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AC 002 122

EVALUATION OF A GOODS AND NUTRITION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR
LOW-INCOME FAMILIES IN WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA.

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REPORT NUMBER EXTENSION-STUDIES-32

PUB DATE JUN 65

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.25 HC-\$1.16 27P.

DESCRIPTORS- *HOMEMAKING EDUCATION, *FOODS INSTRUCTION,
*PUBLICATIONS, *LOW INCOME GROUPS, *PROGRAM EVALUATION,
NUTRITION INSTRUCTION, UNIVERSITY EXTENSION, WELFARE
RECIPIENTS, INFORMATION DISSEMINATION, ADULT CHARACTERISTICS,
PENNSYLVANIA, COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE,

RECIPES, FOOD IDEAS, AND PROFESSIONAL SOURCES OF
INFORMATION WERE LISTED ON PENNY PLANNER CARDS MAILED EACH
MONTH TO HOMEMAKERS ON THE PENNSYLVANIA FOOD STAMP PROGRAM TO
INCREASE THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF NUTRITION AND TO HAVE THEM USE
RECOMMENDED FOODS AND RECIPES. TO EVALUATE THE PROJECT, A
SAMPLE OF 145 RECIPIENTS IN THE WILKES-BARRE DISTRICT WERE
INTERVIEWED BY STAFF MEMBERS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE
UNIVERSITY. MOST HOMEMAKERS RECOGNIZED THE CARDS, MORE THAN
HALF HAD READ THEM, AND ALMOST HALF HAD FILED THEM AWAY. OVER
HALF SAID THEY WERE OF SOME HELP. FEW SOUGHT ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION FROM PROFESSIONAL SOURCES. HOMEMAKERS HAVE
STARTED TO USE NEW KINDS OF GOODS, BUT THIS CHANGE IS DUE TO
THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM RATHER THAN TO THE CARDS. HOMEMAKERS
INTERESTED IN THE INFORMATION HAD MONTHLY INCOMES OF \$150 OR
MORE, LARGER FAMILIES, WERE UNDER 60 YEARS OF AGE, AND WERE
ABLE TO READ ENGLISH. CONDITION OF THE HOUSE, SPARE-TIME
ACTIVITIES, FORMAL EDUCATION, CHURCH MEMBERSHIP, TYPE OF
ASSISTANCE RECEIVED, AND PERSONAL NEATNESS WERE NOT
ASSOCIATED WITH PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS. THIS EDUCATIONAL
METHOD HAS BEEN ACCEPTED WITH SATISFACTION BY THE FOOD STAMP
RECIPIENTS. HOWEVER, EDUCATIONAL SPECIALISTS WILL NEED TO
CONSIDER THE HETEROGENEITY OF THE LOW-INCOME POPULATION AND
ADAPT SUBJECT MATTER AND TEACHING METHODS TO MEET VARYING
NEEDS AND RESOURCES. (THE DOCUMENT INCLUDES 18 TABLES) (AJ)

ED017856

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Extension Studies No. 32 June 1965

**Evaluation
of a foods and nutrition educational program
for low-income families
in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania**

The Pennsylvania State University / College of Agriculture / Extension Service / University Park, Pennsylvania

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EVALUATION OF A FOODS AND NUTRITION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES IN WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA

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The assistance and cooperation of many people were necessary in conducting this research project. We would like to acknowledge the efforts of the staff members associated with the Food Stamp Program, especially Raymond Bartow, Director of the Department of Public Assistance office in Luzerne county; Mrs. Marcella Haydock, Chief Clerk in the D.P.A. office; and John Conaboy, who was in charge of the Food Stamp Program in Luzerne county. Field interviews were conducted by the following specialists and county staff from the Pennsylvania Cooperative Extension Service:

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Cy Chadwick
Al Skala
Barry Flinchbaugh
Aubrey Vose
Bill Gregory
Mary Jane Bowman
Bob Hobbes
Emilie Lunger
Stan Hummer
Anna Mae Lehr
Chuck Robertson
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EVALUATION OF A FOODS AND NUTRITION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES IN WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA

Educators are signing up for the war on poverty. Many are already conducting programs to help low-income families. Many others are in the planning stage. This escalation of aid for the impoverished provides educators with opportunities as well as responsibilities. Too often we don't have a systematic body of knowledge to provide guidelines for teaching low-income people. How "teachable" are they? What methods are effective? What sources of motivation can we appeal to? These are questions for which answers are needed in designing effective educational programs.

