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Learning Experiences through Clothing and Textiles

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A characteristic of secondary school students is their preoccupation with self and appearance. Due to this preoccupation with self, appearance and peer acceptance, our students become concerned with grooming habits and clothing, and this may bring about first experiences of shopping for clothing without adult supervision. Hence the teaching of Clothing and Textiles is relevant and can be made exciting, creative and relevant for contemporary living.

The teaching of clothing and textiles offer several specific objectives:

- 1 To broaden students' understanding of the subject matter
- 2 To increase students' problem solving and decision making ability
- 3 To enhance students' critical thinking ability
- 4 To improve students' oral presentation skills
- 5 To improve students' valuation skills.

CLOTHING AND AESTHETICS

- * Discuss and demonstrate the use of clothing to help compliment the figure and to create the illusion of desired figure proportions.
- * Discuss and demonstrate the use of accessories to add interest, originality and versatility to clothes.

CLOTHING AND IMAGE PROJECTION

- * Compare your own attitude towards buying clothing to that of an older member of your family.
- * What influences you most in the purchase of clothing and accessories.
- * Analyse your own dress and describe the image that you would like to project and how clothing can assist you.
- * Show pictures of individuals and students to characterise each person shown, based on this assessment of their dress and discuss reasons for their choices.
- * Survey individual reactions to dress by observing the reaction of store personnel to well dressed and not so well dressed customers.

CLOTHING SYMBOLISM

- * Discuss how clothing can be used to send messages to others.
- * Discuss national or local events and the role clothing has played in that event.
 - * Parades
 - * Inaugurations
 - * Balls/proms
 - * Weddings
 - * Concerts
 - * Theme parties
 - * Funerals
- * Discuss the role that National costume plays for the different races found in Singapore.

- * Discuss the part clothing plays' in various organisations students belong to, for example:
 - * Church choir
 - * Girl Guides
 - * Boys' Bridgade
 - * The Red Cross
 - * The St. John's Ambulance Bridgade
 - * Athletic Teams
- * Discuss the role of school uniforms
 - * What do they mean to those wearing them and to those observing them?

CLOTHING AND ECONOMICS

- * Discuss ways to economise on the clothing budget.
- * Engage in comparative shopping by locating and pricing similar items from different types of stores:
 - * Department stores
 - * Boutiques
 - * Neighbourhood and market stores
- * Discuss reasons why similar merchandise may sell for different prices at the various stores.
- * Study imports by taking a survey of the countries where clothing sold in our local stores are produced.
- * Discuss the effects of imported clothing and the cost for consumers. Would our local clothing industry benefit if fewer clothing items were imported and why?

CLOTHING SELECTION AND CARE

- * Collect a set of articles of clothing for students to use to evaluate their quality, Ask students if they can recognise good workmanship.
- * Discuss some construction details that are necessary for reasonable serviceability of the garment.
- * Check and compare construction details of garments from various stores:
 - * Neighbourhood and market stores
 - * Department stores
 - * Designer boutiques
- * The following construction details should be checked:
 - * Seam width and finish
 - * Quality of buttonhole
 - * Grainline
 - * Hem depth and treatment
- * Discuss the importance of selecting clothing made of an appropriate fabric. Conduct a class discussion of what fabric to choose for a selected list of garments.
- * Explain basic features of an automatic washing machine.
- * Discuss and interpret clothing labels for care and fabric contents.
 - * Bring in examples of garments not properly cared for and show the results.

FIBRE CONTENT

- * Investigate the origin, composition and structure of two fibres in detail.
- * Examine the fibre content of five different fabrics.
 - * Observe fibres under a microscope and draw your results.
- * Devise simple tests to identify the properties of different fabrics. Show how different fibres:
 - * absorb water/resist water
 - * shrink/resist shrinkage
 - * burn/resist flames
 - * stretch/do not stretch
 - * stain/do not stain
- * Investigate the source of natural and synthetic fibres.
 - * Synthetic fibres are usually known by their trade name. Find out some trade names of these synthetic fibres: Polyamides, Polyesters, Polyacrylics.

FABRIC CONSTRUCTION

- * Examine fabric samples for different weaves. Dissect fabrics to see their weave patterns.
- * Pupils will explore weaving with a variety of media, and discover a variety of weaves.
 - * Using coloured paper strips 1 cm wide, and 20cm long experiment with plain and twill weaves to create checks, stripes and herringbone weaves.
- * How are your clothes woven? Using a magnifying glass try and discover the weaves. Sort them into: plain weaves, twill weaves and others.

Lesson plans that incorporate the above activities can be flexible. This format should be used only as a guide. Adjustments can be made to comply with student needs, readiness, attention span, and the course she is teaching. The teacher must also bear in mind the time available for the lesson.

Our students need a wide range of skills for competent living. This approach fosters skill development by increasing knowledge, stimulating analytical thinking, and encouraging responsible decision making.

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