

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF HANDICRAFT EDUCATION IN GENERAL SCHOOLS IN LATVIA

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Abstract. In the article the historical development of handicraft education in general schools in Latvia is analyzed. It describes the period from the end of 19th century till nowadays in Latvia. This article analyzes the programs and standards of handicraft subject during this period as well as well-known Latvian educators as A. Dauge, Al. and A. Dzervitis opinions on methods for acquiring handicraft.

Key words: handicraft, practical works, manual training, housekeeping, handicraft and home economics, textile, woodwork, metalwork, textile works, program, standard.

Introduction

Handicraft education in Latvia has been substantially influenced by political, economical and national traditions: while handicraft education was introduced in Europe, Latvia was a part of Tsarist Russia, in 1918 Latvia become an independent state, in 1940 Latvia was occupied by Russian army, in 1991 Latvia regained its independence. In the course of time the name of this subject has changed from “Handicraft” (Rokdarbi) to “Practical works” (Praktiskie darbi) and “Manual training” (Darbmaciba), “Craft training” (Amatu maciba)- for boys and finally has got a name ”Majturība” which in direct translation means “Housekeeping”, but officially is translated as “Handicraft and Home Economics”.

Latvia has long lasting traditions of making textile, wooden, metal and ceramic objects of applied art. It is known from investigations of archeologists and ethnography as well as from materials in museums collections and plenty of publications. At the end of the 19th century one of the most extensive and productive field of art craft was textile goods. (30, 67) That substantially influenced also the content of handicraft lessons. In the handicraft programs of the beginning of 20th century we can observe tendency to teach not only some handicraft technique or simply make some object, but also to decorate it, create esthetically beautiful things, based in Latvian tradition.

Handicraft education at the end of 19th and beginning of 20th century

Preconditions for teaching handicraft in general schools

The Subject “Handicraft” in the school programs of general schools in Latvia was introduced in 1874. (64, 11) As mentioned in “Macisanas radītāji prieks Vidzemes evangeliski-luterāņu tīcības lauku skolām” (Handbook for Vidzeme’s Evangelical Lutheran country schools) in one-year parish school handicraft was planned only for girls 3 lessons per week. In two-years parish school garden works were planned 2 lessons per week for both genders, with indication that in wintertime in the place of garden works it is possible to teach singing. (43)

Karlis Cirulis, a socially active Latvian, played a very significant role in the development of handicraft education in Latvia. In the world he is known as the creator of Russian handicraft teaching system.

K. Cirulis graduated the Baltic Teachers Seminar. He worked as a teacher in Dundaga in Latvia (1878-1880). In 1879 he attended handicraft courses in Kuldīga, directed by Danish work

school representative A. Clauson-Kaas. In 1883 he finished St. Petersburg Teachers Institute and became a handicraft lecturer in this institute. From 1888 till 1890 in Riga he organized the first wider courses for preparing handicraft teachers of city and countryside schools. (30,65; 58, 223). He is known as an advertiser of work school ideas in pedagogic, as well as creator and introducer of special handicraft system in Russian school praxis. K. Cirulis in his pedagogical writings paid attention to argumentation, content, methodology and organizational questions of teaching handicraft. To improve handicraft education in schools, K. Cirulis tried to improve teachers preparation, to make a system from separate tasks and working techniques, to consider teaching handicraft in general school as one of educational tasks. (58, 223-225) The Latvian education historian Janis Anspaks have researched that K. Cirulis developed preconditions for organizing handicraft lessons so, that during those lessons children's artistic development would be promoted. (2)

In the beginning of the 20th century work school ideas (the articles of such thinkers as Dewey, Kershensteiner, Gaudig and others) had been widely distributed in Latvia. They mainly emphasized the educational significance of teaching handicraft. One of the most important advanced ideas was the principle of amateur art. Teaching handicraft was indissolubly connected with Latvian ethnographical ornaments. One of the most active advisers of work schools was Latvian Aleksandrs Dauge, who combined the ideas of work schools and general spiritual culture. (12, 3)