This is an appraisal of one specific educational project aimed at reaching low-income families. The evidence from this study provides greater insight into the living conditions of these people and possible channels of communicating with them. It does not purport to arrive at definitive conclusions about the previous questions -- but, then, no one research project does.

THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

The Food Stamp Program helps low-income families buy additional food. Low-income and public assistance families are certified for eligibility by the public welfare agencies. The amount families must pay for the coupons and the total amount of coupons they may buy are based on family size and income. The families spend their coupons at local stores for any foods, except a few excluded items, just as anyone else would use money. The grocer redeems his money at the bank just as he does other receipts, or he may redeem his coupons to food wholesalers who have been authorized to accept coupons from retailers. This program was initiated in Pennsylvania on a pilot basis in the city of Pittsburgh, and Cambria, Fayette, and Luzerne counties. When the Food Stamp Program began,

donation of federally owned foods to needy families was terminated. The Food Stamp Program has recently been extended to six more Pennsylvania counties.

THE EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

An educational project in foods and nutrition was developed for low-income families who participated in the pilot Food Stamp Program in Pennsylvania. To provide information to these families about foods and nutrition, a series of 12 (7 1/2" by 3 1/4") cards were mailed directly to the recipients of the Food Stamp Program by the Department of Welfare. These Penny Planner cards were enclosed with the food coupon authorization mailed twice monthly, the 1st and the 15th. Cards were included from the beginning of April until the middle of September 1964. Each card included a message about foods and nutrition, generally in the form of a recipe, nutrition, and buying tips. Two of the cards had names of county home economists from whom the people could get additional information, and references to the Department of Health, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, as a source of bulletins. The entire project was a joint undertaking of the Departments of Health and Welfare, the state government, and The Pennsylvania State University Cooperative Extension Service. The general educational objective was to increase the knowledge of homemakers in low-income families about nutrition and to have them use recommended foods and recipes.

EVALUATION

Objectives of the evaluation were:

- (1) To determine whether homemakers could recall receiving the cards.
- (2) To determine whether homemakers read the cards.
- (3) To ascertain whether homemakers used various foods and recipes mentioned on the cards.
- (4) To obtain from homemakers their "felt" problems in feeding their families.

- (5) To ascertain the communication channels homemakers used, their personal characteristics, and the socioeconomic status of their families.
- (6) To determine whether selected personal and social factors were associated with use made of information on the cards.

Locus of Study

An evaluation of the Penny Planner cards was carried out in the Wilkes-Barre district, Luzerne county. In the total county, there were 3112 families on the Food Stamp plan with about three-fourths of them in the Wilkes-Barre district. Of the 3112 in the county, 2056 were public assistance cases and 1156 were not. Recipients in the Wilkes-Barre district contributed to the Food Stamp plan about \$133,000 and they received \$67,000 additional free coupons. In other words, the average family received \$3 worth of food for \$2.

Sample

A 7 percent sample (161 names) was selected from the Food Stamp recipients in the Wilkes-Barre district. This was a systematic list sample in which every fifteenth name in the files was chosen. For each sample family, a 3 by 5 card was prepared and included the following information: name, address, family composition, gross monthly income, cash required, total food coupons issued, monthly rental, and any offset for hardship. The geographic locations of the sample families were marked on a large highway map. Staff members in the Department of Public Assistance and the Food Stamp office assisted in selecting the sample and identifying place of residence on the maps.

Interviewing

Interviewing was conducted by 27 staff members of The Pennsylvania State University. Fourteen were specialists or supervisors at the state level and 13 were Extension personnel from Luzerne and adjoining counties.

An orientation meeting was held with the interviewers in which interview assignments were given; the schedule of questions was discussed; and the Food Stamp and Public Assistance programs were explained. Each interviewer was assigned six names. The schedule of questions was pretested with four families who were on the Food Stamp plan but who were not included in the sample.

A few days before the interviews were conducted, the Extension home economist in Luzerne county sent a letter to the sample families telling them that someone would personally interview them at their homes the following Tuesday. They were told only that questions would be asked concerning the Food Stamp Program but nothing about evaluating the Penny Planner cards.

Interviews were conducted in one day, September 22. The day following the interviews, staff members met as a group to discuss their experiences and to talk about implications for Extension work with low-income families.

