THE METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING HOME ECONOMICS

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ABSTRACT

The paper defines Home Economics as the study of laws, conditions, principles and ideals which deals with man as a social being and takes cognizance of his interaction with his immediate physical environment. It stresses the importance of Home Economics to both sexes in improving the standard of living of families. It gives the five major concept areas of study in Home Economics as food and nutrition, home management and family economics, human development and the family, housing, textiles and clothing and delimits the three content areas for secondary school level.

The objectives for teaching each concept area are outlined while the teaching strategies are carefully stated. The methods are aimed at giving students opportunity to explore, analyse, participate fully and learn to the maximum. It identified some methods for teaching and pointed out the importance of demonstration method for aiding the students in acquiring laboratory experience which is an integral part of the discipline.

A sample lesson notes is given and some defects in teaching are listed with suggested solutions. Listed also are the specific qualities of a good Home Economics teacher.

INTRODUCTION

The level of aspirations of young people to better themselves and their country cannot be raised without the people having the will to raise the level. This will is fostered only within the family itself; but when there is no progress to improve the quality of family living, there will be little progress at the highest level of government, no matter what the aspirations are of the leaders themselves. Hoeflin 1970.

The mission of Home Economics is to respond to the problems of families and the society as a whole. If the needs of individuals in the family are met, they would have the capacity to contribute to the smooth running of their homes. Families in such homes would contribute favourable to national development. On the contrary a country loses when homes are inefficiently run while much individual unhappiness can be caused by badly run homes.

I. WHAT IS HOME ECONOMICS?

Home economics is an interdisciplinary field of study which helps families and individuals to understand and adapt to the effects of social, economic, cultural, and technological changes. It is an applied science subject which is dependent on the integration of different academic disciplines such as the natural sciences, i.e. biology, chemistry, physics mathematics and health science; the social sciences, i.e. sociology, political science, economics, philosophy, psychology; and art in solving problems of families and individuals within the families. According to Fleck
(1980), "the world shapes home economics and home economics contributes to the shaping of the world through its impact on millions of individuals and their families".

The American Home Economics Association has rightly defined Home Economics as "the study of laws, conditions, principles, and ideals which are concerned on the one hand with man's immediate physical environment and on the other hand with his nature as a social being and is the study especially of the relation between those two factors". Advanced countries have realized the importance of Home economics to both sexes since they know that both men and women have need for training and cooperation to improve the standard of living of their individual families. It is also a means of providing both academic and vocational training and work opportunity for people and thereby reducing the unemployment rate of a nation. There are about five major concept areas of study which could provide areas of specialization at the higher levels of academics, these are food and nutrition, home management and family economics, human development and the family, housing, and textiles and clothing.

II. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR TEACHING.

The only true form of education is the one which teaches people to think for themselves and at the same time prepares them for both present and future life; training of intelligent thinking people, training that affects behaviour and training in Independence. The ultimate objective of home economics is to help families identify needs, make decisions and utilize resources to improve their quality of living. This general objective embraces the larger and total field of home economics. There are however, key objectives for each concept area mentioned above. These are tentative in nature and could be set for the entire year's work. They are usually directed towards changing concepts and behaviour. They should be clear and definite enough to guide in the selection of topics to be taught on weekly and daily basis. Examples of these are given below in the major concept areas of the secondary school curriculum.

Food and Nutrition

1. To teach and help students to understand and develop food habits essential for good health.
2. To teach students to plan, prepare and serve, simple nutritious meals using a minimum amount of money, time, energy and equipment.

Home Management

1. To help the students to learn management skills in home making and
   (a) appreciate the importance of good family living to family members, to the community, to the nation and to the world.
   (a) cultivate personal qualities which help in achieving good family living.
2. To teach the students to understand the rudiments of homemaking and acquire appropriate homemaking skills such as:
   (a) planning, preparing and serving wholesome meals;
   (b) making and caring for clothing;
   (c) planning suitable and attractive home furnishings;
   (d) managing family finances, time and energy.

Textiles and Clothing
1. To help the students to learn how to utilize wisely their resources in the purchase and care of clothing.

2. (a) To help them develop aesthetic values and judgements and learn to be creative through work with textiles.
   (b) To help them understand the social and psychological factors affecting clothing choices for the family.

3. To help them learn and develop skills and techniques in the use of the tools of the trade and in handling various fibers in clothing construction and clothing repair work,

III. SUBJECT CONTENT

The secondary school and grade II curriculum are in three major content areas. These are listed according to concepts as suggested by Fleck (1980, pp 260-261).

