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Changing but not compromising home economics teacher education in context of COVID-19

Kerry Renwick
University of British Columbia, Canada

Joe Tong
University of British Columbia, Canada

Abstract

The emergence of COVID-19 disrupted higher education programs including teacher education. At one Canadian university teacher educators responded to the changed circumstances according to two time periods. The initial period of shut-down characterized by an emergency pedagogy *and a second period of working* up close, but at a distance pedagogy.

The use of self-study as a methodological approach enabled the authors/participants to take an inquiry-based approach to their practice as teacher educators. Two critical incidents were identified as a way to focus on the dilemmas and decisions that were being made about content and pedagogy being employed.

Two home economics teacher educators engaged in collegial dialogue about their observations and shifting practices in their professional practice with teacher candidates since the onset of COVID-19. By focusing on reflective teaching practices as self-study methodology enables engagement with praxis and to recognition of changes in professional practice.

The use of self-study and critical incidents as methodological approaches offers ways to elicit thick descriptions of home economics as a practice orientated profession.

COVID-19 has created challenges in the delivery of professional programs especially in home economics teacher education. While development and engagement with online learning opens up possibilities it has concurrently offered challenges for young professionals developing a professional persona that is practice orientated.

KEYTERMS: COVID-19, PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE, TEACHER EDUCATION, SELF-STUDY, HOME ECONOMICS

Introduction

Vaines (1980) describes home economics as a mission orientated field where the focus is on knowing how and why to do something. This practical orientation means that it is not possible to separate theory from practice. Rather home economics is problem orientated, drawing on knowledge and implementing action to deal with practical, perennial problems (Bubolz & Sontag, 1988; McGregor, 2010; Vaines, 1980, 2004). Drawing young professionals into the field requires induction and socialisation that serves "to orient newcomers to the culture of the profession" (McGregor, 2011, p. 562). Working with pre-service teachers (PSTs) in a teacher education program with home economics as their specialisation requires spaces that provide opportunity "to understand the home economics profession" (McGregor, 2011, p. 562). Within teacher education there is an additional aspect of induction that of being an emerging teacher requiring teacher educators to support the professional persona of becoming a teacher of home economics.

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Correspondence: **Kerry Renwick** ✉ kerry.renwick@ubc.ca

In the first quarter of 2020 the growing impact and associated concerns of COVID-19 precipitated a number of events including changes in the delivery of teacher education programs from face-to-face to online and distance education modes. While healthcare professionals were being called into action other social systems such as higher education were also drawn into state or national health officer's strategies for managing transmission. The initial responses were fast and typical of an emergency response typified by events and circumstances that are largely unforeseen and requiring immediate action. With time and experience with the new *COVID normal* triage responses were able to move from management of critical work to delivery of teacher education courses in less urgent ways.

Teacher educators in a program graduating home economics teachers have had to utilise the same practical orientation and culture of the field that the PSTs were being inducted into. The capacity of teacher educators to adjust, adapt and innovate highlighted their problem-orientated skills as they coped with ongoing requirements for change. These substantial changes included the ways that classroom contact was facilitated, the way that certifying practica were structured and experienced, the ways learners connected virtually, and the ways individuals built and maintained professional persona. With programmatic changes due to COVID, this paper identified two critical incidents experienced by the teacher educators across ten months beginning in mid-March 2020. It focuses on each event and the responses and impact on teaching and learning with PSTs. Self-study is used as the methodology as it continues the existing reflective practices of the teacher educators and builds on the praxial conversations between the teacher educators and with the PSTs.

Professional practice

According to Macklin (2009) a professional is someone who explicitly focuses on the wellbeing within their work. The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) claims that home economics is a professional discipline that is concerned for equity and sustainable practices and therefore has a global reach (IFHE, n.d.). Renwick (2015) has argued that home economics is a profession because of its connection with students, families and communities through food, textile and family studies that builds "capacity for a *future well lived*" (p. 21, original emphasis). Bubolz and Sontag (1988) have noted that as a mission orientated profession focused on creating balance between people and their environments the professional practice of home economists is not static. When teacher educators reflect on their practice they validate their practical knowledge or in Aristotelian terms, engage with phronesis (Renwick, 2015). It requires ongoing examination and re-examination of professional realities, how these realities are shaped with opportunity to resist restrictive realities that undermine both the practice and professionality (Mahon et al., 2017) using what Kemmis et al. (2014) describe as practice architectures.