A. Dauge advocated an opinion that handicraft has to be acquired as kind of art. He offers the following opinion about relationship of art and handicraft: "Exactly artists should try to influence handicraft education in schools, bringing into it more true and creative amateur art, developing exact, proper estimation by sight and feeling of authenticity, educating people with good taste. " A. Dauge openly criticizes acquiring handicraft only as technique: "Were pure technician - craftsmen teaches handicraft, there easily too practical attitude towards work can be established that can easy become mechanic and stereotyped... And too much mechanized work of craftsman step by step looses any freshness and charm, and it is done without any spiritual inspiration. At the same time artistically done, it always maintains lively interest and fresh fantasy action. Were special handicraft lessons are introduced in schools, there it would be good to teach handicraft in artistic spirit. Then they would develop much more spiritual energy and their educational power and educational value would be bigger." (13, 93) Thereby A. Dauge very obviously shows, what is difference among purely technically made work and work, that is created in "artistic spirit" - observing, acquiring and using art language (means of expression, their order principles), expressing oneself creatively, making beautiful things, such, that delight heart and eyes.

In 1919 by the resolution of Latvian Teachers Congress necessity to connect studies with work was defined. This resolution stated that handicraft has to be introduced in school syllables, workshops and educational, experimental gardens have to be arranged, preparation of handicraft teachers has to be started. By the law, established in 1919, December 8, compulsory general six-year education in Latvia was proclaimed, possible to acquire in native language. (68)

To implement handicraft in school, workshops of handicraft teaching aids were of big significance. In 1919 School department of the Ministry of Education founded first handicraft and school supplies workshops in Riga. Later such workshops were established also in Liepaja, Daugavpils, Jelgava, Bauska, Tukums, Cesis, Rujiena and Limbazi. (48, 1; 30, 425) The task of those workshops was:

- to organize courses for teachers, giving them possibility to learn handicraft techniques and teaching methods,
- to help schools to arrange teaching handicraft for pupils,
- to introduce teachers how to prepare training devices,
- to organize demonstration lessons in workshops.

In 1919 during Christmas holidays first technical courses for teachers took place and 72 teachers attended them. In the program several educational subjects were included, also

handicraft. The biggest interest was about handicraft. Participants could learn paper and carton techniques and things that they made they could take with them as teaching aids. (59, 65) Later during such courses teachers were introduced also to the history of handicraft, handicraft methodology, handicraft technologies and handicraft hygiene as well as applied arts and practical lessons. In practical lessons various techniques were used: appliqué, plastering, easy wooden works, carpenter works, carton works, basketry, metalworking, women handicraft, housekeeping, shoes handling, leather handling and art trade. In time of three years already 4000 Latvia's teachers had attended those courses. (44, 700)

In 1922 the magazine "Kurzemes vards" published an article about the exhibition in Liepaja where it was possible to view different works made in handicraft workshops - wooden, metal and carton works. Plenty of them: paper knives, books, albums, carton cards etc. were decorated with Latvian ornaments. (57, 3)

Latvia's cultural life in the 20-ies of the 20th century was characterized by enthusiasm and optimism. Latvia had won freedom and had come closer to Western Europe. One could feel the consequences of the World War I; a lot of what was initiated and done in the beginning of the 20th century was lost. It was necessary to renew material resources of applied arts and prepare new specialists. Also necessity to build schools of applied arts raised.