1. Content Category - Food and Nutrition
   Concept - Significance of food
   Subconcept - Food as related to nutrition
   Generalization - Adequate nutrition can be attained from many combinations of food commonly available in our land. No single food pattern is essential to health.

2. Content Category - Home Management
   Concept - Environmental influences on individual and family management.
   Subconcept - Economic and social.
   Generalization - The family economy affects and is affected by the larger economy.

3. Content Category - Textiles and Clothing
   Concept - Significance of textiles and clothing Subconcept - Social and psychological aspects of clothing.
   Generalization - As an individual natures his or her clothing perceptions and values change.

The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology's (1985) curriculum for Junior Secondary School (JSS) covers the three major areas described above in general terms. The work is planned on yearly basis while each year's work is sub-divided into units.

METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING HOME ECONOMICS

Berliner and Gage (1976) categorize teaching strategies according to patterned teacher behaviour that includes lectures, discussion or recitation. According to Fleck (1980), a home economics teacher may choose from a variety of teaching methods because a variety of approaches gives interest, enjoyment, and benefit to students. Before any method is selected the teacher should consider the appropriateness of the method to the topic to be taught. The preliminary considerations should include how the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains would be emphasized. The students' needs, problems, interests and maturity should also fit the method. Any method chosen should also give students opportunity to explore, analyze, participate, think and learn to the maximum. Other points for consideration suggested by Fleck (1980) include the suitable approach for the content and objective, the relevance to the lives of students, the competence of the teacher in the use of the method and the provision for individual differences among students of different background, learning ability and other capacities.
The following methods are unique to home economics teaching:

1. **Lecture Method**

   The best use could be made of the lecture method when it is impossible for students to find the necessary materials to do research on their own. A careful preparation is required to make it achieve the goal (McLeish 1976). The teacher is advised to plan carefully and work out an outline on the lecture. The important points should be supported with illustrations, statistics, quotations, comparisons or questions (Fleck, 1980). According to Hall and Paolucci (1968) a lecture may be clarified through the proper use of slides, models, a chalkboard or some other illustrative material. Audio-visual aids can do a lot in making the learning situation more realistic and concrete. A lecture should be followed by questions from students so that some form of interaction, is allowed.

2. **Demonstration Method**

   The main purpose of a demonstration in home economics is to show something or show how something is done. It is commonly used to teach skills in either home care, food preparation, or clothing construction. It can also be used to convey personal mannerisms relationships between people and other aspects of living that are difficult to explain in words alone (Hall and Paolucci 1968).

   The Illinois Teacher summarizes the purpose of a demonstration thus:
   - Sets a standard for a product
   - Establishes a pattern of procedure for preparation of a given product.
   - Helps students to judge the amount of time needed for preparation and actual work.
   - Sets a standard for work habits.
   - Illustrates hard-to-describe terms and processes.
   - Gives pupils a chance for critical analysis.
   - Motivates the desire to try the product.

   Demonstration need careful preparation and must be very clear and of high standard, otherwise the students would not have guidelines for producing good work. The teacher must use large scale specimens and pictures for illustrations where necessary so that students do not strain their eyes in viewing objects from a distance. The teacher should plan what to do, what to say, how to use chalkboard or flannel board and other instructional materials (Clark 1968).

   The arrangement of the demonstration is extremely important, every student should be able to see what is being demonstrated; lighting and seating arrangements are important to achieving such an end.

   Clark (1968) talks about formal and informal demonstration. In a formal demonstration the teacher prepares and sets out all the necessary equipment and materials for explaining the how and why of processes as well as motivating the students to develop certain skills. Fleck (1980) asserts that students who watch a teacher use the same materials, equipment and processes they need to use later in the laboratory are bound to perform well. Students can assist the teacher in the demonstration process. A pre-arrangement could be made with the students who would assist (Hall and Paolucci 1968). Another suggestion is to call on students occasionally to come out and help do something during the demonstration or to time a procedure. Another way is for the teacher to arrange with some students to give demonstrations themselves while he/she gives guidance so that the rest of the class benefits from seeing the demonstration.

