

Home Economics Methods for the Secondary Level

"Do I have to take Home Ec?" "Can't I substitute another class?" "It's so boring—all we do is book work." Do you hear comments like these at your school? Or do students say, "We do so many different things in Home Ec." "Look what I made today!" "Home Ec is my favorite class." "This is really cool. I'm going to stay home and do the cooking and let my wife work."

What you hear may depend on the teaching methods you are using. There is usually more than one way to get the information across. An interesting approach will leave a lasting impression on students. Here are some ideas for getting secondary students interested in home economics:

- Making the subject come alive depends on the teacher's own enthusiasm; it lets the students see that you are interested in them and in the subject.
- Using a variety of methods creates and builds a lively interest in home economics in both young men and women. Everyone is familiar with the lecture method, but some of us may have forgotten the finer necessary details such as defining the purpose, using visual aids, making an outline, and offering some conclusions. Readings, case studies, and role-playing encourage student participation; reports help students organize their thoughts, expand their creativity, and develop poise; panel discussions allow participants and large groups to interact; puppets and masks help students gain self-confidence; and dialogues and rap and buzz sessions will also bring variety and interest into the classroom.

Puzzles, word games, and bingo help motivate students. "Complete the statement" can also be used in all areas of home economics. For example, write on the board, "Child discipline is..." and have each student complete the statement. Then follow up with discussion. At the end of the period collect the papers so that all students will have participated.

Quote tests can be used to introduce a subject or as a post test. In a quote test the teacher copies an important section out of the book, leaving a blank for every fifth word. The student then fills in the blanks.

- Making the surroundings in the home economics room as pleasant as possible is another positive contributing factor. Bulletin boards need to be changed often (at least once a month) and should relate to the subject matter under discussion or should lead into a new area. *Creative Bulletin Boards for Home Economics*¹ by Bush, Kempf, and Schwanekamp features ideas for all areas. Argus² offers relatively inexpensive educational

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Using a variety of methods can make home economics come alive.

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posters that resist fading so they can be reused. Laminate the items you make for the bulletin board so that they can be used more than once. Displays, peg boards, and exhibits let others see what is going on in various areas of the department.

How can you get today's teens excited about home economics? It is hard to imagine many of them getting turned on by a designer pattern. They probably will not put in the time, effort, and skill required to make a dinner for six people, or to plan activities to keep preschoolers occupied. That is why recruiting students for today's home economics classes calls for creativity, especially when the subject is not required.

One good method is to establish guidelines and then let students pick the kind of class projects they want to do—exercise pants or a blouse; jams, preserves, or fruit; drop cookies or brownies. Let them decide what age child they want to work with, the people they want to invite to the meal they prepare. By offering these choices, you can keep students coming back for more.

How Do You Recruit Students?

Be creative. Promotion can take many forms. Computer-graphics banners can be hung around the school promoting your class. "Sign up for clothing class! We'll keep you in stitches" is one example. Fashion shows can demonstrate what the students have made during the year. Invite parents, teachers, and interested community people (such as the managers of a local

fabric store) to your fashion show so they will know what you and your students have accomplished.

Taking surveys among peers and/or community will create interest in what is happening in home economics: it ties the "real world" and book learning together. Faculty, board, and/or parent banquets prepared by Advanced Foods students let other groups know what is happening. The students take pride showing off what they have done, and that helps build their self-confidence.

Foods and Nutrition

Most students like this section because they get to eat. However, it is sometimes hard to get across to Home Economics I students the importance of culinary basics such as kitchen organization, reading and following recipe directions, and the proper use of measuring equipment. I have tried the following experiment successfully with Home Economics I with both boys and girls.

At the beginning of class the students are given a recipe for "Gobbly Gooks"—a confectionary concoction made with "globs," "blobs," and "dribbles" of a variety of ingredients. Students are expected to follow the recipe, approximating the correct amount of each ingredient in order to create an edible cookie within 45 minutes. The recipe is flexible enough so that if too much or too little of most of the ingredients is added, the cookies are still edible.

After the lab, we discuss what they have learned from this unusual recipe. The students then complete lab sheets, evaluating the class experience. The next day they make a batch of "No-bake Cookies," which is actually Gobbly Gooks with accurate ingredient measurements and specific recipe "How-to's." The students can then taste the difference that precise measurements, like a cup or a teaspoonful, make when compared with a "glob" or a "glub."