Within our current roles we live a multiple, simultaneous reality as we engage in self-study. We are teachers with both content knowledge of home economics and pedagogical content knowledge of how to teach an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary subject (Hodelin, 2008). As McGregor et al. (2008) have noted home economics is a field that is adept at developing unique ideas that are subsequently used to inform our practice. We are teacher educators who are engaging in what Loughran calls "complementary aspects of knowledge and practice: teaching about teaching and learning about teaching" (2014, p. 275). We are practitioner researchers because of our engagement in professional learning practices and our dispositions for improving student learning through our shared reflexive dialogues and conversations (Kemmis et al., 2014). This requires a disposition, a willingness to think about practice in different and new ways. Mockler and Groundwater-Smith (2015) point out that for a teacher to improve their teaching practice they rely "on a deep understanding of context, well-honed and utilised professional judgment, and endless engagement in professional dialogue and discourse based on problematization of practice" (p. 30).

As a practice orientated profession teachers of home economics use their content knowledge about food and textiles to build educational experiences that have meaning within the everyday (IFHE, n.d.; Renwick, 2019) of their students' lives. The inter- and trans-disciplinary nature of the home economics field requires practitioners to not to produce something but to also know how and why something is able to be produced in particular ways (Renwick, 2015). This praxial action is infused with ethical considerations with the intention to support, transform and create better lives (Hodelin, 2008; McGregor, 2010).

Teacher education practice

Our daily lives are replete with complex problems in need of resolution using approaches that Smith (2004) describes as pragmatic and integrated. These approaches make use of knowledge that is derived from both experience and theory that in turn inform the practitioner's practical wisdom (Stenberg & Maarandn, 2020). Practical wisdom is deliberative in nature and requires the ability to perceive what is relevant (Stenberg & Maarandn, 2020) in the everyday and therefore is explicitly embraced by home economics teachers (Renwick, 2015).

Therefore, the practice and professional knowledge of teacher educators focused on home economics teaching specialisation requires not only content knowledge about what is being taught but also pedagogical content knowledge about how to teach (Shulman, 2015). This is closely followed by the practical wisdom to know what pedagogical decisions need to be made, how to adapt as needed and to make ethical practice responses (Stenberg & Maarandn, 2020) that is, to engage in praxial action (Renwick, 2015).

In her comparative analysis of teacher education in Canada, USA, Finland, Singapore and Australia, Darling-Hammond notes that the goal in all five countries was to ensure "that each school is populated by effective teachers" (2017, p. 296). The roles of a classroom teacher and teacher educator are not identical. While classroom teachers will have engaged in pre-and in-service education and professional development the same level of role? support does not exist for teacher educators. Thus, teacher educators develop their practice and identity over time through what Dinkelman et al., describes as "a process of becoming" (2006, p. 6) an evolutionary process (Loughran, 2004, 2014). Ritter (2007) comments about one difference between the teacher and teacher educator roles relates to the focus of the teaching. Whereas teachers are focused on conveying subject matter knowledge, teacher educators are focused on how to teach subject matter. Williams and Ritter (2010) note that being a competent teacher in a school context does not automatically translate to being a competent teacher in teacher education. This supports Ritter's (2007) observation "that the process of becoming a teacher educator is far more complex than is typically acknowledged, as it involves modifications to professional identity as well as to pedagogy" (p. 20).

Becoming a teacher educator is a continuation of a professional practice trajectory. It entails understanding about professional identity (Dinkelman et al., 2006) that evolves through transitions from experienced school teacher to novice teacher educator to one with experience but still engaging in learning. Bullock (2009) argues that being a teacher educator requires more than the application of professional knowledge gained as a school teacher. Imparting knowledge gained through experience, re-contextualising that learning for PSTs requires rethinking by the teacher educator (Ritter, 2007) to construct a different pedagogy, one that works in context of teacher education (Bullock, 2009).