In 1923 the Housekeeping Seminar of Kaucminde was founded. In 1926, cooperating with handicraft workshops of Latvia's Ministry of Education, School department, an art trade school in Liepaja was founded. At the end of 20ies in the frameworks of Latvia's Ministry of Education regular art trade courses were developed (since 1931 those courses lasted two-years). In 1933/34 those courses were reformed and the Riga's State Art Trade School (RVMAS) was founded. Its founder was Arvids Dzervitis. Besides RVMAS he has worked in several places - in the Latvian Chamber of trade as a consultant, in the Latvian Housekeeping Institute, in the magazine "Zeltene" as a head of art trade and handicraft department. (30, 424) In 1937 together with his wife Aleksandra Dzervite he created and published a methodology for handicraft "Rokdarbu metodika". In 1934 they together also published a book about net works. Aleksandra Dzervite had finished the Housekeeping Seminar of Kaucminde (1925) and worked there as a teacher (1926-1936) (30, 432). Besides that A. Dzervitis together with other authors prepared and published books about embroidering and Latvian national costumes. (30, 425) In "Rokdarbu metodika" they emphasize, that significance of teaching handicraft should not be considered only narrowly from practical side, but mainly educational significance should be emphasized. In other words properly realized handicraft teaching develops children both spiritually and physically. Also national component in teaching handicraft was emphasized. The book gives a survey of the history of handicraft, its goal, significance, teaching methods and techniques of explaining, handicraft class equipment, handicraft hygiene, syllabus, necessary teaching supplies, pupils amount of work and materials. The methodology includes also planning of lessons, analyzes teaching failures, order in a class, class and home works, their evaluation, bookkeeping of handicraft, handicraft programs in various educational institutions, handicraft literature and necessary education for teachers. Significance of drawing and drafting in acquiring handicraft is emphasized. Authors of this book mention, that schoolgirls have to be able to depict their ideas in an outline with good divided squares, ornaments and colors. Teacher should shortly introduce children to the laws of colors and ornament composition. But acquiring art education in handicraft lessons should not become an end in itself. That emphasizes Al. and A. Dzervisi: "It is not allowed just to draw some ornaments and patterns during handicraft lessons. This will not have any significance. Ornaments should be drawn for definite objects and they have to be adjusted to form and material, for example, pattern should be drawn to some definite thing from the program, like knitted cap, gloves, crocheted scarf etc." Dzervisi point out, that observing this connection between handicraft and drawing "...would promote education of our new generation, that would have far-reaching consequences in cultural life, underlining Latvian way of life."(15)

In 1938 the Daugavpils Art Trade School was founded. In applied art Art Trade Schools were based on studying and creative using of Latvian ethnographical material. In the 20ies-30ies textile art in Latvia was the most popular way of applied art. With its textile works Latvian art got success in the world, for instance, already in 1925 in the international exhibition for decorative art in Paris. The most famous artists were: A. Dzervitis, A. Cirulis, J. Madernieks, J. Bine, J. Sudmalis. (30, 423)

Analysis of handicraft programs

In the syllabus of school year 1920/21 handicraft was planned for grades 4 - 6 two hours a week. For secondary school handicraft was not provided except for girls in the 4th year of secondary school. (27,191) In the methodological recommendations the following was underlined:

- work promotes child's development,
- work helps and facilitates proper comprehension and understanding of studies,
- work advances development of child's character,
- work prepares a child to practical life.

For the grade 1-2 practical works were predicted within the frameworks of other school subjects: mainly plastering, appliqué works, paper works, wooden works. All works had to be done in the class. In the grade 3-4 the same handicraft techniques as in the grade 1-2 were provided, and additionally carton works. In the grade 5 and 6 boys had to be introduced to carpenter works, metal works and glass works. In the grade 5 and 6 girls had to be introduced to crochet, sewing, embroidering (open-works and cross-stitch), basements of knitting, knitting socks, mending socks and clothes, making underwear and table-linen). It was also advised to engage both girls and boys according to circumstances in gardening, poultry, cattle breeding, painting, pottery and other works. (33,102-109; 18,6)

Since 1925/26 handicraft was predicted for grade 3-6 two lessons a week, pupils could be divided in groups: boys and girls. In the program already several goals for teaching handicraft are formulated: to satisfy child's inclination to activity and movement, to develop child's artistic taste, ability to use geometry, mathematics, drawing and other real sciences in practical life, to introduce a child to characteristics and implementation of various materials and tools, that will have a big significance in his/her future life. The program also mentions, that handicraft has to be used as method in all subjects from grade 1 till grade 2. Following working forms were recommended: modeling, paper cutting, appliqué works, wooden and basketry works. Starting from the grade 3 boys had to acquire wooden works, carton works, book binding; girls had to acquire embroidering, knitting, mending socks, knitting mittens, sewing underskirts, sewing a part of Latvian national costume – women shirt. (34)