Gobbly-Gooks

1 glob peanut butter, 2 scoops brown sugar, 1 smidgen butter, 3 dit-dots vanilla, 1 handful flour, 6 blobs sugar, 2 ittsy-bits salt, 4 glubs quick oats, 1 small blib cocoa, 4 dribbles of milk. Boil butter, sugars, milk, and cocoa. Remove from heat. Add peanut butter, vanilla, oats, salt, flour. Glump onto waxed paper. Cool.

No-bake Cookies

¼ c. butter, ¾ c. sugar, ¼ c. brown sugar, ¼ c. milk, ¼ c. cocoa, ⅛ t. salt, ¼ c. peanut butter, ½ t. vanilla, 1½ c. quick oats, ¼ c. flour. Directions: Mix butter, sugars, milk, cocoa, and salt in saucepan. Boil for 1 minute at low heat. Remove from heat. Add peanut butter, vanilla, oats, and flour. Stir. Drop on waxed paper on cookie sheet. Allow to cool in refrigerator.

Only by doing will students learn the importance of meal planning, budgeting, preparing, and serving. Budgeting can be made more relevant by using the Cooperative Extension Service booklet, "Cost of Food at Home Estimated for Food Plans at Four Levels." When students have to put together a week's menus on the thrifty plan (\$39.90 a week for a couple) and then see the difference on the liberal plan (\$77.10 a week for a couple), they realize the importance of budgeting, planning, and wise use of resources. Preparing attractive, nutritious, and appetizing meals on the thrifty plan is a real challenge for most students. One immediate benefit is that of making it possible for them to help their parents with menu planning.

Bread bake day is a very popular learning experience. Half of the day is spent in the home economics department learning the fine art of breadmaking. Each student is responsible for making one loaf alone, choosing from a variety of recipes for such bread as whole wheat, oatmeal, or white. If you have demonstrated ahead of time a healthful recipe like oatmeal or whole wheat, and they have sampled it, many students will choose those recipes over those for white bread.

Working with lab partners, students can also make such items as cinnamon rolls. Likewise, teenagers enjoy making pocket bread and stuffing it with taco salad. Sharing goodies made in class will interest others to sign up for home economics. Encourage the students to share a cinnamon roll or slice of bread with a teacher, particularly one who has let them

out of class for the day.

"Sabbath Dinner," luncheons, or brunches offer wonderful learning experiences. Students do the planning within the assigned budget and allotted time. For the luncheons and brunches I have them invite one staff member; for the "Sabbath Dinner" they can invite two classmates and two adults. "Preparation Day" is the last class period before they serve. On "Sabbath" they have 45 minutes to get their meal on the table and be ready to sit down and eat. They are graded on selection of food, preparation, service, and atmosphere. "Sabbath Dinner" can take place on Sabbath or on another day that fits into your schedule.

Because of tight budgets you may not be able to involve as many students in hands-on experiences as you would like, but that should not prevent you from doing demonstrations for the class. Given properly, demonstrations help students focus on methods and provide learning experience. Catchy titles will spark student interest.

Not only do most local churches welcome help with cooking schools, but attendees appreciate having teenagers interested and showing them how to do things. Moreover students gain self confidence and poise when they answer questions about what they have just demonstrated, they will feel especially rewarded when they see non-SDA's from cooking class attend Sabbath school or church, as sometimes happens.

From time to time various companies hold recipe contests. Such contests offer your students a great opportunity to develop and test recipes. Therefore, if there are cooking contests in your area, involve your students, or hold such a contest in your own school.

Child Care

Since most students will eventually become parents, they should learn about the commitments and responsibilities of parenting and child care. Various methods can be used to study child development. Students can observe a child and record its actions for a certain period of time. Outside reading can offer insights beyond those in the textbook. Through reading and observation the student will see child care from new perspectives.

The teacher can also assign case studies to be read and discussed. Resource persons such as pregnant women, unwed mothers, and midwives open new avenues of thinking about families and decision-making.

Some teachers have had students dress up raw eggs, and then had them assume the care of these "babies" requiring them to carry their "child" about, making sure that it is cared for 24 hours a day. "Egg Babies" have provided some new insights into the responsibilities involved in child care. However, it is easy to put an "egg baby" in a pocket or purse and forget it. Five-pound "bundles of joy" are more true to life. Human characteristics can be added to five-pound sacks of flour or sugar just as they usually are added to the "Egg Babies." Students will find it a real challenge to carry around these "children" all day.

During the unit on child care, baby-sitting needs to receive some attention inasmuch as many students do baby-sitting. Students need to learn what qualifications to look for in a baby sitter and how to interview a potential sitter. Ask them to hire a reliable baby sitter, relying on predetermined criteria as well as intuition.

