

# **Curricular Content, Pathway Affiliation, and Selected Characteristics of Teachers of Secondary Fashion Courses**

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*Teachers from three Midwestern states who taught clothing and textiles content within the previous two years were surveyed in this pilot study to explore the extent of coverage of five subject areas in secondary-level fashion courses. Pathway affiliation, teacher age, length of time teaching, and fashion industry experience, respectively, to the extent of subject coverage were examined. The subject area covered most extensively was “apparel or other textile product construction or alteration.” No difference in the extent of subject coverage between teachers of pathway-affiliated and pathway-unaffiliated courses was found. While neither teacher age nor teaching experience was related to the extent of coverage for any of the subject areas studied, teacher fashion industry experience was positively related to coverage of the subjects “fashion design or illustration” and “fashion merchandising or general apparel-related topics.”*

Family and consumer sciences (FCS) is part of Career and Technical Education (CTE), which prepares high school students for employment or further education in a career field upon graduation (Brand et al., 2013; Palombit, 2019). To achieve this goal, CTE employs career pathways, a series of high school courses as well as other developmental activities, such as work-based learning and Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) involvement, in specific career areas. Likewise, FCS teachers and administrators have been called upon to frame coursework within FCS’s various content areas into career pathways as a means of preparing students for related careers and college programs of study (Rehm, 2009).

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) noted that career readiness incorporates three important skill areas: core academic skills, employability skills, and technical, job-specific skills (ACTE, 2010). While FCS coursework may certainly help develop skills in all these areas, its focus on technical skills within a specific career area makes FCS coursework unique. In the case of clothing and textiles, students can acquire technical skills in garment construction as part of a pathway to a career or higher education in fashion. Within the Framework for FCS in CTE, “Apparel & Textile Merchandising & Production” and “Fashion Design” pathways are listed within the “Visual Arts & Design” career field (LEAD FCS, n.d.). Pathways leading to fashion-related occupations may be found among multiple CTE career clusters, including “Arts, AV Technology and Communications” (Advance CTE, 2023a), “Human Services” (Advance CTE, 2023b), and “Marketing” (Advance CTE, 2023c).

As a discipline, FCS evolves as individual, familial, and societal needs change over time (Handy, et al., 2021). For the clothing and textiles or fashion content area in FCS, social change as well as the increased emphasis on preparing students for gainful employment and/or higher education has put its curriculum under scrutiny from faculty and administrators (Coffeen & Bartley, 2019; Brandes & Garner, 1997), both from within and outside FCS (Werhan et al., 2004). The construction of textile-based products has traditionally been a mainstay of the clothing and textiles curriculum in FCS secondary education (Montgomery, 2006). However, its continued usefulness to homemaking, let alone college and career preparation, has been called into question. For area of study 16.0, “Textiles, Fashion, and Apparel,” the *FCS National Standards 3.0* include a much wider range of competencies beyond skills in garment construction (NASAFACS, 2018-2028). Teachers may draw upon topics from the broad subject areas of industry career analyses, textile and apparel product evaluation, apparel design and production, and the merchandising of textile and apparel products in developing their fashion curriculums. Given their limited time with students, teachers must decide which topics to include and how extensively to cover them. Course pathway affiliation may place more pressure on teachers to justify their curricula in terms of preparing students for careers or college study, and subsequently influences what they choose to cover in their courses.

Given the focus of FCS toward college and career readiness as well as the debate around sewing’s relevance in the FCS classroom, the question of what content FCS high school teachers currently cover in their fashion classrooms arises, along with what might be shaping their choice of content. Identifying factors that shape fashion curricular content may help school administrators to identify obstacles as well as catalysts to ensuring that FCS high school curricula meet the goals of college and career readiness.

## **Review of Literature**

### **Fashion Education at the Secondary Level**

Few scholarly publications have addressed the FCS fashion curriculum at the secondary level. Those that have tended to focus on whether clothing construction should be retained as part of the high school curriculum, sometimes for the purpose of determining whether the subject should be retained as part of the university FCS teacher-preparation curriculum. As the primary content of high school FCS fashion coursework, sewing has presented the subject area with challenges. Among these is the view that sewing has outlived its usefulness in homemaking, and today is more of a hobby or craft (Brandes & Garner, 1997; Lee, 2002; Werhan, et al., 2004). Sewing is also stigmatized by its association with a dated gender ideology. To many, learning sewing skills may seem inconsistent with contemporary views of women’s roles (Werhan, et al., 2004), further calling its place in secondary education into question.