The program for school year 1926 recommended that in the first half a year of grade 1 handicraft could be regular subject 1-2 times a week at the expense of environmental education subject. In those schools, where there are no carpenter workshops, garden works should be done. Unlike previous program for girls it was advised to sew also national apron and bodice. It was advised to embroider made goods with Latvian national ornaments. It was planned for grade 5-6 that girls in the autumn and spring have housekeeping, but during winter months – women handicraft. (35)

First and second parts of the book "Handicraft for girls" ("Meitenu rokdarbi") by El. Farta were published in 1926-1927. This book dealt with handicraft techniques and things to be made according to the program, additionally giving a lot of methodological instructions for teaching handicraft. This book was richly illustrated.(16; 17)

Since 1928 handicraft lessons were planned from grade 3 till grade 6: in grade 3-4 four lessons a week, in grade 5-6 three lessons a week. For boys like in previous program advised works were: wooden works, wattle-works, carton works, bookbinding, metal works, cattle

breeding, and making teaching aids. For girls it was advised to learn to make: bag for handicraft, washing patch, simple ways how to mend clothes, socks, mittens, undivided bodice with straps, national apron, knitted sock, women's national chemise, women's pants. It was advised to take pupils in excursion to production companies.(36)

The content of the program for 1930 is similar to the one for 1928, also number of lessons is the same. (37)

Since 1935 handicraft as separate discipline was introduced already from the grade 2. But the number of lessons was reduced: from grade 2 - 4 one lesson a week for everybody, from grade 5-6 for boys two lessons a week, for girls one lesson a week, because girls had home economics two lessons a week. In the home economics following themes were introduced: nourishment, clothes, works at home, cooking. Already from grade 2 boys and girls had handicraft separately.

Girls had to acquire:

- sewing, starting with needle-book, then bag for handicraft, bodice, apron, women chemise, women pants, little bodice,
- embroidering - with colored works pricks (handicraft bag, thing by option, women chemise), one-way open work (thing by option),
- knitting-(washing patch, sock, mitten),
- crochet- making needle-lace around washing patch, crocheted scarf,
- weaving ribbons,
- darning of cloth, knitted things.

In the frameworks of handicraft it was also planned to introduce pupils to national costumes of the most characteristic parts of Latvia.

Handicraft program for boys had two variants: for city schools and for country schools. Programs differed in following: in the country schools boys had to acquire also mending different tools, leather works, glazing, as well as conservation of wooden materials, concreting, brick-laying and plastering. All boys had to acquire: paper works, basketry, net works, making cords, macramé, wood cutting, sawing, how to plane timber, connect wooden parts, hone working instruments, painting, filing, brazing. Boys had a big choice what to make. (31) Accordingly to the program that was approved by Ministry of Education in 1935, Al. un A. Dzervisi published a book about girl's handicraft "Meitenu rokdarbi" (14) and A. Balodis published a book about boy's handicraft "Zenu praktiskie darbi un to metodika"(3). The content of the program, published in 1938, was the same as of the one, published in 1935.(32)

At the time of Independent Latvia handicraft was taught in a national spirit. Attention was paid to decorating objects with Latvian ornaments. Both boys and girls had to arrange special handicraft exercise-books, were they had to mention all given and done works, give explanations with drawings, make calculations about material costs. Carelessly made and dirty works had to be corrected and cleansed.

In its turn representatives of European work schools and art pedagogic remarkably inspired the formulation of the necessity of handicraft. If we investigate handicraft programs in chronological continuity, we can see, that every next program has been more and more developed, offers bigger diversity of objects to make, objectives and arguments of handicraft subject are improved.

