

# THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

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## I

### A TEST OF GOOD HOME ECONOMICS TEACHING

DO OUR PRESENT DAY METHODS OF HOME ECONOMICS TEACHING FUNCTION IN THE LIVES OF OUR STUDENTS?

The purpose of home economics education in our school is twofold: (1) to train teachers of home economics, and (2) to prepare for the vocation of home making, in accordance with the provisions of the Smith Hughes Law.

In this important period of transition and reconstruction, the home economics educator finds herself confronted by some such problems as these: Are we giving our girls work that will function in their lives, and the lives of those whom they will influence; are we helping them in the development of certain standards and judgments or are we imparting a certain amount of information, skill and technique about problems which may or may not function actively in their lives at all?

Many a college or normal graduate closes the door of her school behind her laden with note books bearing a record of her past years of endeavor, and enters upon her new field of labor, which may be a small rural community in the heart of a prosperous farming section, a bleak rugged mountain district, or a progressive, alert industrial center, with the selfsame note books still under her arm, and from which she soon proceeds to draw all information, whether or not it be suited to the community or the lives of the students.

Are we, then, training our teachers to meet the needs of their children, to adapt their work to the age, ability, and knowledge of the child? Are we helping our girls to develop judgments that will cause them to go into their respective communities and discover the industrial needs of each girl in her own home and her own community?

"Since the civilized home is the highest product of civilization," says Miss Ravenhill, "the sole test for the efficiency of our home economics methods must ever be the quality of human material produced in these homes."

The instinct of imitation is strong in the child—so strong that every teacher of home economics should be an example of what she teaches. "Clothes do not make the man, but they make him look a lot better after he is made." They give self-reliance. Every teacher or successful business woman must be well dressed if she is to measure up to her full capacity for success. The home economics teacher must live the health principles she teaches. "Cleanliness costs, but it is worth the price." A large percentage of illness comes from unwise eating and lack of sleep. The value of simple, out-of-doors recreation may readily be reflected in a cheerful, buoyant manner and a quick alert mentality.

The home economics teacher must be a woman possessed of good technical knowledge and a good pedagogical training. She must have managerial ability and she must be so efficient an executive that work passes through her hands without fuss or friction. She must be able to discriminate between the necessary and unnecessary tasks and thus give herself an opportunity to become a leader in the social and civic interests of the community. No teacher can afford to live her life apart from those with whom she comes in contact, much less the teacher of home economics. The physician goes to the sick and prescribes for the individual needs of his patient, so if the home economics teacher is to prescribe for the existing ills in the home, she must know the actual conditions as they are, and not as they are said to be.

"Reconstruction has been defined as the rebuilding of the life of humanity." During this period, then, of national reconstruction probably no phase of teaching is so vitally concerned nor have methods been so revo-

lutionized to meet the changing demands, as in that of home economics teaching.

The problems in our home economics work should grow out of the conditions which confront the student in her every day life. For example, the problem of menu making is a very different one in a distant rural community from that in a small village or a large, bustling industrial center where the transportation facilities and cold storage make it possible to have fresh fruits and vegetables for the table at almost all seasons of the year. Instead of fresh lettuce for garnish the rural child can be taught the attractiveness of the tender leaves of the cabbage heart or celery, and she can be encouraged to keep her own small window box of parsley growing throughout the winter both to use as a garnishing and flavoring and to bring cheer to the kitchen. The orange and grapefruit are not the only available nor appropriate fruits for breakfast. The farmer's breakfast may be made quite as appetizing by a deliciously baked apple, nice canned fruit, or attractively stewed dried fruit.

The up-to-date home economics teacher will find many advantages in presenting her work by the "problem solving" method. If she can allow the pupils to assist her in choosing the problem, it will make more of a personal appeal and draw forth more constructive thought and reasoning on the part of the child. The teacher must carefully guide the child's line of thought and skillfully and clearly keep the problem ever before her. The country child will welcome suggestions for a hot dish for the school lunch and attractive methods of preparing the cold food necessary to complete this lunch. These problems, then, can be easily formulated by the children.

"What hot dishes can I make to supplement best my cold lunch? And what cold foods are most suitable for me to bring from home?" "As winter approaches I need warmer clothing than for early fall or for last summer," suggesting a problem which may lead to an interesting textile discussion. "How can I help my grandmother serve her Thanksgiving dinner?" should arouse a keen interest in table service.

As the problem method of teaching becomes more acceptable in our schools the

necessity for equipping our laboratories more like home kitchens will become evident. In many schools now the meal forms the basis of the food work and these meals are kept within the financial limitations of the average family of the community, showing how under these conditions attractive, wholesome food may be secured.