According to Mockler and Groundwater-Smith "to posit that good teaching practice exists and can be quantified in a vacuum, decontextualized from students, is a nonsense" (2015, p. 30). The emergence of COVID-19 and the associated lockdowns and efforts to minimize its spread presents as a stark example of this point. While the global response was for higher education to close campuses and cease face-to-face teaching, the majority of institutions reported a switch to distance learning modes (Marinoni et al., 2020; Tesar, 2020), as well as postponing and rescheduling examinations and study terms and semesters (Aristovnik et al., 2020). Aristovnik et al. have also noted that the impact of COVID-19 on higher education students has had an extensive impact on their life, across their academic, work, social and familial domains.

Decisions to continue offering teacher education programs became a balancing act across several concerns identified by Ellis et al. (2020). Keeping a sense of calm was essential to working through constantly evolving advice while also conveying confidence that issues around practicum and enabling students to complete their professional programs in a timely fashion. Concurrently teacher educators needed to change to use online technology with little to no notice (Firebaugh et al., 2010). This shift has meant that teacher educators have needed to explicitly reflect on and reconsider their pedagogical approach as teaching online and in distance mode is a different experience to face-to-face delivery. The impact of COVID-19 and the resultant changes in and to higher education was a critical point in time and has provoked an evolutionary moment in teacher educators' practices.

Self-study and critical incidents

Self-study is utilised by researcher-practitioners to better understand what they do and has been described by Loughran as "a focal point for those pursuing a better knowledge of their particular practice setting and the work of those with a concern for teaching and learning" (2004, p. 9). As an inquiry-based stance self-study provides opportunity for the practitioner to query, probe and investigate their practice (Ovens & Fletcher, 2014) with the explicit intention for personal understandings to enhance and enrich practice (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2011). While relating the development of self-study, Loughran (2004) underscores its significance as an approach for teacher educators to research their practices. Loughran (2004, 2014) notes that that there is no template, instead self-study literature demonstrates a use of a range of methods and reporting styles that reflect the inter-relationship between the practitioner as researcher and their pedagogical and research practices.

In the absence of a defined method it is an assemblage of possibilities. Loughran (2004) offers key features of self-study that has emerged within the field that include a willingness to be vulnerable, seeking alternatives perspectives so avoid not seeing assumptions and positionings, and reporting learnings to an audience in ways that they too can learn from the research. Self-study often draws from what Loughran describes as dilemmas, tensions and disappointments. He argues that the practitioner will move on relatively quickly from successes. However, events or critical incidents with unintended and negative consequences as well as outright failures are "picked over" to determine causes for future reference.

Teacher educators juggle numerous dilemmas and decisions in their practice incessantly making choices about content and pedagogy. The professional lives of teacher educators are littered with incidents that become critical incidents when they take on a particular meaning about "underlying trends, motives and structures" (Tripp, 2011, p. 25). By spending time with critical incidents to understand the event from multiple perspectives it offers possibilities for reframing and being in conversation with colleagues and the students offers openness and collegiality (Elijah, 2004). An incident is critical because it questions normality and routine through reflection (Tripp, 2011). However, as Loughran points out being reflexive is not sufficient in and of itself. Self-study makes use of reflective practice when the practitioner engages with a personal journey to develop their professional practice, and is shared, enabling it to "be challenged, extended, transformed and translated by others" (Loughran, 2004, p. 26). This creates praxial conversations about understanding the work in both context and time (Kemmis, 2010) and that supports ongoing improvement.

Higher education responses to COVID-19 including the shutting of campuses and movement to online and distance delivery is an example of a critical incident as was the decision to continue to deliver classes online through the remainder of 2020 and into 2021. The university where this self-study is based was within the final four weeks of the term that had begun in January when the pandemic response started. The initial emergency response was to ensure that the shift focused on the welfare of students and to support them in completing their courses. While students were asked to make allowances for their teachers while they facilitated this shift through a range of cobbled together strategies, the full impact of the workload and associated stress remained largely hidden from students. (Tesar, 2020). With continued remote learning in place, teachers were expected to develop online courses for the summer terms within 2–3 weeks. The capacity of teachers to do this varied as some had considerable experience, others only moderate and a third group with no experience. While forced these circumstances have enabled teacher educators to develop their "knowledge and practice of teaching *and* learning about teaching" (Loughran, 2014, p. 272, original emphasis). This development is subsequently understood through the self-study process.

