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**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
FOR HOME ECONOMICS**

International Federation for Home Economics
Kaiser Friedrich Strasse 13, 53113 Bonn , Germany

Tel: 0049 (0) 228 9212590
Fax: 0049 (0) 228 9212591
Email: office@ifhe.org
Web: www.ifhe.org



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Editor's comment.....	1
A Food Literacy Model for Food Education Program Design and Evaluation..... <i>Sandra Fordyce-Voorham</i>	2
Ambassadors for the profession, not just rebranding..... <i>Sue LT McGregor</i>	12
Changing Food Culture for Food Wellbeing..... <i>Juliet Wiseman</i> <i>Jane Murphy</i> <i>Jacqui Hewitt-Taylor</i>	20
The home: Multidisciplinary reflections (book review)..... <i>Sue LT McGregor</i>	34
Notes for contributors	37



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EDITORIAL

Editor's comment

Welcome to the final 2018 Issue of IJHE. I am pleased to welcome two further members of the Editorial Board:

New Editorial Board Members

Dr Elsayed Ahmed Elnashar is a Professor of Textiles and Apparel at KafereIsheikh University, Egypt. He has published over 185 scientific articles and holds editorial board membership on a range of international journals. His areas of specialisation are textiles technology and design

Dr Adri Du Toit is a lecturer in Consumer Studies and Technology Education at North-West University. Her key areas of specialisation are curriculum, education, entrepreneurship, indigenous knowledge, and skills development.

Professor Donna Pendergast

Editor, IJHE

Editor: Donna Pendergast ✉ intjournalhomeeconomics@gmail.com

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INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
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REFEREED PAPER

A Food Literacy Model for Food Education Program Design and Evaluation

Sandra Fordyce-Voorham
Food Skills Australia, Melbourne, Australia

Abstract

Food literacy has emerged as a term used by home economics teachers to describe the knowledge and skills acquired in food education programs in secondary schools. This paper outlines the evolution of food literacy models based on Nutbeam's three-layered healthy literacy model and then proposes a new model for use by teachers to design and evaluate their programs. The model, based on the attributes of several others, is described and exemplified in a 21-item questionnaire. A pilot-survey to test the model was completed by a small convenience sample of 22 15 to 16-year-old students who responded to the questionnaire that covered the three levels of the model. The questionnaire was administered post-completion of a semester unit in food education. The findings showed that the evidence-based model was a reliable tool to evaluate food literacy and skill acquisition. More testing on the model and further development of the survey instrument would need to be performed in similar school settings to validate these preliminary findings.

KEYWORDS: FOOD LITERACY, FOOD SKILLS ACQUISITION, HOME ECONOMICS, TEACHERS, EVIDENCE-BASED MODELS

Introduction

The link between food knowledge and skill acquisition and mitigating the prevalence of obesity, particularly amongst young people, has been gaining interest amongst health and medical professionals (Lichtenstein & Ludwig, 2010; Markow, Coveney, & Booth, 2012; Slater, 2013). This interest has been somewhat of a revelation for public health professionals with their subsequent research and reporting of the work of food educators, primarily home economics teachers in schools (Burton & Worsley, 2014; Markow et al., 2012; Ronto, Ball, Pendergast, & Harris, 2016b; Slater, 2013; Vaitkeviciute, Ball, & Harris, 2015; Vidgen & Gallegos, 2011). Hitherto, there has been a dearth of evidence-based research of the home economics teaching profession. Recent acknowledgement of practitioners' work (Burton & Worsley, 2014; Nanayakkara, Burton, Margerison, & Worsley, 2018; Pendergast, Garvis, & Kanasa, 2011; Ronto et al., 2016b; Vaitkeviciute et al., 2015) has subsequently generated a renaissance of home economics and a call for evidence-based strategies to assist the work of teachers (Burton & Worsley, 2014; Lichtenstein & Ludwig, 2010; Markow et al., 2012). The use of simple and easy-to-use evidence-based models is one example of a strategy to help teachers to plan, evaluate and report on their skill-based programs. The aim of this paper is to set out the evolution of food literacy models, particularly those most relevant to food education, and then to describe the use of a practical, multi-directional food literacy model that is suitable for *all* food educators, those working in schools and in communities, to plan and evaluate their skill-based healthy eating programs. The term 'students' is used to refer to young people in schools whilst the term 'learners' is used more broadly to represent young people in schools and in the community.