Of the 161 families chosen in the sample, 145 completed interviews were obtained. Of the 16 from whom schedules were not completed, 11 were not at home and 5 others were not contacted. The homemaker was interviewed in each family. In all except a few cases, this was a woman.

Findings

Card Recognition

Each interviewer had a set of 12 cards which he showed to the respondent. This question was asked: "Have you seen these cards before?" Ninety-one percent said they had, 8 percent had not, and 1 percent was not sure.

Those who claimed they had not seen the cards before were asked if they would be helpful to them. Nine of 11 persons said they would

be of "no help"; two said they would be of "little help." They were also asked if they would read the cards if they were sent to them. Only 3 said they would. It is reasonable to assume that the 13 persons who said they had not seen the cards had actually received them.

Half of these non-cognizant homemakers had no formal schooling and no one went beyond the ninth grade. Only 3 received a daily newspaper; in fact, half could not read. Husband and wife were living together in only 3 cases. Hence, these homemakers who did not recognize the cards had less formal education than the total sample and were very low in reading skills.

The 91 percent who said they had recognized the cards were asked how many of the cards they had seen. Practically all had seen all the cards, with only a few indicating they saw only a portion of them. No attempt was made to ascertain the validity of their responses to this question.

Card Disposition

Homemakers were asked what they did with the cards when they received them. Sixty-nine percent read them, 48 percent filed them for future use, 19 percent threw them away, and 11 percent gave them away (table 1). Many homemakers gave details about filing them for future use.

Table 1. Percent of Homemakers Who Did Various Things with Cards.
(Some gave more than one response.)

Action Taken	Total	Percent
Read them	100	69
Filed them	70	48
Gave away	16	11
Threw away	27	19
Total respondents	145	

Typical comments received were: throw them away; don't know what to do with them; can't read good; I read very little English, mostly Polish; going to try some of them; look them over and that's it; don't use recipes because you have to buy extras; gave them to daughter; save for a while and then throw away; don't cook much for myself; most of the things my son doesn't care for; they come in handy; look to see what I like and try if I do; sometimes follow menu. The most often comment given was that they look them over and then throw them away.

Did the characteristics of the homemaker or the family situation make any difference in what was done with the cards? A few items were significantly associated with use made of the cards: type and size of family, age of homemaker, her ability to read English, and the family income. The homemaker was more likely to read the cards if husband and wife were living together, if there were more than two in the family, if she was under 60 years of age, if she could read English competently, and if the monthly income was \$150 or more. There was no relationship between use made of the cards and these characteristics: formal education, church membership, spare-time activities, neatness of homemaker and cleanliness of home (as judged by interviewer), type of assistance received, and condition of home and furnishings (as judged by interviewer).

Perceived Help

When asked if these cards were of any help to them, 69 percent said yes. Homemakers who felt the cards were helpful differed on many factors from those who felt they were not helpful. Homemakers who perceived the cards as being of help were more likely to have these characteristics: younger, more ability to read English, file cards and read later rather than throw them away, interested in joining a homemakers group to talk about foods, interested in continuing to receive the cards,

receive a daily newspaper, schooling beyond the eighth grade, more than one-person family, husband and wife living together, used new foods since getting the cards, and tried recipes on the cards.

Use of Recipes

Each respondent was asked specifically about seven recipes which were on different cards. For each recipe they were asked whether they had tried the recipe after they saw it on the card and if this was a new recipe to them or one they had used before. They were then asked if they will use this recipe again, and whether anybody else in their family or neighborhood used the recipe.

Homemakers who tried each of the recipes ranged from 9 percent for Special Spinach Casserole to 35 percent for Macaroni Special and Raisin Oatmeal Drop Cookies. Twenty-seven percent used Bean and Tomato Soup, 22 percent Beef and Onion Balls, and 23 percent Baked Cheese Sandwiches (table 2).

Table 2. Percent Who Tried Various Recipes and Their Opinions About the Recipes.

	% Tried	Of those who tried, % to whom it was a new recipe	Of those who tried, % who will try again	% saying someone else tried recipe
Chicken Rice Casserole	16	73	89	4
Bean and Tomato Soup	27	74	97	5
Raisin-Oatmeal Drop Cookies	35	62	97	7
Beef and Onion Balls	22	62	89	4
Special Spinach Casserole	9	77	80	1
Macaroni Special	35	62	95	7
Baked Cheese Sandwich	23	68	89	2
N =	128	13 to 47	10 to 38	141

Of those who used each of these recipes, 62 to 77 percent said they were new recipes to them. Also, 80 to 97 percent of those persons who used the recipes said they would use them again.