Methodology

This self-study is at a Canadian university where the authors—Kerry and Joe—work in a teacher education program that includes a home economics specialisation. The PSTs enroll into the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program after completing their undergraduate qualification that includes study in at least two areas of home economics content—family, food and textiles. Until March 2020, the Provincial Teacher Regulation Board (TRB) had not permitted any online learning or online practica options within a B.Ed. program however with the implementation of health measures to manage the spread of COVID-19 this changed. Courses that were in progress were moved into an online format overnight so that the final three weeks of the term could be completed. For secondary home

economics PSTs and their teacher mentors, the sudden shift to online learning took place following the Spring Break in week seven of the 13-week practica. There had been a delay to this action, while awaiting the approval from the TRB to allow a partial online practicum. Faculty were subsequently instructed to prepare their courses to be fully online for the summer terms (May—July 2020) and the winter terms (September 2020–April 2021).

Participants

Both Kerry and Joe are home economists with experience teaching in secondary school contexts and have substantial experience in developing online educational content. They teach into the home economics specialisation at the university within the B.Ed. and the Diploma of Education programs. Included in their role as a teacher educator manages and teaches into national and international online teacher education programs and Joe teaches into the B.Ed. and Diploma of Education programs and is a K-12 Apple Professional Learning Specialist.

Data collection and analysis

During the academic year of 2019–20 both Kerry and Joe were focused on the shift to distance, online learning. While they were facilitating this work with PSTs in the B.Ed. program and practicing teachers in the Diploma of Home Economics program they were engaging in reflective practice and deliberately seeking feedback from their students about their transition and wellbeing. Additionally, the Kerry and Joe connected with each other at various times to share experiences and knowledge about their learnings about teaching under the described circumstances, and to consider the impact on their teaching about teaching (Loughran, 2014). Within these conversations they focused on what they know about online, distance learning both theoretically and practically in seamless rather than fragmented ways. The intention of the conversations was to engage with praxis by applying practical wisdom (Renwick, 2015). These praxial conversations are categorised into two time periods. The initial stage was when public health strategies to manage COVID began in March 2020 and is described as a period typified around an emergency pedagogy focused on effective communication responses. The second stage some six months later, focused on a triage pedagogy, the sorting of possibilities that supported PSTs to engage with the distance, online learning.

The development of the critical incidents was subsequently framed around four questions:

1. What IS the critical incident?
2. What is the response?
3. What concerns are identified for home economics PSTs?
4. How were the teacher educator's concerns, challenges "tested" in conversation with colleagues and the students themselves?

These questions enabled a thick description of each incident, highlighting both the circumstances and complexity of each incident (Bott & Tourish, 2016). The thick description is thus continued in the praxial conversations as it merges both the experiences and interpretation thereby inviting the reader to decide if they would have arrived at the same interpretative conclusion (Ponterotto, 2006).

Self-study—critical incident #1

The immediate shift of in-person university classes and the B.Ed. practica at partner sites after the Spring Break during Summer 2020 for the teacher education program is the first critical incident, prompting an emergency response to re-examine formats and predefined requirements of a practical and professional program. Both Kerry and Joe were responsible for supporting PSTs under these emergency conditions and aid them in navigating unexpected and serious circumstances that affected PSTs' continuation in the second half of the teacher certifying practicum and subsequent coursework. Both teacher educators prioritized PSTs' wellness in addition to the sudden shift from in-person to online coursework. Kerry facilitated a professional development program to support colleagues with little to no experience of online delivery. Joe collaboratively wrote course content and templates that were provided to other faculty who were teaching the same course.

Fortunately, PSTs in the home economics cohort had already completed their classes on home economics content and methods before the pandemic. Joe and the PSTs were able to build on their

existing relationship and re-establish trust, support, and honesty when navigating concerns and worries arising from the university, partner school district, and TRB's response to certifying new teachers during the COVID pandemic. The teacher educator paid close attention to new stressors that PSTs faced (including personal health and wellbeing, family and friends, pandemic data and rise of cases, loss of income, relocation, uncertainties of future employment) as he guided them through a revised second half of their certifying practicum and remaining coursework. At the same time. Joe's own stress related to COVID pandemic was difficult to put aside. He recognized the need to allow time and space for himself to process the details of the pandemic for himself first (Williams & Ritter, 2010). Then there was opportunity to offer the same space and time with PSTs (support through resources, phone conversations and check-ins, consistent liaising between PSTs and their practicum school advisors, flexible due dates during coursework, limited and flexible times for video conferencing).

