.

Some of the confusion may have been centered on the administration of the units. Most of those interviewed worked in collections that were academically housed within a department; but were physically separated or called a distinct name, not associated with the home department. For Cecily, a faculty member with no formal time devoted to the collection, the jurisdiction caused challenges to overall awareness. She stated, 'a lot of people on campus aren't even aware of our department let alone our collection'. Marcia likewise indicated that within the larger university, 'we have very low visibility. I regularly run into people who've never heard of us, and not only students, but also faculty and administrators'. Even for Allison who commented on the extensive ways in which her collection was promoted to students and faculty, 'we're not visible enough, so that's one of the big complaints'. For Teresa, even if faculty from across the university were aware of the collection, 'they might be vaguely aware that something like that exists, but no concept of what it really has, what type of collections and how they're used and how available they could be to them'.

Continual Need for Collection Management Maintenance

For the vast majority of those interviewed, the collections were started as residual teaching examples or souvenirs from world travels as completed by early 20th-century faculty members. Often times, once these faculty members retired, these items formed the basis of the collections. According to Pearl, a faculty member with 10% PRS devoted to the collection, as new faculty members and new curators of the collection were hired, they brought their own textile interests and passions to the mission of the organizations and

> …as this developed, the things that we began acquiring into the collection had in some ways, more historic value than they would in terms of actually handling them in the classroom. You know, turning them inside out and looking at how things were constructed, and that sort of thing.

The discrepancy of beginning as a teaching collection and moving into a more formalized institution of museum had lasting impact. For Imogene,

> We try to hold museum quality and hold museum standards, but at the same time I want to hold on to that educational mission and not be so stand-offish. Because it seems very often that when you crossover into the museum side of things you lose that accessibility. I'd like to find a middle ground somewhere, but I don't know how to do that right now.

Several of the curators and collection managers mentioned that their collections, while abiding by museum standards of care, did not meet the criteria of being a museum, as set forth by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the primary source of federal support. The criteria for museums include having at least one staff member whose responsibilities related solely to the museum's services and operations, or if part of a university, the museum must have its own fully segregated and itemized operating budget, conditions that several of the university collections did not meet. This limited the collection manager and curators from applying for IMLS grants and other funding opportunities to support their units.

Due to the informal beginnings and shifting priorities of the collections, there were often little to no formal policies in place for the accessioning process. According to Isabel, 'in the early stages, what seems to be apparent is that nobody knew how to say the word "no", and so heaps and gobs of the same thing, and also provenance was lacking on many of the objects we have'. Most of the collection managers and curators spoken with indicated their collection objects lacked adequate documentation. For Marcia, a staff member with 100% PRS devoted to the collection, objects in her collection were accompanied by 'mere pieces of scratch paper with notes on it that you just run across randomly somewhere'. Even if collections were started with excellent provenance, many of those were moved with departmental and college re-organizations. As stated by Isabel, notes 'were lost somewhere along the line because this collection has been moved and shuffled around in buildings on campus for many, many years, and they were not stored properly'.

Additionally, the collections were often managed by faculty members as part of their service appointments with students with varying levels of experience and interest serving as the un-official registrars. These students would process accessions and according to Isabel, 'it's always interesting to read the paperwork or descriptions … For example, we had a tea cozy that had been mislabeled as a hat for many, many years. And so there was never a lot of consistency'.

The irregularity in record keeping has proved challenging for making collection records accessible online. According to Pearl,

> Our database is atrocious, it's atrocious right now. We have all these kind of data management problems right now that we're trying to deal with, and in order to make our collection more readily accessible…We have just never had the funds to be able to pay, someone who is a professional, with a degree. We have undergraduate students who are training to become professionals and this is part of their training, so we serve a really important function in training our undergraduate students, but as a result, the database is a little bit questionable in some instances. That's one of the challenges that we're facing in terms of how to make ourselves more visible, more accessible, without kind of embarrassing ourselves in some instances.