Relatively few of their family members, friends, or neighbors used the recipes, according to these respondents. Ten homemakers said someone else used the recipes Macaroni Special and Raisin Oatmeal Drop Cookies; fewer than 5 percent were aware of other people using any of the other recipes.

Homemakers were asked why they didn't try several recipes. For the Chicken Rice Casserole the most common reason was that the family or some members of the family didn't like rice or they didn't like chicken, or they didn't like the combination. Some women indicated they just didn't get a chance to try it yet.

For Bean and Tomato Soup, some homemakers said they used the recipe but it's their own recipe. A few others indicated they varied their own recipe slightly. Others said they just didn't care for beans.

Regarding Raisin Oatmeal Drop Cookies, several indicated they use their own recipe, some said they don't bake, and others did not like oatmeal or raisins.

For Beef and Onion Balls, some homemakers use their own recipe for meatballs; others didn't use the recipe because the portions would be too much for one person.

The predominant reason for not serving Special Spinach Casserole was that the family or some members of the family just didn't like it. Others didn't like the idea of spinach in a casserole.

With Macaroni Special, most homemakers said they use it in a slightly different way or use their own recipe.

Regarding Baked Cheese Sandwich, most homemakers use their own recipe. Several use grilled cheese sandwiches rather than baked cheese.

A few thought it would be good, but they haven't had a chance to try it. Some don't use cheese.

It is obvious that many tastes and preferences would have to be altered to gain widespread acceptance of these recommended recipes. Change in knowledge alone will not be adequate to have people adopt new food habits. Programs must also take into account a complex set of attitudes.

Each homemaker was given a quantitative score based on the number of the seven recipes she had tried. A weight of one was given for each recipe so that scores could range from 0 to 7. Forty-two percent had a score of 0, had not tried any of the recipes; 14 percent had a score of 1; 11 percent had a score of 2; 20 percent a score of 3; and 14 percent a score of more than 3. The homemakers were divided into 3 groupings based on these scores: 0, 1-2, and 3-7. Several characteristics were cross tabulated with these groupings. These factors were associated with number of recipes tried. The higher the monthly income, the more recipes tried; the larger the family the more recipes tried. Families not on public assistance were more likely to use more recipes. The amount of formal schooling of the homemaker and her ability to read English were positively associated with number of recipes tried.

Homemakers were asked if they talked about the ideas or recipes on the card to anybody else in their family or their relatives. Forty-six percent said they had. Nineteen percent talked to someone outside their family about the cards.

Use of Recommended Foods

Homemakers were asked, "Have you started using any new kinds of foods since getting these cards?" Fourteen percent said they had. When asked what new kinds of foods, the responses most often given were: bought prepared chicken rice dish, bought TV dinners, fish sticks, potato salad, cole slaw, more eggs, milk and cereal for the children, juice for the

children, minute steaks, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, turkey, mixing soup and vegetables in different ways, more meats and fish, cheese, an assortment of meats, cottage cheese, and better meats. Undoubtedly most of these changes in foods were due to the Food Stamp Program rather than the Penny Planner educational program. Sixty-six percent of the homemakers used a shopping list.

The purpose of some information on the cards was to acquaint homemakers with various kinds of nutritious and economical foods. Respondents were asked if they were using six different foods and whether they had used them in the previous year.

For nonfat dry milk, 37 percent were using it compared to 55 percent in the previous year (table 3). This was a considerable drop because nonfat dry milk was included in the donated food program in which most of them had participated before the Food Stamp plan. With the stamps they had freedom to choose the type of milk they wanted.

Table 3. Percent of Homemakers Who Were Using Various Foods and Percent Who Used Them in the Previous Year.

Food	% who use now	% who used last year	N
Nonfat dry milk	37	55	123
Frozen or canned orange or grapefruit juice	73	60	111
Cottage cheese	71	58	125
Eggs	97	74	125
Liver	66	55	123
Homemade cookies	53	50	118

With respect to frozen or canned orange or grapefruit juice, 73 percent were using it compared to 60 percent the previous year.

Seventy-one percent were using cottage cheese as compared with 60 percent the previous year. Ninety-seven percent were using eggs,

23 percent higher than the previous year.

Sixty-six percent were using liver, 11 percent higher than the previous year.

