1926

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Recommended Citation
Alexander, Virginia (1926) "School lunch Room an Education in Food Selection," The Iowa Homemaker: Vol. 6 : No. 5 , Article 7.
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol6/iss5/7

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Problem Method of Teaching Home Economics

By VIRGINIA ALEXANDER
Miss Vera Mintle, Simpson College

I
n student comes to us in our Home Economics work with varying degrees of theoretical as well as actual home experience and training. Most of our school systems have no way of sectioning this group according to ability and training of the students because the entire group must be placed in one class and requested to do the same work. On account of this group we find often a lack of initiative, of interest, and especially a strong feeling of lack of progress.

With this situation existing, it was necessary to adopt a new plan of teaching, which would make the course a more practical one for the student. This plan of teaching utilizing some of the suggestions of the Dalton plan seemed to appear to me as one way out of a most disturbing situation. So the following plan was carried out in my classes.

The very first step on the part of the instructor is to create an ideal for the pupil. This is a rather difficult undertaking as it involves a large amount of groundwork for the already busy instructor. Each person must work out her own ideal of what she is going to do, orders her own food, grades her work accordingly. She also finds that she is more interested and has more initiative. She is then the duty of the helper to a more normal child life, the aim of lack of progress.

The teacher is a guide and not a dictator. The disadvantages of this plan are as follows: The total progress of the entire group in actual work accomplished in terms of projects is slower because of lack of time for collecting equipment, etc. for food problems. The products might not score as high in quality, as those of the old plan, but more is actually learned by the student in the preparation of foods. We find too that the girls following this plan are more capable, more interested and have more initiative than those of previous classes.

School Lunch Room an Education in Food Selection

By VIRGINIA ALEXANDER
Miss Helen Woods, Iowa State University High School

EELING a decided need for the furthering of the plan to establish the correct food habits in youngsters who were old enough to attend school, a lunch room was planned. This lunch room, operating only at noon time is one which has not only helped the child in the right selection of foods, but also established the in mind of the child certain definite food habits which can only lead to a more normal child life, the aim of every child institution.

The lunch room must be clearly understood is not run on any commercial basis for exploitation. The profits are minimized in every respect, and often times a loss is taken on certain foods such as fresh vegetables and salads in order that the child may have the advantage of these foods.

The aims of the lunch room are to give a well-balanced meal, to provide a supplement lunch, to provide a clean place for those children who bring their lunches, make the lunch a sociable one, to establish certain food habits necessary for the well being of the well nourished child, and to give an opportunity for the instruction of good table manners as well.

The foods that are planned for lunch are carefully arranged so as to avoid repetition of important food constituents as much as possible. The meal has been planned to be well balanced and nutritious. The dishes that are served are vegetables, scalloped dishes of all kinds, protein dishes, fruits, salads, sandwiches, bread and milk.

As the children are accustomed to meat and potatoes at home, this combination is avoided. Eggs, cheese, butter and the like are encouraged. It has been noticed by the helpers that the children as a rule have no idea of the selection of foods. For instance, they will buy both bread and sandwiches, or two desserts or all protein foods. It is then the duty of the helper at the tables to give much needed assistance to the little girl. At the same time the helper tells the children why they should select certain foods.

It is not always true that the foods best for children are most expensive as most people seem to think. We find that we can make Hot Raisin pudding, serve it with cream and still use the full amount of any other dessert. Whipped cream is served whenever possible, and it not only adds to the appearance of the food but it also furnishes the proper food nutrients.

Ice cream is served in our lunch room because the children, as we would be expected will always choose ice cream in preference to any other dessert. This habit has to be discouraged because ice cream, although considered quite a delicacy by grown ups, is not always the best for children. It does not contain as valuable or as many nourishing food substances as the same amount of other kinds of desserts such as rice pudding or custards.

Such favorable results have come from this project that it is a temptation to tell you a few of them. We find by actual observation, that the child who once carefully selected bread, rolls and sandwiches is blissfully content with one of the (Continued on Page 6)
Esthonia Sends Us a Homemaker

By ELSIE GUTHRIE

No longer need a woman choose between a husband and children and a career; she can have both. This is being proven by Mrs. Alma Lassman Martin of Europa Esthonia, who is now on the Iowa State campus as a student in home management. In her own country Mrs. Martin has been a teacher in an agricultural school and her husband is an assistant in the University of Esthonia. Her three children, of two, four and six years, respectively, are at present under the care of their grandmother.

Esthonia is a small republic on the east coast of the Baltic Sea and south of the Gulf of Finland. The country, which has an area of 18,500 square miles, supporting a population of over one million people, has a climate and soil very suitable for dairy farming and agriculture, the rapid development of the latter being due to the cooperative movement under which the agricultural and cooperative societies have succeeded in producing a million people. The country, for about 200 years preceding the World War, was a part of the Russian empire. Following the collapse of the Russian military power in 1917, Esthonia declared her independence as a nation. By treaty later, the country was given absolute independence, became a free republic, and joined the League of Nations.