   In an informal demonstration, however, an arrangement is made for the students to work
to assignments. The students are assigned to find out from books and other sources what is required to be done and they then carry out the demonstration. The teacher needs to correct all mistakes very promptly. Another Informal method of demonstration is for the teacher to call the students together during a lesson and quickly show them what they do not know—or what they are having difficulty with. Fleck (1980) refers to this as "spot demonstration". When a teacher notices for instance that several students in a class are unable to operate a particular machine efficiently because they have not mastered the techniques, she/ could carry out on a spot demonstration to show them how it should be done.

**USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Instructional materials or teaching resources are extremely important in all teaching-learning situations. They can increase motivation of the learner for learning, add variety to teaching and stimulate students participation through questioning. Technological advances have made available useful materials for teaching. Odu (1986) advises teachers to remember the many experiences that students of today gain outside the classroom with television, video recorders, radios, stereo equipments, reading rooms, museums, to mention just a few. These resources should be well utilized in the classroom. All available teaching materials should be employed to bring about effective change of behaviour in various aspects of living in Nigeria; these areas include nutritional status, hygiene and environmental sanitation, primary health care, child care, principles of family life, sensible choice and care of clothing and rehabilitation of the handicapped person.

Edgar Dale (1969) has devised a "Cone of Experience" which is extremely useful in selecting teaching resources. He divided learning possibilities with different types of teaching aids into three categories which are: direct experience, pictorial experience and symbolic or highly abstract experience. A simple illustration of the three categories could be made with a lesson on "Fibre Identification". When a student carries out an experiment in the laboratory in order to identify a given fibre, she/he under-goes a direct experience; when he/she views the pictures of different fibres on the board, the experience Is pictorial, the reading he/she does from a book about fibres is symbolic and highly abstract. Hence Dale's cone becomes a practical guide which would depend on the degree of abstraction or experience dimmed necessary for the objectives of the lesson. The choice would also depend on the needs and abilities of the students.

The teacher In his/her choice of aids should evaluate available aids to determine the soundness of the material, method of presentation, the ability of the aids to capture and hold interest and the organisation of the materials. Fleck (1980) explains that aids make differing contributions such as the introduction of a topic; supply of basic information; a challenge of an idea, attitude, or value; or giving a summary. The home economics department should have a well organized instructional materials corner, unit or room where some of the following could be found:

**Verbal Symbols (oral or written, form basis for most instructions).**

Basic textbooks for various content areas and supplementary reading materials and reference books which include encyclopedias, magazines, newspapers, periodicals, and publications geared towards health issues, food production, home furnishings, fashion and textile news, and family living news.

**Visual Symbols (for stimulating interest)**
Photographs, still pictures, overhead projections and transparencies, broom stick movies, slides; Display visuals - chalkboards, bulletin boards and posters, flannelboards, magnetic boards, pegboards, flipcharts, exhibits, mobiles, models, mock-ups, cartoons, and stimulations. The captions and titles for these should call attention of the viewer.

**Recordings** - Radio, still pictures, tape recordings, cassettes, sound film strips, audio visual and video-tapes (videotaped lessons).

**Television** - (televised lessons or illustrations). Commercial and public television programmes may be useful; Instructional television and videotape equipment are becoming an integral part of home economics classes. It makes educational experiences which are beyond the reach of the classroom available to the students (Fleck 1980).

**Exhibits** - These are three dimensional displays of full-sized or stimulated articles. A showcase is useful for exhibits collection of fabrics, students' work, food items, new equipment, books could be displayed.

**Realia** - (the real thing) or authentic material such as household appliances and furnishings, food, and clothing should be available to help the student distinguish between knowing something and knowing about something (Dale 1959).

Haney and Ullmer (1970 p. 100) suggest multimedia approaches to instruction. According to their definition this term means "a combination of various types of media arranged so as to provide appropriate presentational capability to realize the objectives and content of a lesson through eliciting desired pupil responses". The interrelationship of the media used would make them mutually supportive "in the creation of a new learning environment. One example given is the combination of two audio visual devices In order to take advantage of the presentational capabilities of each. A sound filmstrip could be used with automatic or mutually advanced filmstrip. The audio device from a tape recorder would provide a relatively inexpensive way of adding sound to the projected pictures.

Quite a number of instructional materials could be locally produced. The teacher needs to be resourceful and explore into the various avenues opened to him/her. Through the local production of materials, either by himself/ herself or with the assistance of media production specialists, the teacher has a means of quickly obtaining materials that can enhance teaching and learning in the classroom.

