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Research Views Tomorrow

The Iowa Homemaker

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Graduate students apply science with practice theories in well-equipped laboratories. Emphasis is placed on a well integrated program of research which attempts to organize and interpret known facts as well as to obtain new ones

Research Views Tomorrow

RESEARCH work in home economics at Iowa State began when teachers realized that they needed more knowledge in all areas of home economics before they could teach effectively or help homemakers solve their problems.

In the beginning each department tried to solve these problems in its own way. These isolated problems contributed to the development of new information in a scattered sort of way. Then departments began working together and with other groups on the campus outside home economics. Cooperation became the keynote of many projects. As results became known, many sources of financial aid became available.

So today there are many programs of research active in home economics at Iowa State. Many of these have been sponsored by the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station.

Commercial Packaging

In applied art, subjects for research have changed just as our material environment has changed within the last few decades. Early graduate students studied original designs for crewel work. Current masters' theses report work on commercial packaging, or other new developments. The nature of the studies has remained the same, however.

The trend in research in child development at Iowa State in recent years has been changing from observation of children under certain conditions to investigation of the causes of their behavior. By recording their actions, attempts are being made to determine the reasons behind these acts.

The research program reflects this attitude as each graduate student works on a thesis problem of interest to her and of importance in her professional and personal development. These problems have varied from

studies of a child's concept of discipline to the effects of a mid-morning rest and the preparation of a guide book of Sunday-school nurseries.

Research in home economics education at Iowa State College is just 25 years old. In 1922 the first master's degree was granted, and the first research study was completed.

Curriculum Studies

Early studies dealt for the most part with the high school or college curriculum. Research has sought to establish sound bases for home economics curricula at every educational level. This includes programs for elementary schools, high schools and colleges as well as for out-of-school youth and adults. Evaluation, adult education, extension education, teacher training and factors affecting the supply and demand for teachers have been given considerable attention in recent years.

The early research in foods and nutrition, as in all other branches of science, was exploratory. It attempted to answer specific questions as they arose. In foods, people asked how meat should be cooked to avoid toughness and to gain the best flavor. In nutrition, research centered around the demonstration of vitamin deficiencies and the analysis of foods for their various nutrients.

The research staff has grown in foods and nutrition and there are many graduate students, some candidates for the master's degree, others for the doctoral. The emphasis is on a well integrated program of research which attempts to organize and interpret the known facts, as well as to obtain new ones.

At the present time one large research program in foods involves an investigation into the causes of toughness of meat. Factors like heredity, effect of the food the animal eats, its age, conditions at slaughter,

storage and the final cooking of the meat are all investigated. Precise ways of measuring toughness have been evolved.

In nutrition the entire research program is based on a comprehensive concept of the science of nutrition. What are the things we need to know if we are to interpret nutrition to all people? Projects now underway, as well as those planned for the future, look toward more adequate understanding in all areas of the science.

Family Economics

The Department of Home Management has been unique from the outset in the opportunity it offers graduate students for the study of family economics. Many young women have recorded and analyzed the ways in which families manage their income. More recently, they have determined the extent to which the money income is increased by such home production as baking, gardening, sewing, etc.

Finding a solution to the problems a homemaker meets while working in her home is the job of the research worker in household equipment. In the past, when women have asked specific questions about equipment, workers of the staff of the Department of Household Equipment have attacked each problem as it arose.

At the present time the department is equally responsive to the homemaker's needs but tries to approach them in a more fundamental fashion. In the past they worked with what was in the field, now they try to set up standards against which to check equipment. The increased tempo of the times makes this task more difficult, for there is continual change not only of models but also of materials.

A wide variety of problems have been studied by young women seeking the master's degree in institution management. Within the past 2 years, theses on management procedures at Ames High School, food

preferences of Iowa State women, food service in southern negro colleges and the use of dried eggs in the large scale preparation of custards indicate the range of subjects under investigation. These have yielded important information, often put into immediate use in the institutions concerned.

Technical journalism is the newest department in the Division of Home Economics. In this field, graduate students have evaluated the extent to which published material on child development meets parents' needs and have gained experience in home economics publicity work.

The department is planning research on the value and effectiveness of illustration and graphic art techniques in the presentation of home economics information; also a study of text and reference book needs and the best qualified authors in the field of higher education in home economics.

The Department of Textiles and Clothing awarded its first master's degree in 1920, at a time when research was largely on consumer problems. In the years since, research in textiles has pushed further and further into the basic roots of the problem.

Clothing Preferences

In the area of the social sciences, research workers in textiles now ask what values women attach to clothing that motivate them to exhibit certain preferences. In the realm of the physical sciences the fundamental goal is knowledge of the molecular structure of fibers themselves and their resultant behavior under specific conditions.

There's no question that much has been accomplished in research in home economics at Iowa State during the last three decades. As we look into the future, however, we see more to challenge us, greater needs to be met and even larger opportunities for research.



Food for the pre-school child is a research topic for graduate students in the Department of Child Development. They are also concerned with individuals in various groups, whether they be young or older children or parents