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What Shall We Teach and Where-withal Shall We Be Clothed?

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What Shall We Teach and Where-withal Shall We Be Clothed?

By MARCIA E. TURNER

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We are all undoubtedly familiar with the story in advertising section of almost any magazine, depicting the unhappy state of the poor little wallflower girl who has not the right clothes for the party. And we have all rejoiced over the sequel in which she astonishes even her close friends by suddenly blossoming forth in fascinating clothes for all occasions, which she had planned and made for herself. More than likely you have had an impulse to start right out and accomplish the same results, either by that route or another. So it is with modern advertising—we are made to feel that we can no longer be quite happy without "that school girl complexion" or the fulfillment of others of the fifty-seven or so varieties of alluring promises that beckon to us from the advertising section.

Teachers—and just here specifically, home economics teachers, might do well to study advertising methods. After all what difference is there, between good motivation and modern advertising? Take for example the story of the girl who learned to make lovely clothes, and moreover to plan them so well in the first place that she could afford to have them. Right there is the kernel for a whole clothing course of actual human problems, so well motivated as to capture the eager interest of every girl in high school or out. Again and again the question comes from some harrassed young teacher—sometimes accompanied by delivery return postage—"What garments shall I have my first year high school girls make?" Far from the task of answering such a question there should be rejoicing that teachers are beginning to question, even thus vaguely. There was a time, and perhaps it is not yet altogether of the past when it was accepted as law that the first year class should make underwear—that and nothing more. In vain a child might protest that she did not need more underwear—why need she make a night gown? Why couldn't she make a dress? Simply that tradition coldly decrees "that it isn't done."

But now, let's forget all we ever thought we knew about a clothing course for high schools, turn tradition upside down and go at our planning with the aid of modern advertising methods. Why not start out with the style show which we have heretofore reserved for the closing week of school? The fall fashion books are full of charming suggestions

about clothes for school wear. The dry goods stores are showing those suggestions brought to life in countless ways dear to the hearts of school girls.

Never before, seemingly, have there been such opportunities to select line and color and materials suitable for individual wearers—to say nothing of the family pocketbooks.

And that brings up another question we are so prone to side step or else down hastily like a dose of medicine—the budget. Somebody asks uncertainly—"would you teach the budget to high school girls?" How can we teach clothing to high school girls without teaching the budget? So let us remember that a budget is only a term for "a plan for spending money" and boldly give it its rightful place in the front row of the style show.

Now to plan the style show. The teacher will need to know of course, something about her community standards and customs before she can sit down with pencil and paper and map out just what abilities or judgments or appreciations she expects this particular class to develop thru planning and executing a style show. Also she must know thru class discussion and a little thinking backward on the part of the girls, what clothing ready-made and home-made they bought last year and what they have on hand that can be used for this year (right here that teacher is going to have a splendid opportunity to digress just long enough to lead her class a little way along the future road to some care and repair problem). You see we have walked right into the first step of the budget without knowing it. Not very formidable is it? Yet the information contained in the clothing inventories is quite indispensable in determining the objectives. Generally speaking, they will be something like this: "Ability to select for themselves for school, for 'Sunday,' for school parties, dresses of suitable materials, color, and design within the amount which they can afford to spend." Similar abilities could be set up for under garments, for wraps, hats, shoes, hose and accessories, depending upon how large proportions it seems best to give the show and also depending upon where the emphasis seems most needed. In one instance it may seem best to confine the first style show to school clothes, dresses, shoes, hose, hats and wraps; in another case it may be dresses for different occasions. In

no case if the project is to be worked out by the class and made of actual practical value, must the fire be too scattered. Always too, there must be guarded against a tendency to let fancy run riot in selecting garments beyond the possible standards which can be achieved by the girls. All the better when at least a part of the garments for the show can be selected from among those the girls have on hand.

After defining her objectives and deciding tentatively upon the information which the class will need to have in order to carry them out, the teacher should be ready then to present the question to her class and get them started finding out what they need to know before they can intelligently plan the show and select the garments. At this point the wisdom of selecting a simple project for the beginning is plain, for in order to get and hold the best interest of the class they must be able to see the end from the beginning and not become oppressed by too many intricacies all thru the planning. The coming needs of the girls based upon their clothing inventories, must be kept in mind so that the style show shall indeed serve as the beginning and not the end of the clothing course. Mary needs a new wool dress for school; Alice has one on hand that will do nicely if freshened up with new cuffs and collar; Jean has a plaid skirt and will need to make a middy to wear with it. These and many other problems will help to build the style show.

To one such entertainment given by a ninth grade home economics class, all of the high school girls and their mothers were invited. Afterward many of the mothers remained to discuss the various points which had been brought out and there the teacher found the best opportunity to get the mother's point of view and to gain closer cooperation with her in teaching the high school girl to solve her own clothing problems.

After the style show—what? Checking back over the development of the project, the teacher will find her course already planned. No need to question what garments shall be made—the individual needs of the girls have brought out a series of live management and construction problems. The girls will make the garments they need. No need to set aside two weeks of a bored, is not painful study, of budget laws. The first step has

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tical value must the fire be too scatter-been begun—not finished by the style show and a way is open to the next problem. "How can I keep withn my share of the family income?" The style show has opened interesting questions of color harmony; of various angles of suitability; of the effect of careful grooming. In other words, if the teacher has done her part skillfully, her class should be at the point where they are ready and eager to go ahead.

The style show is one device for bringing them to that place. Whether we use that one or whether we start from another angle, let's get away from cut and dried courses. Let's be human and develop our home economics courses out of live, human situations.

The 4-H's of Housekeeping

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some books that I've always wanted to read and never have had time for, or by

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enjoying my flower garden. I count anything recreation which is entirely different from my usual work and which leaves me feeling a greater zest for life and more fit to go back to my daily tasks.

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2nd Floor



DOMINANT in the modes for this fall and winter are the Frocks marked with the new high collars. Other noteworthy innovations are the bolero effect and pleated front, with the wide leather belts. These come in all the variety of wools and the new autumnal color tones.

2nd Floor

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