Handicraft acquirement during soviet time

When Russian army invaded Latvia in 1940, educational institutions experienced radical changes. In the 1941, June 14, a part of teaching staff was deported to Russia. In the Soviet time schools had to forget the Latvian national pedagogical traditions. The main goal was to teach pupils industrial working skills, impart knowledge that mostly consisted of slogans and catchwords of the Communist party. (38, 250)

As the Latvian education historian Leonard Zukov researched, in 1945/1946 pupils of grades 1-6 and 8-10 had practical works 1 lesson per week. Pupils of grades 7 and 11 did not have handicraft. At that time the spirit of handicraft teaching in the independent Latvia was still alive. Pupils of grades 1-4 acquired handicraft together. They acquired different kinds of handicraft: molding out of clay, wood carving, paper and cardboard works, work with veneer, basketry, macramé, sawing, spiking, painting works, works with cloth, shaving, choosing clothes and taking care for them, arranging a flat, cooking. At grades 5-6 and 8-10 boys and girls acquired practical works from different programs. Boys acquired wood and metalworking, girls – cooking, knitting, sewing, embroidering, arranging interior. (69, 73)

However since the school year 1947/1948 only pupils of grades 2-4 had practical works, 1 lesson per week, boys and girls separately. Since the school year 1948/49 the subject “Practical works” was not anymore included in the teaching plan, however it was allowed to teach it for grades 2-4. Since 1949/50 this subject regain was included in the teaching plan for grades 2-6 1 lesson per week. In that period by schools functioned a lot of technical and agricultural hobby groups. (69, 74)

Since 1952 polytechnic training was introduced in general schools. The goals of this training were:

- Connect theory and life.
- Introduce pupils to the principles of production to help pupils in their deliberate choice of future profession after graduation of secondary school. (69, 74-75)
- In the teaching programs, which were approved until 1990 the main goal of handicraft was: to prepare pupils to work. Each class at the end of school year had an excursion to some industrial enterprise. (4-11;45; 49-56)

However the polytechnic training was much more broader and was realized not only during practical work lessons:

- Since the school year 1953/1954 pupils had practical training at industrial enterprises, soviet collective farms and kolkhozes.
- Since the school year 1959 /60 pupils had public-profitable activities all year long. (69, 75-83)
- Since the school year 1955/56 at general secondary schools practical classes in agriculture, machine teaching and electrical engineering were introduced for grades 8-11 (for grades 8-10 1 lesson per week, for grade 11 – 2 lessons per week). (63) Since the school year 1961/62 secondary schools were reorganized and became general polytechnic work and production training secondary schools. In those schools one could study different professions. Since the school year 1964/65 productions training in secondary schools in such large quantities was stopped, but since 1977 a decision was made to create in various enterprises and kolkhozes training workshops and sections for pupil’s production training. Production training centers in Latvia were introduced. (69, 82-83)

Since the school year 1954/55 schools started to use new teaching plans and programs. According to those programs boys and girls in grades 1-4 had handicraft together 1 lesson per week. Pupils acquired paper and cardboard works, work with clay, plastic, fabric (sewing, embroidering), woodworking, technical modeling, various works in training and experimental plot. In grade 5 (since the school year 1955/56 also in grade 6) boys and girls had together practical works 2 lessons per week:

- in workshops (wood and metal working as well as combined works and technical modeling),
- in training and experimental plot (1/3 from the common number of lessons) .

During that period pupils of grades 5 and 6 did not have textile works, a lot of those works were not suitable for girls. (45)

Since the school year 1956/57 the content of practical works for grades 5-7 was divided in 2 parts:

- 1) common part both for girls and boys (wood and metal working, electric installation),
- 2) technical work – for boys, house keeping – for girls.

Boys acquired woodworking (veneer working, wood marking, sawing and shaving, connecting wooden details), metalworking (technological characteristics of different metals, wire working, operations of metal preliminary treatment, introduction to work with boring machine and lathe) as well as electric installation works (reading of electric schemes, switching electric appliances to the net and others.)

Girls acquired mostly sewing (it was advised to make an apron, scarf, sweatpants, slippers, little bag and other things) and cooking. They acquired knitting, embroidering (it was advised to make an overlaid or similar good), taking care of clothes and underwear, space arrangement and taking care of it. In 1957/58 and 1958/59 5 lessons were allocated for crochet. (49; 50; 51; 52)

Since the school year 1960/61 boys and girls of grades 5-7 had to acquire different content: boys – technical work, girls – housekeeping. Themes remained the same as before. (53; 54)

Since the school year 1962/63 both girls and boys at grade 8 had woodworking, metalworking and electric installation, the rest of the content is similar to the previous one. (55)

It is interesting, that during this period the program for girls includes also national elements (girls should learn about the wide possibilities to use Latvian ethnographic ornaments). Although it is not set as a goal, we can see tendency to acquire handicraft as art (program defines that girls have to learn basics of composition, color scheme and develop a wish to be creative in the field of applied art.)