Fifty-three percent made homemade cookies, 3 percent higher than the previous year. Hence, for every item mentioned on the cards, except nonfat dry milk, the percentage of families currently using the foods was higher than for the previous year. It is impossible to separate the influence of Food Stamp plan as well as the Penny Planner cards in interpreting these changes.

The homemakers who did not use each of the foods were asked "why not?"

For nonfat dry milk, most people didn't like the flavor. Some pointed out that children wouldn't drink it. A few said they tried it when they received it on donated foods. Some homemakers use it for baking only; others mix it with regular milk to make it go further.

With respect to frozen or canned juices, the typical comment was that it is too expensive.

Most homemakers said they use cottage cheese every now and then or they didn't like it; some indicated using a lot of it.

The most common statement about liver was that the homemaker or some other member of the family didn't like it. A few indicated that it was on their diet and recommended by a doctor. A few others said they have it once in a while or only occasionally.

Homemakers felt homemade cookies required too much time to make, that they didn't eat baked goods, or that they were on diets which didn't include cookies. Several buy cookies or have cookies only at Christmas time.

Each homemaker was given a score based on the number of the six recommended foods she was currently using. A weight of one was given for each food so that scores could range from 0 to 6. Homemakers were divided

into three groupings based on these scores: 0-2, 3-4, and 5-6. Twenty-three percent had scores of 0-2; 44 percent 3-4; and 33 percent 5-6. Several characteristics of the homemakers were then cross tabulated with number of foods used.

No factors were identified as being significantly related to number of foods used. However, there was a definite tendency for those homemakers who had more ability to read English and higher family incomes to be using more of the foods. Such items as church membership, type of family dwelling, conditions of the home and furnishings, neatness of the homemaker, type of assistance received, and family situation made no difference in number of foods served.

Some homemakers didn't change the number of these foods served from the previous year; others increased the number; still others actually used fewer than previously. In fact, 49 percent didn't change the total number of these six foods used. Thirty percent increased the number used; 21 percent reported a decrease. Were there any differences among these homemakers which might help explain these changes? If the homemaker was judged as having much ability to read English, she was more likely to have increased the number of foods used. Homemakers on public assistance were more likely to have increased the number of foods used, but the difference was not quite significant at the 5 percent level. Other items, such as spare-time activities, church membership, formal education, type of dwelling, condition of house and furnishings, general cleanliness of house, neatness of homemaker, type and size of family, age of homemaker, and family income, were not associated with number of foods used.

Interest in Receiving Cards

When asked if they would be interested in continuing to receive the cards, 79 percent replied in the affirmative. Comments received included:

might find a good recipe some time; like the baking ideas but give them to someone else; help save some money; I would find someone to read them to me; recipes sound real good; like buying tips; interesting; learn something might not now know; they were all worth it for the recipes; very good ideas especially in the winter; someday there might be something I would like to try; for holidays there might be something different; they save you a couple of pennies; and will try to use them and give them to daughter. Recipes they could use or might use sometime in the future were the major attraction.

A few who were not interested in the cards gave such reasons as: have own way of baking; not too much help; we don't use them because we would have to buy extra foods; used to own cooking; don't care about them; and don't use them enough.

Nine percent indicated they contacted the Extension home economist in Luzerne county. Her name was listed on the cards. Four percent requested a free booklet from the Department of Health.

Personal and Social Characteristics of Respondents

Food Interests and Problems

Ninety percent of these homemakers said they enjoy cooking. Only 1 percent attended a meeting in the past year where foods were discussed.

Twenty-nine percent, however, indicated they would be interested in joining a group of homemakers where they could talk about foods, sewing, or other homemaking topics.

The interested ones gave such comments as: if I could get there; if I could find the time; if it were nearby; sewing, that's my line; I would like to learn; we used to meet in each other's home, but the family would prevent me from attending. Most of these interested homemakers cited

certain conditions which would likely prevent attendance at meetings.

Those who were not interested in joining a group gave these reasons: I don't need it; my house is okay as it now is; transportation would be a problem; I don't go anywhere; I'm in very poor health; difficult for me to go into a crowd; I don't hear too well; I'm too old for that; and that's all right for the young, modern woman.

When asked if they ever entertain other families or individuals in their home by serving them a meal, half of them said they did. Almost all the people they entertained were members of their immediate family or relatives, with only a few being friends.