Despite these challenges, clothing construction has continued to be valued and taught by FCS teachers. In their study of Ohio FCS curricula, Werhan et al. (2004) found that most teachers (83%) included clothing and textiles content in their courses and among those that did, a vast majority included machine sewing (91%). The study’s focus group of FCS professionals unanimously agreed that university FCS teacher-preparation programs should include clothing construction coursework. Similarly, Lee (2002) described a survey of North Carolina FCS teachers who reported that sewing was “among the most important skills to be gained in the study of clothing and textiles” (p. 30). Werhan et al. (2004) observed that the conflicting ideas about the value of teaching sewing presented a dilemma for many new FCS teachers; even if a university teacher-preparation program no longer requires the subject, he or she may still be

expected to teach it. The new laboratory management standard of the *National Standards for Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences* (Handy, et al., 2021; NATEFACS, 2020) would seem to suggest that laboratory spaces, including those used in clothing and textiles courses, continue to be an important component in FCS (Jensen, 2020, as cited in Handy, et al., 2021).

Still, the challenge to teaching clothing construction is such that FCS professionals have been moved to write in its defense. Brandes and Garner (1997) argued students entering baccalaureate programs in clothing and textiles are underprepared without having had clothing construction in high school. They also pointed out that the 1995 International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA) core competencies for baccalaureate programs in clothing and textiles drew on content introduced in clothing construction coursework, particularly the competencies in the areas of “Merchandising/Design/Production” (p. 64). While the 2021 ITAA meta-goals have since provided an updated guide for four-year baccalaureate clothing and textile programs, “textile and apparel production processes” listed under “Industry and Business Knowledge” within the “Core Knowledge Content” meta-goal would still seem to directly reference an understanding of clothing construction (ITAA, n.d.). Similarly, Coffeen and Bartley (2019) argued that clothing construction knowledge is necessary for a diversity of fashion industry careers. In making the case that FCS classes “are crucial to postsecondary success as they strive to equip students with the knowledge and skills to succeed in their careers and in life” (p. 37), Werhan (2019) profiled a young woman whose high school FCS courses in clothing construction and design paved the way for her college studies in fashion and helped establish her in her career as a tailor/fitter with Nordstrom.

### **Fashion Education at the Post-Secondary Level**

Because few studies have focused on fashion curricula at the secondary level, looking at studies examining college-level curricula may prove useful. Like secondary FCS programs, this research has been motivated by the need for university programs to remain relevant and demonstrate continued effectiveness in preparing students for employment. In their study of US textiles and clothing four-year academic programs, Laughlin and Kean (1995) identified seven common content areas: “Beginning Textiles, Color and Design Principles, Socio-psychological Aspects of Clothing, History of Clothing, Cultural Aspects of Dress, Merchandise Operations, and Fashion Theory” (p. 195). They suggested that these subjects represented “a core curricular content in textiles and clothing” (p. 188).

Other studies of college curriculums have focused on certain stakeholders’ perceptions of competencies graduates needed for employment in the field. Garner and Buckley (1988) created an inventory of 136 content elements representing “textiles, clothing construction, fashion merchandising, social science aspects of apparel including historic costume, apparel design and selection including accessories, professional preparedness, textile and apparel industry and economics, and support courses outside of apparel” (p. 33). They then surveyed Illinois apparel retailers, clothing and textiles faculty, and an Illinois university’s clothing and textiles program’s alums to measure their perceptions of the importance of the various curricular content to job performance in “fashion marketing, with emphasis on retail merchandising” (p. 32). Based on these ratings, the authors ranked individual content elements in terms of the amount of priority each should be given in curriculums for retail merchandising positions.

Not surprisingly, the fashion content recommended for highest priority was from the merchandising area. Garner and Buckley (1988) stated that “many of the traditional clothing and textiles content areas” (p. 39), including basic clothing construction and textiles, were among curriculum elements that were rated as being “neither very important nor of no importance” (p.

39). However, topics relevant to clothing construction, textiles, as well as other content areas besides merchandising specifically were ranked among the second priority group.

More recently, Frazier and Cheek (2016) measured 109 supervising retail managers' perceptions of competencies graduates would need to be successful in entry level merchandising positions. They used the 2008 baccalaureate program meta-goals established by the ITAA as a basis for their instrument. Based on their findings, the authors concluded that soft skills or boundary-spanning skills (e.g., leadership, communication, teamwork) were valued over discipline-specific content.