Also further programs until 1973 have similar Manual training content. (56;5)

Since 1973 the content of Manual training has changed substantially: since grades 4-8 boys and girls acquired different content; boys – technical works, girls – home economics. Country schools have also agricultural works. In previous programs boys mainly acquired one theme in one grade. Now boys in each grade acquired various themes: at grades 4-7 woodworking and metalworking, electrical engineering, at grades 4-5 work with constructor, at grade 8 – work with different materials, gas-engine, production technologies, organization and economics.

For girls a theme “Applied art” is included 4 lessons at grade 7. This theme still exists in the handicraft and home economics content. Since this year the content of Manual training again includes crochet (grade 4). In each grade girls have cookery, work with fabrics – sewing or/and embroidering, electrical engineering; knitting (grades 5-6), the culture of housing (grades 4 and 8), taking care of indoor plants (grades 4-6). (6; 7; 8; 9)

Accordingly to the program that was approved by the Ministry of Education in 1973, a supplementary book for the teachers of Manual training (24) and teaching aids were published (19- 23; 65-67).

From school year 1986/87 Manual training and Professional training was 1 lesson per week from grade 1-3 for boys and girls together, 2 lessons per week for grade 4-8 and 4 lessons per weeks from grade 9- 10. From grade 4- 6 practical work for boys and girls was separated, but from grade 7- 10 there was professional training. (66, 85) From grade 4-6 the housekeeping for girls was 69 %, the agricultural works 31%. For boys-technical work-69 %, the agricultural works 31 %. In the schools without training and experimental plots the girls acquired only housekeeping, but boys -only technical works.

The housekeeping consisted of crochet, embroidering, knitting, work with fabric, applied art, taking care of clothes, cookery, electrical engineering, the culture of housing, taking care of

indoor plants, repair works. In the crochet, embroidering, knitting the girls got acquainted with materials, instruments, the basic elements and made simple textile works. In the work with fabrics the girls acquired the sewing machine structure, materials, the construction, modeling and sewing of works. Only the themes Applied art (4/2 lessons) and embroidering (16/ 10) were connected with acquiring national culture.

The technical work parts consisted from woodwork, elements of machine teaching, metalwork, electrical engineering, combined works and repair works. (4)

From school year 1988/89 Manual training for grade 5-9 for boys and girls was separated. The program, published in 1988, among other targets of this subject, includes a target to develop technical and elementary artistically abilities. The ways of handicraft are the same as in preliminary program, but more attention is paid to acquiring composition. The handicraft techniques are more considered as a part of applied art. In the content of the program the theme "The folks costume of Latvian regions" is included. (11)

Positive moment was, that during the Soviet period there was a centralized system of creating visual aids also for acquiring handicraft: posters, examples, etc. Those visual aids were given to each school.

During the Soviet times some processes in Latvia stimulated acquiring handicraft as applied art. A lot of girls, who had finished Riga's, Liepaja's and Rezekne's Secondary schools of applied art, worked in general schools as handicraft teachers and tried to apply in work their art school experience. As turned out from the interview with the experienced handicraft teacher Spidola Lejniece, in 1954-1974 she worked in Riga's pioneers Palace as the head of the Applied and art department. She organized annual city and region's exhibitions of fine and applied art. Once three years she organized Republic pupil's exhibitions of fine and applied art. Professional artists were committeeman, they selected works for those exhibitions and consulted teachers, which works are more valuable and why. By schools there were a lot of different hobby groups of applied art and professional artists conducted a lot of them.