The discrepancies and inaccuracies in cataloguing proved difficult for efficient exhibition preparation. For Teresa,

> I was going through the database trying to find garments that had a real university connection, that either were worn by a student, designed by a student, belonged to a faculty member, had some type of a logo, or something that pertained to sportswear and it was very difficult. Anyways, that really brought that [cataloging] problem home.

The lack of knowledge regarding what was in the collections meant that several universities had officially stopped accessioning or accepting items for later receipt because they, like Roseanne, with 75% time devoted to the collection, were 'still working on understanding what's in our collection'. It is to be noted, that there is a certain natural fluidity involved in managing and documenting collection pieces. This can be an engaging challenge and a process of discovery, particularly as new undergraduate and graduate students enter the collection space.

Process and Access

The vast majority of those interviewed were the sole points of contact for their collections with minimal information provided online in a searchable database. Isabel stated, 'our policy for classroom use, for anybody who isn't directly involved in the museum, would be that it would go through me as the collection manager to request certain objects to have in class'. Justine, a staff member with full time PRS devoted to the collection stated, 'the instructor asked me to pull a selection of garments that had interesting darts, so, I went through the records, and went through the cabinetry, and pulled out a selection. They rely on me, really, to find for them what they're looking for'.

Imogene, a long-time curator with the collection stated,

> They [the instructors] don't have any access at all. Basically what they'll do is they'll email and say, 'I'm teaching a design class.' If they've seen something in particular that they remember, they might say, you showed us this amazing Irene coat; can my students see that again? But yeah, there's no search capability at the moment. It's all what's rattling around in my brain.

Dina concurred, 'most of the time the professors have just asked me, "do you have blah, blah, blah", and I say, "oh yes, it's over here". So my institutional memory is very important'. The inherent problem with this approach is what happens once Imogene and Dina and the institutional knowledge that they carry with them is no longer present? Cecily attempted to provide access to the database—as well as the physical collection—but felt, despite this, that 'nobody goes in there without asking me because they don't know where anything is… I've tried to make it available, but… I don't think that most of the faculty perceives it as being very accessible'. Staff member Renate also believed that many faculty members asked for specific things they have seen before and that this limited their knowledge and use of the collection. She stated that faculty will say,

> 'I want something from the sixties, or I just want things from Galanos'. I understand for them it's easy if they're familiar with the objects, it's like, ok, I know what to talk about when I see this. But then also there's that inspiration and that sort of kismet that happens when something new comes, and who knows how they'll be inspired by that.

In tangent with lack of online access, there was also a lacking of physical access to many of the collection spaces. Lynne, a faculty member with 25% PRS dedicated to the collection, indicated 'it's always a challenge because we're hidden on the top floor of the building, so we don't have a drive-by location. You really have to work to get here. … That's the challenge with universities. It's almost a closed community'. The size of the physical collection space and structure of the facilities were also mentioned as limiting factors in accessibility. This was particularly important as class sizes were noted as always increasing. Students could rarely fit within the collection spaces without dividing the class into smaller groups. Further, large classroom environments often limited instructors' ability to closely delineate garment details.

Misperceptions

While certainly all of the collection managers and curators interviewed could mention at least one instructor passionate about historic textiles and clothing, many also discussed the lack of interest or misperceptions expressed by some faculty members within and outside of their departments. Isabel's department included a wide variety of faculty interests and for her the merchandising related faculty 'don't outwardly seem to have a big interest in what we have going on, and they don't possibly see how they could incorporate historic clothing into a class'. Teresa noted that the composition of her department had not remained static over the years, possibly contributing to changes in interest levels and use, and creating a need for the collection to adapt:

> The curricula has changed, the professors obviously have changed. How it is used; how it is perceived to fit into the department has changed. And … we have to continue to make it relevant to the courses that are currently being offered, and also for the type of research that people want to do.

For Pearl, the disinterest was more systematic and staked on the use of resources by the collection.

> There are certain faculty in our department that disagree philosophically that we should even have a collection. There's always politics around resources and there are certain faculty in our department that don't like that we exist, so it would sort of be futile to try to reach out them and encourage them

to use the collection, when they disagree that there could even be fashion history.

