Looking Sideways: Textiles
'Looking sideways' describes ways to develop links with other subjects in the curriculum.

1. Understanding the user

History
Your students can use their study of history to gain insight into life in times past and the products that were then available to meet people's needs and wants. People's basic needs have not changed through the decades but what they can use to meet those needs depends on the technology available at the time and how accessible it was to particular groups of people. People have always worn clothes and portraits from the past can tell us much about the way textiles were used especially for those who were wealthy or privileged in some way. To find out about the clothing of ordinary people it is often necessary to use written descriptions from the time in question.

English
Your students can use fictional accounts of living now and in the past to gain insights into peoples needs and wants.

2. Briefs and specifications

Your students will have to design experiments in science lessons and will develop a list of criteria that an experiment should meet in order for it to be a valid and reliable investigation. There are parallels here with developing a specification in design & technology.

3. Generating design ideas

Art
Your students who study art will already have considerable experience of using observational and investigative drawing. Ask them to show you, and each other, their sketchbooks.

4. Developing design ideas

English
Your students will be used to drafting, redrafting and refining pieces of writing in English lessons. This is not dissimilar to developing design ideas. Talk to your English teacher colleagues with a view to finding out how you could reinforce each other's work in this area.

5. Communicating design ideas

English
Your students will have had considerable practice at writing instructional materials as part of their work in English. You can capitalise on this in developing the text to be included as information to support those who will use a product.

6. Evaluating design ideas

History
Those students that study history will have the opportunity to evaluate the impact of technologies at particular periods in time e.g. the industrial revolution in Victorian times, the information technology revolution in modern times. They can use the evaluation techniques they learn in design & technology to inform this work.