**EXAMPLE OF LESSON NOTES**

It is difficult to plan model lesson notes to suit all various topics. The planning of a good lesson, however, is solely dependent on a carefully thought out syllabus from which a detailed scheme of work has been prepared. This enables the teacher to know the topics to be taught on weekly and daily basis. The daily topics are then written out into a structure which guides the teacher in imparting the knowledge to the students. Taba (1962) suggested a structure which begins with the concepts, skills or pattern of ideas that serve as a framework for the development of objectives.

Since home economics has been and perhaps is still the least popular of secondary school subjects because of the derogatory remarks which are usually made by uninformed individuals, it is especially necessary that teachers should not only make-it useful but really interesting. The teacher should, when preparing the lessons, try to think out various ways of creating interest for without interest the students are slow to learn* may not bother to watch or listen, or they may fall to understand or keep in memory what they have seen or heard.

An example of Lesson Notes (This is only a guide to a practical approach).

**SUBJECT** - Textiles and Clothing
TOPIC - Introduction to Textiles
CLASS - SSS I
TIME - Two periods (90 minutes)

OBJECTIVES
1. To promote an understanding of textile fibres and their uses.
2. To enable the students to identify various fibres and appreciate the interrelationship between textiles and clothing items.
3. To promote an understanding of the scientific facts and principles involved in the chemistry of textiles.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS Books
1. CESAC, Clothing and Textiles, Pupil's Text, 1980.

Others
1. Exhibit of various textiles - the fibre sources, the fibres, fabrics and sample of clothing items.
2. Film on Textile Production.
3. Charts on production of Natural and Manmade Fibres.
4. Magazine pictures of fibres, fabrics and clothing items.
5. Microscopes and Magnifying lenses.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING:
ACTIVITY I - Teacher introduces as coming attraction on Exhibition titled "The Textile Kingdom".

ACTIVITY II -
 a) Assign for outside reading the books listed under instructional materials, each student to read the chapter on Textiles in one of the books.
 b) Assign students to find one advertisement of a textile product in a magazine and analyse the information learned from the advertisement.
 c) Assign students to bring fabric cuttings and any available yarn to class.

ACTIVITY III. The Lesson:
Inquire from students some of the findings by way of introducing the lesson.
ACTIVITY IV. Show the film "From Fiber to Fabric" produced by Educational Department of the American Man-made Fiber Producers Association. Summarize with class facts and basic concepts essential for all to know.

ACTIVITY V - Demonstration and Student Activities: Carry out experimental demonstrations to let students discover for themselves how to identify various fibres in the laboratory:
1. Microscopic viewing of various fibres;
2. The Burning Tests;
3. Tests with various agents and chemicals.

Students
a. to write up the experiments according to a given outline for such reports;
b. to write out the history and manufacture of textile materials;
c. to find out ways in which textile fibres are used in the home and try to determine the fibre content of the various textile materials.

ACTIVITY VI - Students to prepare 2-3 questions on all their findings and give possible answers to be put in a question box. The worthwhile questions would then be pulled out for discussion. Summarize at the end.

ACTIVITY VII - Teacher's Evaluation - Grade all the inputs of students.

SOME DEFECTS IN THE TEACHING OF HOME ECONOMICS AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

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<th>DEFECTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Lack of space and poorly equipped laboratory can hamper effective teaching,</td>
<td>Provision of standard laboratory and sufficient units and equipment would enhance good teaching.</td>
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<td>2. Unqualified teachers are made to teach the subject in some post secondary institutions.</td>
<td>Well trained teachers in the different content areas are a big boost to adequate training in the subject.</td>
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<td>3. Inadequate preparation, planning, of lessons. Knowing the syllabus well, sufficient reading, and organization planning of good lesson notes and the keeping of record of work would ensure good lessons.</td>
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<td>4. Teaching of uninteresting lessons. Interest could be aroused and maintained through the use of good Introduction, thought-provoking questions, intelligent discussions, use of chalkboard and instructional materials, giving plenty of creative activities, the provision of comfortable conditions for work.</td>
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<td>5. Not taking knowledge of fore knowledge. Learn to link up old and new knowledge, correlate topics with topics in other subjects.</td>
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<td>6. Poor demonstration due to lack of preparation and use the chalkboard and instructional insufficient materials for demonstration materials. Use authentic materials when available and possibly some of the materials used in the children's home. Use good-sized specimens.</td>
<td>Plan what to do and what to say. Plan how to knowledge, poor preparation and use the chalkboard and instructional insufficient materials for demonstration materials. Use authentic materials when available and possibly some of the materials used in the children's home. Use good-sized specimens.</td>
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Unfinished demonstrations Plan sufficient time for finishing
demonstrations: outcomes and results give a great impression.