She continued, 'there's history in our department in particular, certain politics, where faculty don't think that we should exist, because we should be fashions about the future, and not about the past … Those kind of ingrained political issues are a hindrance'. The focus on the future instead of the past was also mentioned by Cecily,

> There's an emphasis, or I guess this misperception, that because it's old, it has no place in a design class where they're trying to push cutting edge. But I don't agree with that because a lot of these historical techniques are things that we still use in design today…

The lack of interest, use, and ultimate support for the collections was frustrating for many of the curators and collection managers because they had spent their careers studying historic textiles and clothing. However, the importance of use was undergirded by Roseanne, a part time staff member, 'for administrators, if the faculty are not supporting it, are not using it, then the administrators are not going to see the value either'. Finding opportunities for correcting these misperceptions was vital to the curators and collection managers.

Faculty That Used the Collections

For the nine instructors that utilized the collection in their teaching there were two primary themes discovered: 1) knowledge of the collection processes gained through prior experiences and 2) unequivocal understanding of the benefits of using the collection in teaching dress related classes (**Table 2**).

Indeed, seven of the nine faculty members had gained experience with the collection through previous undergraduate, graduate, informal, or professional exposure to historic textiles. Two of those interviewed stated they learned of the collection during the hiring interview.

Table 2: Description of faculty that utilize the collection in their teaching.

Name	Courses Taught	Introduction to Collection
Jeanine	Apparel design, forecasting	Undergraduate work
Kaylin	History, textile science	Undergraduate work
Laura	Fashion illustration	Undergraduate work
Randy	Fabric design	Informal courses with faculty
Kimberly	Introduction to fashion	Graduate work
Lucille	Apparel design	Previous career
Maureen	History	Previous career
Alex	Functional design	During interview
Luella	Product development	During interview

Jeanine stated, 'Basically as soon as I was hired, I knew about it…. I also graduated from a university in which we had a collection, which was also pretty heavily used'. Kaylin expressed that

> as a student, I knew it existed, because I did my undergrad here. So I did undergrad research and things for class projects. I took the museum studies class. So I kind of had a leg up, because I already knew what was here and what we had. Especially in terms of teaching, I teach many of the classes that I took, so I remember them from that time.

While previous exposure to a historic costume and textile collection is undoubtedly helpful, each of the respondents unequivocally expressed the importance of the garments in their teaching. The courses that they taught and used the collection ranged from the applications of dress history and apparel design, to product development and textile science. Kimberly, an instructor that graduated from the program in which she currently teaches, indicated,

> It was a very natural thing [to use the collection] when I started teaching because it was just a very powerful thing for me as a student. It was studying, you know, being able to have this hands-on with these garments really all of a sudden I was like 'I see how that comes together and then I'd go home and I'd try it on my own machine.' So for me, it's a very important teaching tool.

Laura, an instructor of fashion illustration likened the use of the collection to the paparazzi:

> We're seeing pieces that have unusual construction and it's just opening up their eyes. We're like the paparazzi. It definitely enriches. It gets them rolling…. They can research online; they can go shopping on their own. They can look at books and publications, but seeing in real life the garments, and having someone point out the great detail, I don't know, it helps a lot with supplementing the design process.

The idea that the garments helped enrich the process of learning was a consistent theme. Kaylin stated, 'you can talk and describe, you know, what a certain silhouette is or what a particular style is, or how they changed, but until you can actually see it doesn't usually resonate… It helps to reinforce those ideas, as well as different techniques and just kind of overall stories as well'. In teaching a functional design course, Alex learned 'that in many cases students never have seen that kind of unique clothing that's already in the market. They may have seen in the movie or may have seen online as a photo, but they never touched, never visually investigated the clothing we are studying'.