Once the TRB permitted the university to continue the remaining half of the certifying practicum it prompted PSTs to refocus and create new materials, all in the form of digital content. Joe made use of professional networks, colleagues in the field and other teacher educators to gain a holistic sense of how schools were responding. There was a need to identify what requirements and skills the PSTs would need to engage within their practicum under COVID-19 conditions.

After the practicum the PSTs returned to their university classes, now fully online. In an attempt to balance the course objectives and the learning and personal needs of teacher candidates, Joe dedicated a full class to determine what aspects of course format, activities, and responsibilities were effective and what methods were a hindrance to student learning. Joe gathered feedback from students using a design thinking framework (Razzouk & Shute, 2012) a key aspect of the provincial curriculum to model this transition. Then, Joe shifted coursework and format to a primarily asynchronous model to accommodate the PSTs availability and workload. In addition to feedback during the coursework itself, the Education Students Association authored a letter outlining their concerns after experiencing online coursework from the Faculty and its many departments. Both Kerry and Joe spoke at length about the contents of the letter and subsequent professional development opportunities for academic colleagues that addressed the PSTs' concerns. Joe subsequently debriefed these changes with colleagues and as a result was asked to create a revised online course shell (structure and content) to share with colleagues for the following academic year.

The implications of this critical incident connect to the substantial and immediate shifts experienced by the PSTs during the second half of their revised practicum. Joe worked with teacher candidates to develop digital and creative voices quickly using a multitude of digital tools to convey practical skills. Many PSTs had previously only created one or two small demonstration videos as part of course work. The scaling up to full lessons on new online platforms used in schools, was a substantial learning curve for teacher candidates. It was also a motivation for Joe to create modules for digital storytelling to be included in the following year's curriculum.

Self-study—critical incident #2

Starting a new cohort of home economics teacher candidates in a practical-oriented professional program in distance and online mode rather than in person is the second critical incident. Having experienced the sudden shift with the previous cohort, Joe had some time to reflect, consider the "new" realities and triage for conditions to support PSTs success. These responses included an orientation to the university's learning management system (LMS) and ensuring that the program delivery aligned with the professional culture of home economics education.

Getting to know the new home economics PSTs was a priority for Joe. He started the beginning semester in September 2020, with one-on-one interviews with each PST to gather information their capacity for the practical-oriented content of home economics and skills with digital technology fin preparation for online learning. In partnership with the PSTs, Joe crafted a series of learning experiences balancing course objectives around pedagogical content knowledge and practical teaching methods, against home economics skills and content. There was also a need to anticipate the pedagogical content knowledge that the PSTs would require for their practicum under COVID-19 conditions such as the combination of face-to-face classes and online coursework in most school districts. Joe engaged in regular check-ins and conversations with students and colleagues to examine what practices were effective and what teaching strategies would require shifting. He also engaged in regular communication with secondary teachers in multiple school districts who were faced with

shifting timetable, face-to-face instruction, hybrid teaching models, and online-only models of home economics curriculum development. These evolving conversations resulted in a holistic approach to pre-practicum preparation with teacher candidates as the format of the certifying practicum was uncertain.

Most of these PSTs had only just completed their undergraduate program. Their experience of distance and online education was now an accepted aspect of their enrolment however planning was needed on developing home economics pedagogical content under remote and virtual circumstances. Methods courses that previously focused on practical applications of skills, demonstrations, and full-group interaction and simulations required substantial changes. The practical-oriented home economics content was adjusted to include digital content creation. PSTs were encouraged to find their preferred methods for creating and editing home economics digital content. File sharing services were curated by Kerry and Joe using Google Drive to allow the PSTs access to a communal repository of resources.

