



CLEANING THE TEXTILE CLOSET: STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

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Even though the introductory textile three-hour lecture course is filled to the rim with content, we decided to challenge the students to apply their new textile knowledge and help organize the swatch closet at the same time. The objectives were for students to identify characteristics of particular textiles and assemble a library of fabrics.

The textiles instructors sorted samples into fiber/construction/finish groups. Five samples were then randomly chosen and put into large manila envelopes. Students worked in pairs to identify fabric name, fiber content, yarn structure, construction, yarn count, finishes, and suggested end uses for each swatch in their envelope. They were encouraged to use microscopic examination, textile dictionaries, burn and chemical tests, and the knowledge of their fellow students.

Swatches were then prepared for accession into the library. Students were asked to cut their swatches on grain into 12-inch squares and serge the edges. The data they identified for each swatch were then entered into a Power Point template. Students turned in their swatches, a hard copy of the identifying text, and a diskette. Instructors checked the information for each swatch for accuracy, sorted the samples again, and assigned catalog numbers based on fiber/construction/finish categories. The corrected Power Point templates were then printed onto label paper and affixed to a cardstock header that was folded and stapled over the individual swatch. A cord hanger was incorporated and the swatches were hung on a rack in the textile lab.

Several corrections had to be made, but the students were enthusiastic about the project and could see the practical outcome of their work. Students were graded on correctness and completeness of information, peer evaluation of contribution to the project, and inclusion of all relevant materials.