It should be noted that studies by Garner and Buckley (1988) and Frazier and Cheek (2016) focused on skills needed for retail merchandising positions. As Frazier and Cheek (2016) suggest, competencies employers consider important in graduates would likely differ depending on the specific fashion industry position. Furthermore, research published by Garner and Buckley (1988) and Laughlin and Keen (1995) is dated and does not reflect the development of university-level fashion curricula in recent years. In sum, in terms of implications for fashion curricula at the secondary level, some evidence suggests that fashion merchandising might be the most valuable content for students entering retail merchandising positions or pursuing post-secondary education in that area.

In seeking guidance for curriculum planning, university programs may refer to the aforementioned ITAA meta-goals, which have been available since 1995, but have since been updated in 2008 and again in 2021. The three meta-goals include "Core Knowledge Content," "Curricular Elements," and "Professional Competencies," each of which consists of diverse knowledge content (e.g., the Core Knowledge Content meta-goals consists of specific content related to "Textile and Apparel Product Knowledge," "Industry and Business Knowledge," and "Human Interactions with Products and Processes"). The Textile and Apparel Programs Accreditation Commission (TAPAC) uses these meta-goals for program accreditation purposes (ITAA, n.d.).

### **Factors Shaping Fashion Curricular Content**

Deliberations over appropriate curricular content raises the question of what shapes this content; the literature, however, provides scant information on this topic. In their study of university curricula, Laughlin and Kean (1995) stated that content area coverage was related to undergraduate enrollment as well as number of faculty; larger programs tended to offer more areas of content. Werhan et al. (2004) found that teachers ranked "student interest" and "personal interest" highest in terms of motivations of Ohio FCS teachers for including clothing and textiles in their curricula. Similarly, in Murphey and Stewart's (1990) study of five home economics teachers' clothing and textiles teaching practices, teachers identified student needs and interests as driving factors in shaping their curricula. While they referred to "curriculum guides," they ultimately used their own judgment in deciding what to include in their classroom instruction. The authors noted that "This was especially true of those with more years of teaching experience" (p. 28). Furthermore, those teachers who devoted the most class time to sewing were also the most experienced teachers and expressed their own personal enjoyment of sewing.

Given the debate over appropriate fashion curricular content, the question of what content high school fashion teachers were including in their courses, as well as what things may be influencing their choice of content emerged and guided this research. Specifically, the purpose of this pilot study was to see, in the context of the secondary fashion classroom, 1) to what extent different content was being covered, 2) if content coverage differed between teachers of

pathway-affiliated and pathway-unaffiliated courses, and 3) whether relationships existed between content coverage and the teacher characteristics of age, length of time teaching, and fashion industry experience.

## **Methods**

### **Instrument**

A Qualtrics electronic questionnaire was administered to teachers who had taught a fashion course within the past two years were surveyed in this research. A fashion course was defined as a “clothing construction, textiles, apparel design, fashion merchandising, or other fashion industry-related course” in this study. Respondents answered the survey questions as they pertained only to those courses they taught within that two-year period. This ensured the data reflected teachers’ most current teaching strategies while allowing time for course rotation.

The questionnaire was designed to assess 1) whether respondents’ fashion courses were pathway affiliated, 2) specific topics they covered in their courses and the extent to which they covered them, and 3) demographic and other descriptive information about the respondents relative to their educational and professional backgrounds. The questionnaire was pretested with two experienced high school FCS teachers who taught courses with clothing and textiles content.

To measure the extent to which teachers covered different topics in their fashion courses, CTE course descriptions from the Illinois State Board of Education (n.d.) were used to identify specific topics for the questionnaire. Topics were grouped into the five subject areas of “textiles,” “apparel or other textile product construction or alteration,” “fashion design or illustration,” “fashion merchandising or general apparel-related topics,” and “career exploration and preparation.” The number of topics per subject area varied, ranging from three to nine. Respondents indicated the extent to which they covered each topic within the five subject areas using the following scale: 0 – *did not cover*, 1 – *slight coverage*, 2 – *slight to moderate coverage*, 3 – *moderate coverage*, 4 – *moderate to extensive coverage*, and 5 – *extensive coverage*. For each subject area, respondents could write in up to two of their own “other” topics and rate the extent to which they covered each.