For Randy, unless they live in a big city or have a special museum nearby, students don't typically have the

opportunity to see historic textiles and ethnographic objects in person. Once they do view these objects, students 'can appreciate what's in the books better because they've seen originals before and transfer is there. I think twenty-first century people, not just students, just to see the quality of a textile in person, is a revelation'. The element of seeing and touching in our technology obsessed society was viewed as a positive aspect contributing to student retention and higher order thinking skills. According to Kimberly,

> So many students are just on the web, on the web, on the web. And when I see them in the [collection], opening up a book, flipping through the pages; that's part of your journey, that process of discovery, that sense that you have when you're amongst material. How do you discover something? It's a navigation skill. That's very relatable to the real world. Because whether you're in a library, whether you're at a fabric store, whether you're there, whether you're in a thrift store, your ability to navigate through content in real space, I would say has a lot to do with success. Because you've got to have a sensitivity, a finesse, but you also have to have some filters, you know?

Faculty That Do Not Use the Collection

For the faculty that probably should use the collection because of the subjects that they taught, but did not, there were two major themes: 1) Real or perceived lack of physical and/or digital access and 2) knowledge of the limited collection staff time (**Table 3**).

Related to theme one, Eva, a fashion illustration instructor noted,

> This is no one's fault and I don't even know how you would fix this, but I wish there was easier access to it. I respect very old garments and I respect museums that take care of them. I don't personally feel that most of our collection should be preserved the way that it's being preserved. Students should be able to walk in and touch them and look at them and really know more about our collection. I am not a historian, so I know when I say things like that, I see my colleagues' faces just twinge up and

Table 3: Description of faculty that do not utilize the collection in their teaching.

Name	Courses Taught	Major Barrier Identified
Christina	Fashion fundamentals and history	Lack of access
Eva	Apparel design	Scheduling
Hannah	Apparel design	Lack of access
Maddie	Product design	Scheduling
Mackenzie	Merchandising	Lack of access
Paulina	Fashion illustration	Lack of access

just be like, 'oh could you imagine?' But I'm also a practical person and I understand that there are some that need to be preserved and some that I really think could be more valuable to students being used and touched and disintegrating over time than sitting in a box and never opened.

In addition to lack of physical access to the collection, each of the six interviewed mentioned the lack of a digital presence of the historic costume and textile collection as a detriment to their use. According to Hannah, an instructor of fashion design, the lack of access related to both not knowing what was digitized but also knowing how to access it once it was in electronic format. For Paulina, the digitization was not only important from the instructor viewpoint, but also for the students' reference. She stated, 'specifically for the illustration class, I hope we can have some images online. We can retrieve or we can check online because, you know, just one time viewing of the garments, maybe you immediately forget in five minutes…'

When the possibility of online databases was brought up with Christina, an instructor of fashion fundamentals and dress history, she stated ecstatically, 'if it was archived online, and I could access from our library, electronic resource, that would be huge. I could be like I want this and that and then the collection manager could go in and have somebody pull'.

The second theme was one that acknowledged the limits of faculty and staff time devoted to the collection. Maddie said:

> Just talking about our costume collection, if I knew there was one person down there or in charge there who would do nothing else than get the university or whomever else access to it, I would definitely do that more. Right now, I probably would wait for a special occasion or I would limit myself to… to not ask for too much, because I know [the collection manager] would do it. She would go out of her way to show and make time and then I know she just spent another hour or two hours with me and my class, and it just meant that she couldn't get other work done… So if I knew there was a person who would do nothing else but that, I probably would use it more.

Although Eva, a faculty member teaching apparel design courses, had occasionally used the collection in her courses, this use was not consistent. She said, 'I'll be honest with you. A lot of times it's just a matter of our schedules. I think that the faculty member only has a certain amount of time devoted to the collection and so it's literally, it's no other reason than my schedule and her schedule'.

Christina talked about lack of access as related to limited collection manager staff time. She stated,

> In order for me to get the garments, I've got to reach out to [the collection manager], set up a time, and then she needs to get there and then give me the garments. So there's this schedule, because she has

to go and pull for the particular decade that I'm working on. And she doesn't… how would she know really what I'm looking for if I'm not right there?

Summarizing this theme in the words of Hannah, 'I should probably know more (laughs). I think I probably personally need to make arrangements and connections, and figure out a way that it would be feasible for students to use the resources of the collection. I guess just even inquire if it is feasible, time wise with the staff at the collection'.