Both Kerry and Joe have an ongoing pattern of discussing the PSTs' concerns, the teacher educator's pedagogy and classroom practice. Given the implications for teaching emerging professionals in a practical-oriented course this ongoing dialogue aligns with the ongoing reflexive nature of teaching and learning. This was an important practice that was of benefit during the pandemic., especially with home economics content during a pandemic. Prioritizing learners' lived experiences, leveraging pedagogical content knowledge and educational technology in a way that supports learners' creation of educational content that is unique to their identities.

Discussion

The critical incidents described above provide insight into how two specific points in the first ten months of the COVID-19 pandemic were critical incidents in the working lives of two teacher educators specialising in home economics. Both incidents arise due to the practitioners' need to rethink and adjust their work to accommodate changing circumstances in ways that support the PSTs in their classes. The first incident is framed as an emergency pedagogy where in March 2020 the university closed its campus and cancelled face-to-face classes. Literally overnight faculty were required to flip their classes from face-to-face to online, distance delivery under heightened awareness about the seriousness of the emerging. The second critical incident has a less frantic feel since engaging with online, distance education is both predictable and now familiar feel. While still serious management of COVID transmission including changed behaviours such as wearing masks, social distancing, intermittent lockdowns, frequent handwashing and use of sanitisers became increasingly spoken about as the "new normal". The teacher educators still needed to provide a triaged pedagogy due to the continued underlying concerns for transmission, safety and wellbeing that had to be balanced against the students' engagement in a professional program being facilitated under the position of "business as (almost) usual".

Engaging with professional practice through reflection and reflexivity (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009) was heightened across the first twelve months of the pandemic. This was evident in four ways. Firstly, there was an early awareness that face-to-face teaching and learning practices would not necessarily translate into the online, distance mode. In fact, it was necessary to critically evaluate previous practices for their suitability for education in a virtual context. There was an inherent challenge to maintain a student-focused curriculum when the online format seemed to privilege a teacher-centered delivery. For example, group work using pen and paper, post it note activities had to be significantly modified or jettisoned. Class or small group discussion remained but initially facilitated in either breakout rooms or as asynchronous written contributions to an online discussion page. Secondly, there was a heightened awareness that the teacher educators needed to provide clear expectations especially about assessments and to use the online platform's feature to consistently communicate with PSTs improved over time. Using the platform's calendar features communicated both what was due and deadlines. When all of the teacher educators facilitated this the PSTs had greater confidence in planning their workflow and where necessary being able to renegotiate due dates when there were clashes. Thirdly, over time teacher educators became confident with the routine features of the online platform. Feedback from the PSTs and in conversation with teachers in schools worked to introduce additional applications that not only provided new student-centered activities while also building PSTs' confidence with the applications so they could use them on practicum. Finally, much of the learning and ability to adjust teaching and learning approaches were possible because of ongoing conversations with both PSTs and colleagues (Elijah, 2004; Pinnegar &

Hamilton, 2011). Open and honest dialogue about successes and failures were freely discussed (Loughran, 2004). There was both an allowance for and expectation of mistakes. Trying things and being open about what wasn't working were permitted as everyone was in the situation of needing to learn to teach in new and different ways.

Loughran (2004) argues that there are four intertwined aspects of self-study that are evident in our work as we adjusted to working under COVID conditions. He describes how self-study is more than reflective practice in that it also requires a preparedness to acknowledge that sometimes "we don't know what we don't know"; a willingness to engage with others to elicit other interpretations and to reframe the experience; and finally, to be prepared to do so as a shared task. Within the descriptions of the critical incidents these four aspects are evident. Teaching into a professional program that previously had been forced to eschew online, distance education as a delivery mode meant that Kerry and Joe were consistently checking and rechecking their strategies.

Concerns being expressed and shared within discussions included inviting students into synchronous classes, offering opportunity for comments both in written into discussion forums and discussed in small group sessions in breakout rooms. Other issues that arose included making learning intentions clear, providing meaningful directions about what was being expected and scaffolding the course shell in consistent and intuitive ways. These practices evolved as the teacher educators shared experiences, problem solving and peer-coaching (Dinkelman et al., 2006; Ritter, 2007). The opinions of the PSTs were actively sought as the teacher educators invited the PSTs into conversations about how to not only use online technologies but also consider which ones support the learning intentions. These conversations served to foreground the professional practices of teachers who engage in praxial conversations with the intention to be better at what they do because they engage with authentic relationships with the PSTs in their classes (Tripp, 2011).