Finally, multiple choice items recorded respondents’ gender, age, undergraduate field of study, post baccalaureate field of study, and number of years teaching high school fashion courses. Participants were also asked to indicate their amount of fashion industry work experience using a 6-point scale where 1 – *no experience*, 2 – *minimal experience*, 3 – *minimal to moderate experience*, 4 – *moderate experience*, 5 – *moderate to extensive experience*, and 6 – *extensive experience*, specifying that “‘fashion industry-related employment’ might include working in fashion retail, manufacturing, design, or promotional positions, but does not include education for this question. ‘Fashion’ may include apparel, fashion accessories, fabrics, or home fashions (e.g., textiles for the home or home décor).”

### **Sample**

FCS teachers in three Midwestern states were surveyed in this research. At the time of this writing, CTE pathway requirements vary somewhat among these states. Dual credit opportunities with post-secondary partners, work-based learning experiences, sequences of CTE coursework, and participation in CTSO activities are among the more common attributes listed among the state educational agency websites. Furthermore, all three states provide standards or course descriptions for clothing and textile subject matter. These standards/descriptions include knowledge of construction, as well as other competency areas for the apparel industry such as employment opportunities and career paths, design, and merchandising. Finally, all three states

offer post-secondary programs in FCS Education with coursework in clothing and textiles where basic apparel construction is among the course offerings.

Teacher email addresses were identified in school district or high school websites from randomly selected educational regions in each of three different Midwestern states. When possible, teachers of fashion courses were specifically identified. Most of the sample addresses were associated with individuals identified as FCS or CTE teachers, however. The final mailing list included addresses for 316. Following the initial distribution of invitational emails, two successive reminder emails were sent to teachers who had not yet completed the questionnaire, securing a final sample size of 34 usable responses.

The sample respondents were all female, with most being 50 years of age or older (58.8%). A majority had undergraduate degrees in FCS (76.5%), and some graduate-level coursework (70.6%). The most cited area of graduate study was in FCS Education (41.7%).

### **Analysis**

Because the sample size was small ( $N=34$ ), the scales used to measure the dependent variables were ordinal, and the score distributions for those variables were not consistently normally distributed, data were analyzed with non-parametric statistics. For each respondent and each subject area, median scores based on each respondent's ratings of the extent to which various topics were covered were calculated; median scores for each subject area for the entire sample for each topic were also calculated. Topics respondents added as "others" were excluded from these median score calculations due to 1) the tendency for these topics to be redundant with those already appearing in other subject areas and 2) respondents' occasional failure to rate extent of topic coverage in addition to listing the topic.

To assess whether there was a difference in extent of subject area coverage depending on pathway affiliation status for respondents' courses, the authors grouped respondents into two categories, one for those whose courses were not pathway affiliated during the past two years ( $n=23$ ), and the other for those whose courses were pathway affiliated for either part or all of the past two years ( $n=11$ ). For each subject area individually, they used a 2-sided Mann-Whitney U statistic to test the difference in respondent median scores for extent of subject coverage between the two groups.

The authors calculated Spearman rank correlation coefficients to measure the relationships between respondents' extent of coverage for each of the five subject areas and the respondent characteristics of 1) years of teaching high school fashion courses, 2) age, and 3) fashion industry experience, respectively. The significance level was .05 for all analyses.

### **Findings**

For each of the five subject areas, the median scores for the sample as a whole indicate the extent to which the teachers collectively covered these subjects. The subject covered most extensively was "apparel or other textile product construction or alteration" ( $Mdn = 5.00$ ). "Textiles" ( $Mdn = 2.25$ ) and "fashion merchandising or general apparel-related topics" ( $Mdn = 2.00$ ), respectively, followed. Subject areas covered the least of the five included "fashion design or illustration" ( $Mdn = 0.25$ ) and "career exploration and preparation" ( $Mdn = 0.00$ ).

The authors found no significant differences in the extent of subject coverage between the pathway affiliated and unaffiliated groups of teachers (See Table 1). In other words, respondents whose courses were pathway affiliated did not cover any of the five subject areas to a greater or lesser extent than respondents whose courses were pathway unaffiliated.