When asked what difficulties women around here like themselves have in feeding their families, the problems most often cited were: prices of food too high; they lacked money to buy the food they want; they have a problem of getting the family together for meals; there aren't enough persons in the family to prepare a full meal; they don't always know what to cook for their family members; trying to please all members of the family (table 4).

They were asked whether they recently had a question about 12 different activities related to feeding their families. Forty percent reported having a question about what foods to buy and 39 percent about how much to spend for food (table 5). Only 6 percent had a question about how to serve foods and 8 percent about how to store foods.

Sources of Food Information

Respondents were asked to whom they usually talk when they have a question about a recipe or what food to buy. Forty-one percent indicated some member of their immediate family. The next most often given response was a relative, by 23 percent. Twenty-two percent indicated either a friend or neighbor, 19 percent said nobody, that they turn to themselves for answers to any questions, and 12 percent gave another source (table 6).

Table 4. Difficulties Homemakers Have In Feeding Their Families.

	Number	Percent
None	33	25
Don't know -- never talk to anyone	33	25
Lack of money	14	11
Have problem getting family and individuals in family to eat right	13	10
Trying to please all members in the family	10	8
Price of food too high	6	5
Don't always know what to cook for them	8	2
Getting the family together for meals	3	2
Diet	3	2
Not enough persons in family to prepare a full meal	2	2
Availability of certain foods -- don't always know what to prepare	2	2
Preparing meals for the working mother	1	1
What to buy	1	1
Other	6	5
Total respondents	130	101

Table 5. Questions Homemakers Have About Feeding Their Families.

Food Activities	Number	Percent
What foods to buy	58	40
How much to spend for food	57	39
How to get the family to eat food they dislike	45	31
Getting family to cut down sweets	34	23
How to get to the store	32	22
Eating better meals	28	19
How to cook foods	27	19
Feeding the children	25	17
Where to shop	24	17
Getting proper kitchen equipment	18	12
How to store food	12	8
How to serve foods	8	6
Total respondents	145	

Table 6. Sources of Information About a Recipe or What Food to Buy.
(A few gave more than one response.)

Source of Information	Number	Percent
Immediate family	59	41
Relative	33	23
Friend, neighbor	32	22
No one -- myself	27	19
Other	18	12
Total respondents	145	

Homemakers were then asked where they usually get ideas about food or recipes. Sources most often cited were magazines, newspapers and advertisements, by 39 percent. Nineteen percent said they received food ideas or recipes from their own personal experiences, 17 percent from a member of their family, 13 percent from a cookbook or old recipes, 8 percent from a neighbor or friend, 7 percent from a store, 6 percent from radio or television, 4 percent from recipes on food boxes or labels, and 2 percent from a professional source (table 7).

Table 7. Homemakers Sources of Ideas on Buying Food or Recipes. (A few gave more than one response.)

	Number	Percent
Magazine, paper, ads, publications	57	39
Self -- from experience	28	19
Family member	25	17
Cookbook -- old recipes	19	13
Neighbor, friend	11	8
Store	10	7
Radio, television	8	6
Recipes on food boxes, labels, and others	6	4
Professional source	3	2
Total	145	

Other Homemaking Problems

Homemakers were asked "What problems or difficulties do homemakers around here have in trying to take care of their families and homes?" The most common response was, "Don't know." Lack of communication with neighbors was quite evident for most respondents. This was illustrated by the comment, "I live by myself. I might say something wrong to them so I don't talk much and don't go anyplace." Another said, "Don't know anything about my neighbors. I'm Protestant and don't mix with Catholic neighbors." Problems most often cited pertained to problems of raising children, lack of money, and lack of transportation facilities.

Homemakers were then asked if they would like to have more information on specific homemaking problems. The following areas were cited most often: buying clothes, making or mending clothes, and space to store things. Few expressed an interest in landscaping and shrubbery and borrowing money (table 8). Many homemakers said they do not buy new clothes but get them through gifts or exchange with relatives or at rummage sales or from Salvation Army. Clothing problems pertained primarily to the children.

Table 8. Homemaking Problems on Which Homemakers Would Like to Have More Information.

	Number	Percent
Space to store things	31	21
Making clothes or mending	30	21
Buying clothes	29	20
Taking care of clothes	24	17
Cleaning the house	23	16
Raising children	21	15
Furnishing the house	19	13
Fixing up house	18	12
Buying things for house	18	12
Landscaping and shrubbery	8	6
Borrowing money	7	5
Total	145	

Few of these homemakers are concerned with buying furnishings for the house because they don't have money. They just "do with what they have." Many pointed out they do not borrow money because of inability to pay it back. Quite a few houses had no space for lawns or shrubbery. Several did express an interest in plants and flowers.