As teacher educators working with PSTs specialising in home economics education the Kerry and Joe were challenged to think about what a practical subject area looks like under COVID conditions. There was an opportunity to underscore the importance of family and community wellbeing and engaging with home economics because of its "knowledge or knowing is for the sake of doing something with the knowledge" (Vaines, 1980, p. 112). The changes in teaching practices were inevitable in transitioning to online, distance mode. Focusing in on setting up strategies for success during the practicum was a key focus. Usually PSTs can predict the practicum experience because of their 16 years + of being in classrooms. However, teaching online brought new and unknown possibilities and dilemmas that could undermine confidence in past experiences. The teacher educators focused on those things that hadn't changed—building meaningful relationships with students and clarity about teaching intentions (Tripp, 2011). Working with teachers in schools the teacher educators were able to ascertain the platforms and apps being used in various home economics classrooms and then initially ensuring that the PSTs were familiar with them and subsequently competent using them.

Conclusion

As Firebaugh et al. (2010) have noted home economics as a field experiences persistent change and as a result it has developed a profession that is capable of enduring, surviving and withstanding while recognising a need to embrace change and evolve. Self-study brings to the fore insider knowledge about understanding practice and how to improve it (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). In doing so it contributes to what Brandenburg terms as "ways of knowing" (p. 24). The praxial conversations between the teacher educators and between the teacher educators and the PSTs offered thick descriptions (Ponterotto, 2006) about pragmatic strategies and doing as best as possible under COVID conditions. They were also imbued with a sense of history in that in the circumstances of COVID and how educators have responded is a history-making circumstance in and of itself (Kemmis, 2010). Brandenburg (2008) argues that connections with others is a key attribute of self-study and the critical incidents described in this paper demonstrate this position.

Responses to managing teacher education programs during COVID have offered insights into possibilities for what future delivery might look like. One implication is that approaches to online and distance delivery of teacher education will become a common feature of programs that had previously eschewed such an approach. A positive aspect of online learning is that the delivery of courses and programs are not restrained to any one location rather geographic barriers have been removed. With more teachers/educators globally now experienced with some form of virtually

education there is a greater awareness that online distance education is not something that can be put online without substantial rethinking of pedagogies (Tesar, 2020).

A second implication arises in the rethinking about the way programs such as a Bachelor of Education provide induction into a practice-orientated profession. As teacher educators it has been necessary to rethink our work inducting home economics professionals in a teacher education program. For other teacher educators particularly, those preparing home economics specialist teachers, there is opportunity to focus on Vaines' (1980) concern that the PSTs both know how and why they need to teach the subject areas' content. There is an ongoing need to Identify pedagogical practices that supports learning. That the PSTs understand the interplay of theory and practice, and have the capacity to engage with praxial conversations with their peers whether the program delivery is face-to-face, online or in blended mode.

And finally, there is a need to engage with the problem-orientated nature of the profession. For teacher educators the use of self-study is a way to inquire into their practice with the specific intention for understanding and improvement. The use of critical incidents assists in seeing particular situation or event highlighted and partly removed from the multitude of everyday experience. It is this making of time to notice the everyday in meaningful ways (Vaines, 2004) that is also evident in self-study and critical incident analysis. Both offer ways for educator to notice their practices and support the development of practical wisdom. While there is a looking forward to a post-COVID era it will be about families and communities learning to live with COVID and subsequent outbreaks what will rely on new practical wisdom. Learning from our experiences as educators during a pandemic underscore claims about the practice orientation of the home economics profession.

Author biographies

Dr Kerry Renwick *is an Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia. She teaches in the Bachelor of Education (home economics and health education) preparing secondary educators. Dr Renwick also teaches into graduate programs supporting educators to development their careers in a range of contexts. Her research interests include: critical pedagogies; health education and promotion; and food literacy.*

Joe Tong *is an Adjunct Teaching Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia. He teaches in the Bachelor of Education (home economics) program preparing secondary educators.*

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