**Table 1**

*Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test, 2-Sided, for Subject Area Median Scores Across Pathway Affiliation (N=34)*

Subject area	Mdn, pathway affiliated group	Mdn, pathway unaffiliated group	<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>
Textiles	2.00	2.50	138.500	.663
Apparel or textile product construction or alteration	5.00	4.00	94.000	.243
Fashion design or illustration	1.50	0.00	75.000	.060
Fashion merchandising or other general apparel-related topics	2.50	2.00	93.000	.228
Career exploration and preparation	2.00	0.00	75.500	.060

No relationships were found between the extent of subject coverage and respondents' years of teaching high school fashion courses or age, respectively, for any of the five subject areas. The logical positive association between teacher age and years of teaching ( $r_s=.482$ ,  $p=.002$ ) explains the consistency of these findings. However, they found positive relationships between respondent fashion industry experience and extent of subject coverage for “fashion design or illustration” and “fashion merchandising or general apparel-related topics” (see Table 2). In other words, the greater the level of fashion industry experience indicated by the respondents, the greater the extent of coverage for these two subject areas.

**Table 2**

*Spearman Rho Correlation Coefficients, 2-Sided, for Subject Area Median Scores and Fashion Industry Experience (N=34)*

Subject area	$r_s$	<i>p</i>
Textiles	.073	.683
Apparel or textile product construction or alteration	.163	.356
Fashion design or illustration	.403	.018
Fashion merchandising or other general apparel-related topics	.462	.006
Career exploration and preparation	.126	.477

## Discussion

### Extent of Subject Area Coverage by the Sample as a Whole

Findings suggest that the “apparel or other textile product construction or alteration” subject area continues to be an important focus of fashion courses at the high school level. Reported as receiving *extensive* coverage ( $Mdn = 5.00$ ), none of the individual topics within this

subject area had a median score of less than 4.00 out of 5.00. This finding is consistent with studies by Lee (2002) and Werhan et al. (2004), which concluded that clothing construction was still a valued component to high school clothing and textiles programs.

The “textiles” subject area was next in terms of extent of coverage ( $Mdn = 2.25$ ), though only covered to a *slight to moderate* to *moderate* extent. Textiles may have been second in importance because basic knowledge of fabrics is necessary for sewing.

“Fashion merchandising or general apparel-related subjects” was covered to a *slight to moderate* extent ( $Mdn = 2.00$ ). This subject area included a diversity of topics which were either fashion merchandising focused or were relevant to fashion merchandising but did not clearly fit into one of the other four subject areas. Individual topics within this area received between *slight to moderate* and *moderate* coverage ( $Mdn = 2.00 - 2.50$ ), indicating the sample teachers endeavored to address diverse fashion merchandising-related topics in their courses.

The “fashion design and illustration” subject area was rated as receiving between no coverage and *slight coverage* ( $Mdn = 0.25$ ). With the exception of a couple of topics related to elements and principles of design that received *moderate to extensive* coverage ( $Mdn = 4$ ), other topics in this subject area had median scores of 0.00. Finally, the median score for the “career exploration and preparation” subject area indicated essentially no coverage ( $Mdn = 0.00$ ). Though one topic related to exploration of fashion industry careers received *slight to moderate* coverage ( $Mdn = 2.00$ ), the remaining topics had median scores of 0.00.

In sum, a fairly traditional, construction-focused approach to teaching fashion-related courses seemed to be maintained at the secondary level in this sample. Findings also suggest that teachers explored diverse content relative to fashion beyond construction, albeit to a comparatively limited extent.

### **Pathway Affiliation and Extent of Subject Coverage**

Pathway affiliation would seem to potentially shape FCS fashion course content. Teachers may be more persuaded to include content for which a stronger argument may be made for preparing students for careers and college. For example, one might expect “career exploration and preparation” to receive greater coverage by teachers of pathway-affiliated courses compared to pathway-unaffiliated courses. However, this sample did not show a significant difference in the extent to which the five subject areas were covered when comparing the two groups of teachers. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that differences between the two groups approached significance for the subject areas of “fashion design and illustration” as well as “career exploration and preparation” ( $p = .06$ ) with median scores for subject area coverage being higher for teachers of pathway-affiliated courses (see Table 2).

### **Teacher Characteristics and Extent of Subject Coverage**

Murphey and Stewart (1990) found that more experienced teachers devoted the most class time to sewing, suggesting that longevity in their teaching roles might make teachers more inclined to cover this traditional subject. However, our findings did not indicate that this was the case; neither teacher age nor length of time teaching fashion courses was related to coverage of any of the five subject areas. However, the authors found the teacher fashion industry employment experience to be related to extent of coverage for the subject areas of “fashion merchandising or other general apparel-related topics” and “fashion design or illustration.” The increased coverage of these two subject areas by high school teachers who had greater self-reported fashion industry experience may indicate that such experience provides a heightened



awareness of their relevancy to today's high school fashion student. Students may benefit in terms of career and college readiness from the broader exposure to fashion topics that appears to be associated with greater teacher industry experience.