Spare-time Activities

Homemakers were asked what they liked to do most in their spare time. Watching television or listening to the radio, or sewing and knitting were the most pervasive spare-time activities. A few prefer visiting, religious activities, walking, and reading (table 9).

Table 9. Personal Preferences for Spare-time Activities.

	Number	Percent
Watch television, listen to radio	29	21
Sew, knit, crochet	28	21
Read	22	16
Rest	13	10
Housework	12	9
Walk	5	4
Visit	5	4
Pray, religious activities	3	2
Other	19	14
Total	136	101

Sixty-one percent of these homemakers sew. When asked how much they sew, the most common response was "mending" or "patching." A few constructed clothing. Several said they don't have a sewing machine and therefore what sewing they do is by hand.

Socioeconomic Status

Homemakers were asked about certain items they may or may not have in their home. Eighty-six percent had a radio, 86 percent a television

set, 43 percent a telephone, and 28 percent an automobile.

Newspapers and magazines represent important channels of communication for these families. Forty-six percent subscribe to a daily paper, 35 percent to a Sunday paper, 7 percent to a weekly paper, 5 percent to a foreign paper, and 22 percent receive one or more magazines. Such magazines mentioned included Red Book, Good Housekeeping, Reader's Digest, Family Circle, VFW Magazine, McCall's, Sportsmen, Saturday Evening Post, and Better Homes and Gardens. Several mentioned they received these magazines second hand from other members of their families or from neighbors (table 10).

Table 10. Homemakers Having Various Items or Access to Various Newspapers and Magazines.

	Number	Percent
Radio	124	86
Television	124	86
Telephone	62	43
Automobile	41	28
Daily paper	66	46
Sunday paper	51	35
Weekly paper	10	7
Foreign paper	7	5
Magazines	32	22
Total Respondents	145	

Eighty-five percent belong to a church with almost half attending church weekly (table 11). When asked what organizations they belong to, other than the church, 81 percent said none, 14 percent one, and 5 percent more than one. If any organization, it was most likely the Parent-Teacher Association.

The homemakers completed an average of 7.3 years of formal schooling. Ten percent actually had no schooling (table 12). Three percent had some type of training beyond high school, usually training in nursing, beauty culture, or business. Only 12 percent had graduated from high school.

Table 11. Homemakers Church Membership and Participation.

Participation	Number	Percent
No	21	15
Yes attend weekly	66	46
Yes -- once or twice monthly	18	13
Yes -- seldom	30	21
Yes -- never attend	8	6
Total	143	101

Table 12. Highest Grade of School Homemakers Completed.

Formal Schooling	Number	Percent
0	15	10
1-5	19	13
6-8	57	39
9-11	33	23
12	17	12
More than 12	4	3
Total	145	100
Average	7.3 years schooling	

The interviewer made a judgment about the ability of the respondent to read English. Sixty-four percent were rated as being good in their ability to read English, 24 percent as fair, and 13 percent were rated as not being able to read English.

Only 5 homemakers were employed and 4 others were looking for a job.

The average monthly income of these families was \$132.02. This included the money received from public assistance. Thirty-six percent had a monthly family income of less than \$100; 30 percent, \$100-149; and 34 percent \$150 or more. The range was \$26 to \$296 (table 13).

Table 13. Monthly Family Income (including public assistance).

Dollars	Number	Percent
Less than \$100	51	36
\$100 - \$149	43	30
\$150 and more	50	34
Total	144	100
Range \$26-\$296		
Average income \$132.02		

Sixty-six percent of the families interviewed were on public assistance. This is the same proportion as existed among the total group who were on the Food Stamp plan in the county. Hence, 34 percent of those interviewed were not on public assistance, 14 percent were on old age assistance, 30 percent on dependent children assistance, and the others were distributed among other types or combinations of assistance dependency (table 14).

Table 14. Type of Public Assistance Received.

	Number	Percent
None	49	34
Dependent children	43	30
Old age	20	14
General	10	7
Dependent children and disabled	9	6
Disabled	6	4
Blind pension	4	3
Blind and general	2	1
Old age and dependent children	1	1
Total	144	100

All homemakers interviewed were white. Of the total population in Luzerne county (346,972), only 1,308 were nonwhite as of 1960.