Students can also interview parents, asking them what they would do in a given situation such as, "Your baby has its nights and days mixed up." A general question that should be included is "What, if anything, would have helped you to better prepare for parenthood?"

Ask students to design educational toys for preschoolers. Then have them fill out a check sheet that asks questions such as these: What kinds of toys and activities are best for various ages? What other kinds of toys or learning experiences could they make with the odds and ends around the house such as scraps of fabric, empty spice cans, pot lids, or old chunks of wood? Display the toys in class and have other class members inspect them for durability and safety.

The students can use the toys they have made in a daycare program. Work with the administration of the school to arrange for your students to set up a daycare program one afternoon a week. If this is not possible, ask your students to test the toy on a neighbor's child or younger sibling and report back to class. By having your students make toys from household items, they come to realize how much can be done inexpensively. Once they see how the little ones enjoy playing with the toys, they become aware that it is not the price of the item that counts.

In the Sabbath school, cradle roll and kindergarten classes always need more help. Encourage and/or require your students to participate in these divisions. They will thus receive hands-on experience and help with a need, at the same time increasing their sense of self-worth and self-confidence.

Everybody loves a party. Learning about child development and toy safety in a party atmosphere can be fun as well as educational. At the beginning of the semester pass out handmade invitations to the students, complete with "Plan-a-Party How-To's."

Group the students by their birthday months into five teams to work together to make party plans for children in a specific age group, ranging from one to five years. Plans must include ideas for invitations, decorations, refreshments, games, favors, and appropriate gifts. Each month, select a date for the birthday parties. On the designated day, each team leads the class in party activities appropriate for the children in their assigned age group. Other class members must bring an attractively wrapped toy or suitable gift for the birthday "guests." Keep the party mood going with cake and ice cream.

In planning each unit, assign worksheets and filmstrips/videos, as well as quizzes on the material, for expanding each student's understanding. Guest speakers, field trips, and experiments

questions have been answered or when a half hour has passed, whichever occurs first. Students get to open and keep the packages they hold at the end of the game.

After the game, lead a discussion about appearances by asking the students to explain why they picked the attractive packages over the unattractive ones. Explain that even if it is sometimes unfair, people pass judgments on our "outer packaging." Although what is inside the packaging is more important, a neat, attractive appearance still makes a good first impression.

Students want to know how to look their best. Wearing the right color is part of the total picture. Have a professional consultant come into the class and analyze several students. Before the consultant comes, put up a bulletin board with the colors for various seasons to help whet your students' enthusiasm about the subject.

Students also enjoy guest speakers. Invite members of the community to speak at your class or to demonstrate their skills. Beauty colleges or shops usually are willing to spend time talking about hair care and demonstrating hair styles for particular face shapes. Modeling school representatives are a great help in discussing posture and in correcting body images. Do not forget your own physical education department or aerobics teacher when studying about exercise.

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help expand the scope of the topics.

Clothing Selection and Construction

When beginning the school year or going for a job interview, making a good first impression is important. But how do you get this point across to students? One effective way is to pack grooming and hygiene items in boxes, wrapping some of them in colorful papers trimmed with bright, shiny bows, some in plain white paper with no bows, and the rest in faded and torn newspaper and dirty string. These "gifts" are used as prizes in a grooming game.

Write questions concerning grooming, body language, dressing for success, and personal hygiene on index cards, sort them into piles and number the piles one through six. Students roll a die and answer a question in the pile matching the number they have rolled. If the question is answered correctly, the student picks a wrapped gift or may take away someone else's package. If the question is answered incorrectly, the next player takes a turn. The game ends when all

Self-Esteem/Relationships

Adolescence is a crucial period in self-concept development. A good program to help in this vital area is called "One of a Kind."³ This program includes videos, movies, and exercises. It fits into any curriculum and can be used in its entirety or in separate units. Union education departments often lend this program. If they do not have it to lend, check with local education service districts or high schools. Other useful films such as "Johnny Lingo" and "Pack Your Own Chute" help students realize the importance of a positive self-image.

Our teenagers will take home economics if we make it relevant to their needs. Let's organize and promote it so that they see its value for them. □

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REFERENCES

¹ Cindy Bush, Jan Kempf, and Diane Schwankamp, *Creative Bulletin Boards*, 6847 Shadow Brook Ct., Indianapolis, IN 46214.

² Argus Communications, P.O. Box 6000, Allen, TX 75002.

³ Josten's Educational Services, 810 North Elm, Owatonna, MN 55060.