### **Limitations and Conclusion**

This study is limited by its small sample size as well as the number of independent variables examined in attempting to identify factors shaping subject area coverage by high school fashion teachers. Other factors may also come in to play. For example, access to resources (e.g., technology) as well as the amount of class time teachers have to cover fashion-related content is likely to impact the extent to which they cover difference subjects, though these factors were not addressed in this study.

Another limitation concerned the questionnaire design. The list of topics respondents rated for extent of subject coverage were not exhaustive and did not represent all fashion content areas found among the textiles, fashion, and apparel competencies listed in the FCS National Standards. While the opportunity for respondents to list their own topics was provided, this did not add to the topics already listed in the questionnaire.

Findings from this study support the idea that FCS high school teachers still cover sewing more than any other subject related to fashion. Sewing, or rather the process of producing a garment, is knowledge that is useful if not necessary for certain fashion industry careers (Coffeen & Bartley, 2019). Garment production is also a subject that is reflected in the National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences (2018-2028) and the 2021 ITAA meta-goals (n.d.).

However, as mentioned, the FCS National Standards list a diversity of learning outcomes pertaining to "Textiles, Fashion, and Apparel" beyond clothing construction, though some of these may be gained through that experience (e.g., "evaluate quality of textiles, fashion, and apparel construction and fit") (NASAFACS, 2018-2028). The career pathways identified by the *Framework for Family & Consumer Sciences in CTE* (LEAD FCS, n. d.) include occupations that may not require garment construction knowledge (e.g., apparel merchandising) or would be better served through other types of learning activities. The same holds true for fashion-related careers identified by the CTE career clusters and pathways (e.g., visual merchandise manager, store manager, buyer) (Advance CTE, 2023 a,b,c).

This raises the question of why sewing still seems to be the predominant content for FCS clothing and textile courses. Sewing may be an effective starting point in education leading to careers in fashion because it involves the engaging, hand-on types of learning associated with CTE. Perhaps, as Werhan et al. state (2004), new FCS teachers may be expected to make effective use of existing, expensive sewing laboratories. However, in creating effective pathways to post-secondary fashion programs or industry careers, teachers, with the support of their administrators, might consider hands-on learning activities beyond sewing that will expose students to different aspects of the industry as well as serve as a more general foundation for post-secondary education in fashion. Given the constraints teachers face in terms of the amount of time they have with students, FCS professional educational organizations might provide teachers with guidance on which subjects should receive priority in developing pathways to fashion careers.

The relationships found between teacher fashion industry experience and extent of coverage for two subject areas suggests that greater teacher fashion industry experience is associated with greater coverage of diverse subjects. More industry exposure might help FCS teachers approach fashion content from a broader perspective. Administrators might consider this in their goal of recruiting as well as retaining high quality FCS teachers (Handy et al., 2021).

Strengthening teacher fashion industry exposure may be a useful strategy for helping high school curriculums address more of the competencies listed for the clothing and textiles area in the FCS National Standards, which in turn would address more of the fashion career pathways identified in the FCS and CTE career clusters (Advance CTE, 2023a,b,c; LEAD FCS, n.d.).

In place of or in addition to prior employment in the industry, administrators may enhance the quality of their FCS instruction by facilitating professional development opportunities for teachers, as recommended in Handy et al. (2021). Through release time to visit and study places of fashion business, teachers could gain insight into current industry practices, which in turn would guide them in implementing relevant learning experiences in the classroom. FCS programs might utilize advisory boards that include industry professionals to help identify content that would be most useful to students anticipating careers in fashion store or department management, buying, product development, etc. At the teacher preparation stage, fashion industry field trips and internships may help prepare student teachers for more effective fashion instruction by giving them first-hand experience from which to draw in developing their own curriculums.

This pilot study should provide impetus for further exploration of current fashion curriculum content at the secondary level, as well as the factors that shape it. Continued research efforts in this area may help identify ways to facilitate high school fashion programs' ability to meet the FCS National Standards and the technical, job-specific skills necessary for college and career readiness (ACTE, 2010).

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