"Practice makes perfect," is not only true in the industrial world, but also in the educational world. Girls without previous experience come into the home economics work and are able to perform each problem in cooking and clothing but once or twice during the year; then they are expected to go out as "expert cooks and seamstresses." The mothers and housewives who judge these girls so critically do not stop to consider the number of times they themselves have performed a given task before they have felt that they have become skilled in it. It is in this line of work that the Vocational Home Economics Education has an opportunity to function most effectively. Miss Baylor, Federal Agent for Home Economics, says:

"Vocational home economics further endeavors to tie up the instruction in the school with that of the home *by emphasizing the value of the home project*, and seeking the active co-operation of the mothers, that the homes may be used as laboratories in supplementing the work of the school.

"By the home project method the learner is brought into contact with the vocation, a very essential condition in any vocational work. It would be a strange education that trained a plumber and gave him no contact with his job, under normal conditions; or a carpenter who worked wholly with models and artificial devices and never on a real construction itself.

"Through the home project a supervised, directed piece of work is done under normal home conditions. Thus, contact with the vocation is secured. It calls into play skill and information acquired in the school and demands new skills and information in the utilization of which the student must exercise both judgment and initiative.

"A plan for the supervision of home projects, and the establishment of tests to evaluate results of such work are still to be developed. This lack is an obstacle, at the present time, to the success of this method."

If our present day methods of home economics teaching are going to function in the lives of our students we must strive to develop initiative, independence, confidence, and skill. It is much easier to give the backward child individual help than it is to repeat the fundamental principles and processes which lead up to a given problem. But when that child goes out unsupervised will she be able to repeat the problems with any degree of skill or success? Many teachers find it almost impossible, because of a lack of time and assistance, to let the less capable students assume the responsible duties which require accuracy and speed. For example, in the preparation and serving of a meal, do they select the best waitress to act as cook, or the best cook to be dishwasher? In the clothing work, do the girls who have little knowledge of fitting get more practice than the girl with the alert eye and keen sense of line and form? Not until we are able to grade our classes and let those of equal ability and speed work together will we be able to gain the highest degree of efficiency for all.

The Department of Home Economics in the University of Chicago is doing some interesting work in the formulation of tests and scales for textiles and clothing. If such could be used, our courses of study could be much more efficiently arranged. Problems suitable to the fifth grade could be used in that grade and not placed in the 8th or 9th grade by some well meaning but injudicious teacher. A basis for the establishment of a sequence of problems would be secured, and we would not have students repeating in high school that which they had learned in the grades.

Experienced teachers differ with regard to the grade in which different subjects should be introduced. When does the girl seem most interested in the food problem; when in her clothes; when does she feel the desire to decorate and care for her own room; and when does she feel an interest in child study and child care? Miss Trilling, who has been most instrumental in formulating these tests, says, "If tests were designed for the various phases of subject matter and a standard set in this way, the tests would be a great help to the classroom teacher. She could determine how her children compared with the standards set by the majority of

children. She could also detect weaknesses in her own teaching and emphasize her work accordingly."

It is only when we shall be able to put our home economics work upon a strictly scientific basis; it is only when we shall be able to see that we are helping to develop a higher physical type of childhood; and it is only when we shall realize that we are raising the standards and ideals of the home life of our community that we can feel that *our method of home economics teaching is functioning in the lives of our students today.*

GRACE BRINTON

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## II

### THE ILLUSTRIOUS TARTARIN

BRAGGART BY IMAGINATION

No study of the English novel is complete which does not take into account the influence of Cervantes's *Don Quixote* on the English fiction writers who are accounted the founders of the novel. *Roderick Random* is sprung from the line of *Don Quixote*—Smollet's admiration for Cervantes lead him finally to prepare his own translation of the Spanish classic. Fielding, too, had written *Joseph Andrews* not only to jest at Richardson's *Pamela*, but to follow his master. On the title page of *Joseph Andrews* he placed "In imitation of the manner of Cervantes, author of *Don Quixote*." Sterne, another of that group of early English novelists, offered in *Tristram Shandy* the acquaintance of "my uncle Toby" and the Corporal Trim: these are but variations on the theme of the illustrious knight, Don Quixote, and his squire, Sancho Panza.

Perhaps these are chief among the early English novels that trace their ancestry back to the Spanish hidalgo, but there have also been admirers of Cervantes who portrayed in other tongues the quixotic hero. Indeed, a more charming treatment would be difficult to find than that which Daudet employed in his trilogy relating the prodigious adventures of Tartarin of Tarascon; and it was a daring and successful stroke of the French novelist when he created the remarkable individual who possesses under one skin the dual personality of the practical peasant,