During the Soviet Latvia handicraft teachers almost were not prepared. Exception was The Liepaja's Pedagogical Institute; there it was possible to acquire profession of handicraft teacher as the second profession. As a turning point can be mentioned the second part of the 80ies of the 20th century, at that time preparation of manual training teachers was started: since 1983 at the University of Latvia later at the Latvia University of Agriculture (since 1989), at the Liepaja Pedagogical Academy, the Daugavpils Pedagogical University (since 1985). (1, 7) In 1993 the Rezekne Higher educational institution was founded, also there students can acquire profession of handicraft and home economics teacher. Until the middle of the 90ies a profession of handicraft and home economics was very popular and to enter the university, students had to pass a big competition. Also nowadays in all institutions of higher education mentioned above it is possible to get the qualification of handicraft and home economics teacher.

On the whole we can say, that on the one hand during the Soviet times the following goal was realized –polytechnic training that was stated from Moscow. However on the other hand a tendency to teach the basics of Latvian ornaments and composition, as well as Latvian applied art.

Handicraft acquirement from the end of 20th century until nowadays

As independent Latvia was proclaimed in 1991, system of education has changed overall; emphasis is put on educating a creative personality. Until the year 2005/2006 in grades 1-4 boys and girls acquired the subject "Handicraft" together, 2 lessons a week. Now it is 1 lesson a week. Since 1990 until 1998 handicraft subject for boys was called Craft training, it was acquired 2 lessons per week from grade 5 till 9. Since 1998 all pupils of the grades 5-9 have "Handicraft and Home economics", 2 lessons per week (for girls since 1990), class is divided into two groups.

Handicraft program, published in 1991, emphasizes that together with all textile techniques: knitting, crochet, embroidering, sewing, weaving and macramé also composition has to be acquired. The content of handicraft includes also decorative applied art, underwear, clothing, home culture, food. 1/10 of the total number of lessons is devoted to nourishment. The objectives of the subject "Handicraft and Home Economics" are: "to promote the development of harmonious, creative, intellectual, moral personality", "to develop positive habits and esthetic taste." (41)

Since 1992 the content of subjects in Latvia is determined by the Standard.

The Primary education Standard of "Handicraft and Home Economics" for grades 5-9, established in 1992 includes nourishment education, textile techniques (crochet, knitting, embroidering, macramé, weaving), clothes, underwear and table-linen, applied art and culture of space. The theme clothes and underwear includes designing of clothes, modeling and sewing. Emphasis is put on acquiring national cultural heritage in various themes of textile and applied art. (47)

The Primary education Standard of "Craft training" for grades 5-9, established in 1992 has compulsory part and facultative part. Compulsory pupils have to acquire woodworking, metalworking, electrical engineering, and elements of machine teaching. Additionally pupils could choose repair works, clothes, nourishment etc. (46)

Positive changes were introduced by the Handicraft program for grades 10-12 grade, published in 1992. This program includes various works of decorative applied art, among them textile works. (42) In this period in many general schools in Latvia handicraft subject was offered and many pupils gladly chose it. When Latvia's independence was proclaimed both pupils and teachers had a big interest about national costumes, and often in handicraft lessons parts of national costume or even full national costume were made.

In 1994 P. Vucenlzdans, the lecturer of Manual Training Methodology at University of Latvia, published the Fundamentals of Methodology for Manual Training.(68)

In 1998, August 12, the new Primary education Standard of "Handicraft and Home Economics" for grades 5-9 was approved. It defines that all pupils have to acquire Handicraft and Home Economics. Educational process was oriented to acquiring abilities and skills, practical experience, creative approach to any work. The goals of this subject were the following: promote development of moral, intellectually rich, creative, harmonic and competitive personality, promote awareness of national identity etc. The content is divided in two parts: A and B, their proportion is the following: A=1/3, B=2/3. The part A is the same for all pupils, it includes nourishment, housekeeping, protection of people and environment, also clothes. We have to mention that the part A includes also a bit of handicraft, because acquiring the theme "Clothes", pupils learn to mend clothes. Mainly handicraft is included in the part B, two equivalent programs are offered:

B1 - textile works, that include also ethnography, acquiring applied art and composition. Textile techniques to acquire are the following: crochet, knitting, embroidering, weaving, batik, and sewing.

B2 - woodworking, metalworking and graphical language (at primary school there is no separate subject – technical graphic).