7. Relying heavily on theoretical work
   Practice is more important than theory for
   and ignoring practical work.
   students learn by doing. Such experience
   provide excellent practice in application of
   principles and generalizations, it also
   strengthens managerial abilities.

8. Poor supervision of pupils' work
   Keep an eye on the class as a whole as well and poor discipline during practice class.
   as individual pupils in order to maintain order,
   discipline and routine. Take precautions when dangerous apparatus are being used.
   Supervision is necessary for training in good habits, social and moral development.

9. Being a poor model - are his/her
   Support your teaching with practical words and actions compatible?
   application of the principles that characterize home economics. Students learn more from what they see.

10. Not providing situation for outside
   Assign students to carry out useful activities experience.
   at home. School learning's are reinforced and more likely to stick if what is learned at school make sense and meaning at home (when practice takes place in real life situation).

11. Ignoring community resources
   Invite outside resources to supply professional expertise. Home and community experiences help to meet, varying needs of students who differ in abilities, needs and home background.

12. Poor Evaluation
   Carry out continuous evaluation to identify strength and weakness in the instructions given - Effective evaluation should provide evidence of the extent of the changes in students.

SPECIFIC QUALITIES OF A GOOD HOME ECONOMICS TEACHER

The greatest challenge for any good home economics teacher is in the area of self-advancement. Anyone can easily forget technical knowledge that is acquired during the training years if one fails to improve himself or herself on the job. Lifelong learning is of ultimate necessity in this discipline. There should be an aspiration for outreach or periodic additional education (Fleck 1980; Hall & Paolluci 1968). In-service education can contribute to the renewal and further development of teachers. It would afford teachers the opportunity of knowing about new developments in their fields.

It is of great importance, too, for a good teacher to become familiar with new books and publications in the field. Coupled with this is the necessity to become a member of both state and national professional organizations, and, if possible, a member of international bodies. These organizations publish journals which have articles dealing with current issues of the discipline. Below is a list of some of the associations.

1. Home Economics Teachers' Association of Nigeria (HETAN) Membership open to all home economics teachers. Annual Conferences are held.
2. Home Economics Society of Nigeria (HESON). Membership open to graduates of home economics only, annual conferences held.
3. Nigerian Vocational Association (NVA) Membership open to graduates of vocational
programmes - there are annual conferences.

4. State Associations, e.g. - Kwara State Home Economics Association (KWSHEA) Membership opened to all home economics, usually plans annual workshops.

5. International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) The federation holds annual World Congress for home economists from all over the world where they offer the IFHE Congress and In-Service Training.

A good teacher would apply the principles of home economics to his/her daily living. She would obey health rules both at home and at work. The pupils and students can learn a lot more from what they see. Greenwood (1957) has clarified the attributes of a profession by presenting five elements that all professions should possess:

1. "Systematic body of theory:

   ...The skills that characterize a profession flow from and are supportive by a fund of knowledge that has been organized into an internally consistent system called a body of theory"...

2. Professional authority:

   A professional should have an extensive knowledge in the systematic theory of his/her discipline that would definitely highlight a layman's comparative ignorance. He/She should be able to dictate what is good or evil for his/her client who has to accept the professional judgement.

3. Sanction of the community:

   The professional should be able to prove that his/her acquired occupational skill requires specialised education and that he/she can deliver a superior service to the community because of the appropriate training he/she has.


   Self-regulative codes characterize all occupations: a professional code being perhaps more explicit, systematic, and binding; it shows regard for others and is more public service oriented.

5. The Professional Culture:

   Every profession operates through a network of formal and informal groups. Three groups are distinct - first is the Institutionalized setting (e.g. schools and other set-ups such as community groups) where the professionals meet their clients; second are the organizations (ministries, library, or research centres) where the professional can expand his/her fund of knowledge; third are the professional associations to which the professional can identify.

   The culture of a profession is said to consist of its values, norms and symbols: the values being its fundamental beliefs, the norms are the guides to behaviour, while the symbols are its meaning-laden items.

   These attributes could be tested through the teacher's own self-evaluation. They should be tested by evaluating the teacher's relationship to pupils or students, to parents, to the community, to employer and to other teachers. The rating from those relationships would determine whether the teacher is good or not. Home economics being a service programme requires that its teachers possess those attributes

REFERENCES
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