Mrs. Martin is a graduate of the "Stebute Higher Agricultural Courses" in St. Petersburg (where she attended from 1913 to 1917). She studied during the year 1921-22 at the University of Tartu in Esthonia and in 1924 received her "agron diploma," in other words her degree. The past year she attended at Helsingfors, Finland, a congress of Home Economics, which was made up of representatives from the north countries, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Esthonia and others. For two months she traveled in Finland, studying the status of home economics in homemaker's schools and in private homes. In a few of these schools she found homemaking courses for boys. The purpose of these courses is to teach appreciation of the work of women so men will no longer say, "The woman sits at home; she has nothing to do." On the day that Mrs. Martin returned from Finland she received the offer from her government of a fellowship in foreign lands. She has accepted the offer and is now living in Gray Cottage, Ames.

Besides her course in home management, Mrs. Martin is taking food marketing, child psychology and physiological chemistry. She expects to follow those with work in textiles, art, and economics as she wishes to get a comprehensive view of the Home Economics course. In Europe there are no courses in home economics as such, and in the elementary and secondary schools of Esthonia homemaking is taught and there are always three or four times as many applicants for these classes as there is room. The remarkable interest in education is shown by the fact that 30 percent of the state budget is being devoted annually by the state and communes for educational purposes.

Mrs. Martin says that because of the newness of the country, teachers and governors are very poorly paid. She derides the condition of farm women, who often work from 3 a.m. to 10 p.m. in summer, "It is my main problem to relieve this situation," she tells us.

In Esthonia the houses are large, with large windows that give more light. People do not use shades and curtains at the windows. Houses in the cities have furnaces and electric lights, but electricity costs more than it does here. The common fuel is a red brown wood called "rengaste." More wood is used than stone. Farm homes do not have modern conveniences. Some tractors are found on farms, but most of the work is done by horses.

Housewives in Esthonia use much milk and have bouillon every day. Fruits and vegetables are not canned, but pickled, dried and preserved in salt. Mrs. Martin thinks our small cans very tiny in comparison with the barrels used in Esthonia for spinach, cabbage and beans.

The farm housewife manages her household, cares for the children, spins and weaves and does much outdoor work, which consists of gardening, caring for poultry and hogs and milking. Those who can afford it have maids to do the housework while they spend much time at the coffee houses. Much of the clothing worn by the country people is spun and woven in the home. Wool and flax are the fibers used in home manufacture, the cotton garments being factory made. The city girls wear factory made suits instead of homespun. The dress of all people is very similar to that of Americans except that not so many colors are used. The native costumes is worn only on special occasions, such as a national holiday or festival.

Steam railways and electric cars are used for travel in America, but there are three classes of passenger coaches; third class, with uncomfortable wooden seats; second class, with upholstered seats; and first class, very fine dining car.

In Esthonia, when a woman and a man meet on the street he greets first by tipping his hat, she then speaks and he speaks to her. Mrs. Martin says it would be very embarrassing for a lady to speak to a man first, as he might not remember her.

As yet, the country has no traditions of its own, being only eight years old as a nation. The customs of the inhabitants are those of the neighboring countries, Germany and Russia, but national customs will come as the country grows.

Children in Esthonia usually do not start to school until eight years of age. Before that time, if the parents can afford it, the child has a governess to teach him different languages. Mrs. Martin's two daughters, of 4 and 6 years, have a German governess, who teaches them German, and she herself has lost in a degree much of her Russian language. The eldest loves to dance, accompanied by her father's guitar or her own singing, and she often composes her own dances. Since the country is so small, there are no schools for children as such. In Esthonia are published and much of the literature is in Russian or German. Mrs. Martin tells of a four-year-old girl who, when asked how many languages she can speak, answered, "Just as many as I am years old."

She says she is too busy to get homemaker's housekeeping course, to understand why she cannot get letters on Sunday. One can not but admire her courage and persistence as she sits in the library struggling over an assignment with the aid of her dictionary of German to English translations. If this doesn't solve the word mysteries, she takes them to her room, where she has English to Russian and Russian to English dictionaries, for there does not exist an English-Esthanian dictionary. It is necessary for her to use her dictionary from 15 to 20 times per page of reading.

Between quarters Mrs. Martin hopes to see something of the extension work here and when she has completed her master's work, plans to go to Cornell University at Ithaca, N. Y., for special methods of teaching.

SCHOOL LUNCH ROOM AN EDUCATION IN FOOD SELECTION

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three bready. The dessert counter was not as crowded as the coffee houses, where people in the hop es of instilling in our boys and girls the meaning of the word "soups and hot chocolates. Where once the small boys and girls hastily ate a bit of sandwich, and gulped down a cup of cold water to chase it out to play, now we see happy little girls sitting around a friendly table eating their lunch with the proper amount of leisure.

We who are working with these little people in the hope to teach them some of the vital things with which they should be acquainted in food selections, have no doubt as to the success of our lunch room.