The head of the family was employed in only 12 percent of the families. Sixty percent of the unemployed family heads had been unemployed more than 5 years. These families lived in various types of dwellings. Forty-four percent lived in single-unit houses, 39 percent in multiple-unit houses, and 18 percent in apartments.

Interviewers Ratings of House and Furnishings

Interviewers rated the condition of the house and furnishings into 3 categories: good, fair, and poor. Ratings were also given on the orderliness of the house and neatness of the homemakers. Relatively few cases were classified as poor (table 15).

Table 15. Interviewers Ratings of the Condition of the House and Furnishings, General Orderliness and Cleanliness of House, and General Neatness of Homemaker.

	House Percent	Furnishings Percent	General order- liness and clean- liness of house Percent	General neatness of homemaker Percent
Good	44	46	56	58
Fair	35	35	32	31
Poor	21	19	13	11
Total	100	100	101	100
Number of respondents	144	142	142	142

Family Situation and Composition

These homemakers represented various types of families. Forty-three percent were a family in which the husband and wife live together, with or without children. In 28 percent of the cases, the husband was deceased; in 3 percent, the wife was deceased; in 18 percent, the husband or wife were separated or divorced (table 16).

Table 16. Type of Family Situation in Which Homemakers Lived.

	Number	Percent
Husband and wife together	62	43
Husband deceased	41	28
Separated or divorced	26	18
Wife deceased	5	3
Woman living alone	2	1
Man living alone	1	1
Other	7	5
Total	144	99

The average size of family was three. Twenty-nine percent came from one-member families; 21 percent from two-member families; 10 percent from three-member families; and 17 percent from six or more member families (table 17).

Table 17. Size of Family.

Number of members	Number	Percent
1	42	29
2	30	21
3	15	10
4	17	12
5	16	11
6 or more	24	17
Total	144	100
Average per family	3	

Twelve percent of the homemakers lived in the house they were living in for 1 year or less; 15 percent lived in their present house for more than 25 years (table 18). Homemakers varied considerably in length of time they lived in the community. While 19 percent had lived in their community 10 years or less, 28 percent had lived there 50 years or more. The average homemaker lived in the community for 33 years.

Table 18. Years Lived in Present House.

	Number	Percent
1 year or less	18	12
2 - 3	26	18
4 - 5	21	15
6 - 9	21	15
10 - 15	16	11
16 - 25	21	15
26 or more	21	15
Total	144	101

Summary and Conclusions

An educational project was developed to teach homemakers on the Food Stamp Program ideas about foods and nutrition and to provide professional sources of information. The method of teaching was 12 IBM size cards; two were mailed each month, April through September 1964. A sample of 145 recipients in the Wilkes-Barre district were personally interviewed to evaluate the project. A high proportion recognized the Penny Planner cards and had seen practically all of them. More than half read the cards and almost half filed them. Over half rated them as being of some help, primarily in providing recipes. Few sought additional information from suggested professional sources.

Nine to 35 percent of the homemakers tried the various recipes. Homemakers have started using new kinds of foods but this change is primarily due to the Food Stamp Program, rather than the Penny Planner cards. Some homemakers talked to family members or relatives about the cards but few shared them with neighbors.

Homemakers in families with children tended to be more interested in the information than those without children. Homemakers in families with more income were more likely to have used the information about foods;

income was positively associated with size of family since two out of three were on public assistance which is based on number of family members. Homemakers with much ability to read English were more likely to have read the cards and used the recommended foods. Many characteristics of the homemaker and family, such as condition of the house and furnishings, spare-time activities, and neatness of the homemaker, were not associated with effectiveness of the educational program.

Hoarding recipes is evidently part of the culture of these homemakers, even though many will never use them. Since they are not in the habit of receiving much mail or recognition, perhaps the Penny Planner cards were perceived as being of value because someone was concerned about them, as manifested by the cards.

No doubt more personal approaches will be needed to change behavior significantly, but this mass media method has been accepted with a high degree of satisfaction by the Food Stamp Program recipients. Educational specialists will need to consider the heterogeneity of the low-income population. Some people are old, some are young; some are fairly well-educated, others have no education; some are individuals living alone, others have many children; some are chronically disabled, others are healthy. Since these people have varying problems and resources, educational programs with several dimensions are required, not only in subject matter but also in methods of teaching.

