This is a section from my recent successful job application on how I turned around textiles and integrate technology into the curriculum.

As a Textiles teacher, I create a safe environment that encourages students to take creative risks, immerses them in fashion and design and provides opportunities to successfully and confidently showcase their work. At the commencement of 2012, the numbers of Year 9s and 10s choosing to study sewing as an elective at KC had significantly decreased. Raising the issue with students, I noted the program was stale and found to be boring and irrelevant. Working collaboratively with a colleague, I implemented an overhaul of the subject area, to re-engage the students and meet the needs of the School Business Plan. This began with a change of name to Fashion and Textiles and focused on the 21st century learner. I introduced Avante Garde fashion to the Year 9 students by watching international runway collections and creating a group project. With a focus on sustainability in fashion, and following the complete design process, garments were made of completely recycled materials. Students sourced their materials from home and through a hands-on excursion to REmida Perth Inc. Traditionals sewing techniques such as pleating, lining and inserting zips were still taught but in a garment the students had complete ownership of, instead of a piece of fabric in a folder. One student from each group then modelled the garment at a whole school assembly. The project replicated working in a professional fashion house and demanded students improve their collaboration, cooperation, problem solving and negotiating skills as well as the pace and quality of their sewing. The results were overwhelmingly positive with every student involved in the project choosing to study Fashion and Textiles the following year plus a 150% increase in numbers across all year groups in the subsequent three years. The level of engagement was the biggest indicator of success. Students completely immersed and committed themselves to the task, spending every recess and lunch working in the Textiles room in the fortnight prior to the fashion parade. Through reflection and a desire to improve student outcomes, I have successfully evolved the program by creating opportunities for students to participate in community events. Successes include; being the only school invited to show a collection at The City of Joondalup's Urban Couture Fashion Festival, multiple Apex Fashion awards and two Year 10 students winning the Mandurah Wearable Art competition against professional international artists. The latter was a Victorian Era dress made of over 7000 square tags from used teabags. The students started collecting them as year 7s after watching the initial fashion parade which speaks volumes of the student response to the change in direction of the program.

I embrace and integrate technology in a variety of ways into Home Economics and use it to actively engage my students, teach them to be critical viewers as global digital citizens and open up their world to new innovations. To encourage higher order thinking amongst a group of bright, yet disaffected Year 8 students, I challenged them to create something innovative in concept, design and construction. So, after teaching students how to sew on a button, I posed the question, what if we could make the button? Much discussion, trial and error with traditional materials lead the class to an investigation into the use of 3D printing in textiles. The students designed their own button using the CAD program and made it using the 3D printer. The open ended and student led nature of the project meant they were all completely immersed and engaged the entire time. Their digital literacy improved and the STEM integration allowed solutions they had never before considered.

As a member of the WA Fashion Council, I was invited to participate in the recent Vogue Codes Online Forum. The forum discussed links between the fashion and tech industries and brain stormed ways to increase the number of females pursuing a career in this area. As a teacher of predominately females, I am passionate about girls' education and used the opportunity to promote the endless and exciting possibilities they have before them. To motivate and inspire my students while studying fashion illustration, I live streamed the Paris Haute Couture Fashion Collections on a projected screen in the schools' theatre. Students sat and sketched as the collections unfolded and it completely engaged them in the process. They walked out of the theatre with a greatly increased level of confidence in their designs and abilities and many commented they felt they had just been to Paris for an hour. For a number of socially disadvantaged, fashion obsessed young girls, it opened the door to a previously unseen world. Afterwards, we compared and contrasted the Instagram images released by the fashion houses and the members of the audience, looking at them with a critical eye. Through complete immersion in a medium with which the students are very comfortable, the level of discussion and analysis was greatly above the expected level for their age group.