Creative approach is emphasized in the acquisition of textile works. Composition and its realization in concrete material are planned for acquisition of every textile work theme. Pupils have to acquire the basic elements of knitting, crochet, embroidering and sewing. The basic elements of knitting are: cylindrical knitting, knitting Latvian traditional mittens, and sweaters. The basic elements of crochet are: crocheting simple objects and lace. The basic elements of embroidering are: stitches of colored works, one-way open works and cover stitches. The basic elements of sewing are: introducing of textile materials, designing clothes, modeling and cutting out, different stitches, sewing by hand or sewing-machine, sewing technologies (sewing pillow, sack, apron, T shape cloth, skirt, pants, blouse. At the end of acquiring textile techniques at grade 9 pupils learn to combine different textile techniques.

During the process of learning woodworking and metalworking pupils have to acquire different materials, instruments, auxiliaries, work with a plane, chisel, saw, perforator, file and lathe, as well as work with woodworking and machines. During the process of learning graphic language pupils have to acquire drafting instruments, devices and materials, projection figures, scission and cut, pictures of detail's standard elements and junctions, lay out of body's surface, ethnographical patterns, junctions of lines and documents of constructors. (39)

Since 2005, September 1 the new "Handicraft and Home Economics" standard for primary education has been accepted for grades 1-9. From grade 5-9 the class is divided in two groups. The standard defines what themes have to be acquired together: home, security, planning of home works, clothes, food, basic principles of shopping (from grades 1-4 also handicraft). Pupils of grades 5-9 can choose one of two equivalent handicraft programs:

1. Technologies of textile and other materials (of teacher's choice).
2. Technologies of wood, metal and other materials (of teacher's choice).

Traditionally pupils obligatory have to acquire the following textile techniques: crochet, knitting, embroidering, weaving, and sewing. According to the new standard pupils also have to acquire printing and painting on cloth.

Pupils obligatory have to acquire the following wood working and metal working techniques: sawing, hammering, folding of metal wires and tin, drilling, shaving, turning, connecting details, surface treatment. (40)

Unlike previous standard, this is much more general, it is not concretized, what exactly from each textile, woodworking or metal working techniques, has to be acquired. Thereby teachers have bigger possibilities for creativity. The standard emphasizes sequence of the handicraft process: idea, formation, realization of this idea and evaluation. (40)

At secondary school pupils can also choose "Handicraft and Home Economics" as one of school subjects. Unfortunately, there are not many schools that have this subject.

Since 1992 a lot of training devices for acquiring "Handicraft and Home Economics" have been published, both for definite grades and special issues of handicraft content, for example, textile composition, knitting and crochet, sewing etc. (28;29;62;25). Writings of Latvian authors J. Anspaks, V. Hibnere, B. Vaivare, D. Pudane, M. Urdzina-Deruma, M. Kokina and others express necessity to acquire handicraft as art. (2; 26; 60; 61; 62).

In the 90th of this century organizing handicraft and home economics Olympiads was started: for grade 5-8 each region organizes Olympiads on their own. Tasks for Olympiads of grade 9-12 are developed by the Examination Center of the Ministry of Education and Science; Olympiads are organized in each region of Latvia. The best participants from each region take part in the State Olympiad of handicraft and home economic. Several alternative Olympiads have been organized also by lecturers of the University of Latvia in cooperation with the Association of Latvian "Handicraft and Home Economics" pedagogues.

Conclusion

Currently the Ministry of Education and Science work by preparing the new standard for secondary education, thereby also the new standard for facultative subject "Handicraft and Home Economics".

There are a number of problems for realizing the content of "Handicraft and Home economics" in elementary school: since the new themes were implemented 1998, the content of handicraft has become very multiform; because of low salaries for teachers in our state a lot of schools lack male teachers, usually they are prepared to teach wood-working and metal working; in many places there are no necessary machines, instruments and materials. Equipment and resources of handicraft cabinets often depend on schools governing body attitude towards handicraft subject. In spite of various problems in implementing the handicraft subject there are

a lot of teachers who teach handicraft with a big enthusiasm and achieve fantastic results: creative, interesting goods, that are made drawing inspiration in Latvian ethnography, nature, arts etc.

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