It is to be noted that even for faculty that used the collection, time, or more specifically the requirement for advanced planning was an often-mentioned theme related to scheduling. According to Jeanine, an instructor that uses the collection in teaching apparel design and fashion forecasting, 'I will say that it does take an effort to contact the curator of the collection and say here I want to have these things available. I can't go in and just pull things myself'. Laura, an instructor of fashion illustration who uses the collection, indicated that the only thing that prevents her from using the collection more is 'that there are never enough hours in the day to fit everything you want to do in'. She continued, 'and I'm a parent so I'm also a taxi driver for my children, and homework helper, and chef and all those things. So of course I'd want to take advantage of you know everything, and it's nice to know it's there, so when I finally can put aside, carve out some time, I can make an appointment with [the curator] and research things'.

Discussion

Collection managers and curators cannot work to resolve roadblocks to faculty member use of collections if they remain unspoken by their colleagues. From the interview transcripts with the collection managers and curators (n = 15) at twelve institutions, there were four possible areas that limited the use of the collections. These included: 1) ambiguous roles and invisible collections, 2) continual need for collection management maintenance, 3) lack of process and access to the collections, and 4) misperceptions about the collections. The first three themes could be remedied in part by following the advice outlined by Welters and Ordoñez (2011) to develop a mission statement to define the collection and provide direction for its growth, management, and use; to hire a permanent, full-time manager; and for the collections to have in place an organizational system to facilitate record collection holdings and augmenting retrieval of objects.

The misperceptions of faculty members may be an outcome of the above mentioned problems: lack of mission, lack of a dedicated individual to manage and lead the collection, and lack of clarity in policies related to accessioning, deaccessioning, and garment use for classroom teaching, research, and exhibitions. However, it is clear that these steps may be easier to talk about than to complete. Since budgets are often a constraint within higher education, perhaps administrators could consider hiring a full-time individual or buying- out an existing faculty member's time for a set period to accomplish specific

goals with short- and long-term importance. In this manner, the curator or collection manager might have setaside, devoted time to both conceptually and physically care for the collection and its objects without the multiple demands of other departmental work such as teaching and service commitments. As is currently the case with many of the curators and collection managers interviewed, there is little time to complete the day-to-day tasks associated with collection maintenance let alone longer-term planning. As such, curators and collection managers would be wise to concentrate their efforts ensuring the objects in the collection are of the quality, and meet the desired needs of their institutions. Caring for a well-selected and curated collection seems much more valuable than spending the time, energy, and money on a mismatch of objects that do not fulfill the department, college, or university missions and visions or the day-to-day teaching needs of the faculty. Faculty associated with collections may also consider conducting research on objects in their collection or incorporating teaching projects using the collection into their more advanced undergraduate and graduate courses to complete the valuable work of collection research. As faculty member Christina noted, many pieces in the collection simply were not relevant to her teaching: 'I've kind of set it up to where I really only pull a handful of things, it's not like, you know, the dream collection'. Judicious collecting, better aligned with the curriculum, might then motivate teachers like Christina to expand their use.

For faculty members that used the collection (n = 9), there were two major themes: previous knowledge of the collection and the importance of material culture to student knowledge and understanding. Based on these findings, it seems crucial for collection managers and curators to elaborate upon the benefits of the collection to student learning through any means possible. These promotional efforts might include visual and oral advertising, creation of white papers or short reports detailing the use of the collections in different classes, and the collection of student feedback regarding the benefits of the collection in students' own words. Cain's (2010: 197) recommendations from the fields of history and biology are also applicable here; he stressed the importance of a dialogue about obstacles and objectives in the interactions between collection managers and educators. Furthermore, as Simpson and Hammond (2012: 76) have asserted, the onus may be on collection managers and curators to identify 'new creative uses' for collection objects. If instructors are deterred by a lack of knowledge of collection holdings, such increased efforts could make the use of objects by those within the discipline as well as those outside of it seem less daunting. Collection managers and curators may find a willing audience (and powerful allies) outside of their programs and departments in which internal politics can play a part in instructors' lack of use. According to faculty member Aileen, faculty members in art history, history, anthropology, theater, and women's studies departments often serve as committee members on undergraduate honors and graduate student theses committees. The student work using the collection then becomes a platform

in which to educate others around campus about the resource and specific collection holdings.

Barriers as identified by those that did not use the collection ($n = 6$) included lack of access and difficulty in scheduling time to use the collections. While there are obvious barriers to placing an entire collection online (time, money, and inaccurate records being only a few significant obstacles) perhaps collection managers and curators could select their best or most representative textiles and clothing items to appear on a searchable website. If that is not possible, development of a web page with selected objects and full provenance might be a possible manner in which to introduce reluctant faculty to the collection. As Cain (2010: 199) pointed out, the use of a collection's digital images can be mutually beneficial: 'I can use images from your collection to promote your collection', thereby helping to address the lack of awareness many curators and collection managers bemoan. And, as he continued, 'ask me to register my use'. Collections often need to quantify use to university administrators. Devising systems of measurement and assessment for digital access, while initially time-consuming for collections, may have advantages in the long-term. Demonstrating the varied use of the collection's physical and digital assets may help justify its importance and presence.

Often times those instructors that did not use the collection mentioned a passion in their teaching or research. Identifying the one area that these faculty members would like to explore (a design detail such as darts or zippers as used in functional design for example) may be a valuable way to introduce the collection to this reluctant audience. Similarly to the idea of Taylor (1998) that not all know how to teach with objects, testimonials of the importance of historic costume and textile collections from successful and prominent alumni may move the needle towards acceptance of the resources needed for collection maintenance and growth.

Conclusions

Despite the amount of resources needed to properly support a historic costume collection, there is an overabundance of empirical and anecdotal evidence that material objects enrich scholarly interpretation, furthering our knowledge of individuals, cultures, and societies (Riello 2011). Learning with and from objects enhances engagement, retention, and contributes to students' understanding of a wide variety of disciplines, including history, theater, fashion design, and anthropology (Gam and Banning 2012; Marcketti 2011).

The collection managers, curators, faculty who used the collection, and faculty that did not use the collection provided first-hand perspectives to the varied ways collection objects can be used to support teaching, research, and community engagement of an institution. They also provided evidence of structural and systematic roadblocks that limit the use of collections. Those working in collections may consider organizational theory to help promote their collections. According to organizational theory, knowledge includes both declarative knowledge (facts) and procedural knowledge (skills and routines) (Fiol and Lyles 1985). The declarative or explicit knowledge

is formally structured through scientific work and findings, whereas procedural or tacit knowledge is gained informally from personal experiences through observations and practice (Nonaka *et al.* 2000). It seems from the positive experiences by those that used the collection, the more that we can get our faculty acclimated to and used to our museum systems the better armed they are at knowing what we have to offer. Collection managers and curators can strive to make the declarative information regarding the collections more easily accessible via digital means, while at the same time, sharing the personal and professional benefits of using the collection within the teaching and learning environment. Through such efforts, collection use, as curator Cecily put it, might be made to 'seem like an opportunity instead of a burden'. If possible, continuing conversations on promoting use can occur at professional disciplinary conferences such as the International Textile and Apparel Association and Costume Society of America.

Author Information

Sara Marcketti, Ph.D., is a Professor in the Apparel, Events, and Hospitality Management Department and Director of the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching. Her published scholarship includes co-authorship of *Survey of Historic Costume* with Phyllis Tortora, *Textiles* with Sara Kadolph, and *Knock it Off: A History of Design Piracy in the US Women's Ready To Wear Apparel Industry* with Jean Parsons. In 2018, Marcketti was named a Fellow of the Costume Society of America.

Jennifer Farley Gordon, Ph.D., is a lecturer in Apparel, Merchandising, and Design at Iowa State University. She formerly worked as an assistant curator at The Museum at FIT, where she curated or co-curated a number of exhibitions in the Museum's Fashion and Textile History Gallery. She is the co-author of *Sustainable Fashion: Past, Present, and Future* (Bloomsbury, 2015).

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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