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Correspondence: Dr Fordyce-Voorham ✉ sandra.fordyce@gmail.com © 2018 International Federation for Home Economics

Rationale for using models for food skills program evaluation

While there has been anecdotal reporting of successful food skills programs in schools, the extent of this research has been largely limited to participants' self-reporting of 'confidence'. The use of 'confidence' as an indicator has been typically used by facilitators of food skills programs to measure program success, particularly in primary schools. Typical of such programs include *When chefs adopt a school* (Caraher, Seeley, Wu, & Lloyd, 2013), where the facilitators measured outcomes based on students' self-reporting of feeling confident in food preparation and cooking. In another program intervention designed to increase students' fruit and vegetable consumption administered across three primary schools in Denver, Colorado, the researchers acknowledged that participants' self-reporting of dietary behaviour was potentially subject to bias when they found that tested children increased reported intakes of fruits and vegetables (Auld, Romaniello, Heimendinger, Hambidge, & Hambidge, 1998). Whilst participants' self-reporting on dietary behaviours or cooking confidence as a means of determining program success may be used as one indicator, designers and facilitators of food skills programs require additional methods to secure the evidence they need to report on food skill acquisition. For home economics teachers in schools, this means that they need to have evaluation tools that can more objectively measure their students' skills acquisition, and ultimately, program success. From an educational perspective, program evaluation is important for teachers to measure the learning outcomes of their students to determine the success of their programs. This becomes crucial when funding of programs by schools, community and governments is conditional on participants' satisfactory program completion and skill acquisition outcomes. Despite these conditions, there are several reasons that account for the current lack of program evaluation. Several researchers indicated that facilitators such as home economics teachers fail to evaluate their programs either because they lack the time or the need to do so (Gussow & Contento, 1984; Markow et al., 2012; Worsley & Crawford, 2005) or crucially, the absence of adequate evaluation tools (Barton, Wrieden, & Anderson, 2011; Palumbo et al., 2017). Since these tools would contribute to the evidence teachers need to evaluate the success of their programs, an easy-to-use model for them to use in their food classes would expedite their program planning and evaluation. The next section outlines how (mainly) public health researchers and dietitians have responded to this dearth of reporting on the links between food literacy (and implicitly 'skills') and the current health and dietary status of young people.

Food literacy—evolution and revolution

Prior to the late 1990s there has been limited reporting of the term 'food literacy' in the scholarly literature; however, there has been burgeoning interest in, and reporting of food literacy in all its guises (definitions, implications on health status, application in school and community programs) over the last two decades.

Likewise, over this time researchers, health practitioners and home economics teachers have proposed various models and described how they underpin and strengthen their food education programs that aim to improve participants' eating behaviours and health outcomes. The next section provides an overview of some of the more relevant food literacy models and their use in school and community settings.

Food literacy models: description of models and the food literacy model

Typically, food literacy models have used health literacy theories and there have been efforts to link the two by researchers (Gillis, 2016; Palumbo et al., 2017; Velardo, 2015). Nutbeam (2000) devised the concept of health literacy as one based on social and environmental health factors that determined an individual's ability to take control of their health. However, with the focus on health and how the body utilises nutrients for growth and development, this concept may not be so relevant to food educators interested in a more preventive 'everyday focus on food' (Vidgen, 2016). Nonetheless, health literacy models provide an evidence-based starting point for health professionals and food educators. Food educators and practitioners have typically adapted Nutbeam's three levels of health literacy (functional, communicative/interactive and critical) to determine individual variations of self-efficacy. Several of them have conceptualised these to create, adapt or apply food models of their own to inform, plan and evaluate their programs. The following table (Table 1) summarises the content outlining the similarities and differences between other models presented elsewhere (Fordyce-Voorham, 2015) and displays an overview of the more relevant food literacy models.

Table 1 Overview of food literacy models

Theoretical Model	Description	Rationale
European food literacy (Schnögl et al., 2006) described by Colatruglio and Slater (Colatruglio & Slater, 2014)	Three-tiered approach in which the individual 'organises everyday nutrition' in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a self-determined way • a responsible way • an enjoyable way. 	Focuses on an individual's cultural norms and values to foster positive nutrition and healthy eating outcomes.
Food literacy framework (Slater, 2013) described by Colatruglio and Slater (Colatruglio & Slater, 2014) and Velardo (Velardo, 2015)	Three-tiered approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • functional food literacy • interactive food literacy • critical food literacy. 	Designed to meet developmental capacities of individuals as they advance through programs.
Critical Food Literacy Competencies for Young Adults framework (Slater, Falkenberg, Colatruglio, & Rutherford, 2018)	Multi-directional approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • functional competencies (confidence and empowerment with food) • relational competencies (joy and meaning through food) • system competencies (equity and sustainability through food systems) 	Designed as a non-hierarchical framework with three sets of competencies to show the importance and scope of food literacy, to guide and help evaluate curriculum and program development and as an advocacy tool to promote food literacy policy and programs.
Food literacy-Food 'Bildung' (Benn, 2014)	Three-tiered approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nutrition literacy • food, growing, kitchen cooking literacy • cultural and social literacy. 	Presented as a pyramid to display three levels of food literacy designed to foster critical understanding of food, meals and wellbeing.
Critical food literacy (Renwick, 2013)	Three-tiered approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • operational (interactions with food) • cultural (interactions with people and the near environment) • critical (interactions with the social environment). 	Presented as a non-hierarchical model displayed in three scaffolded dimensions that could be used independently or interdependently to meet developmental capacities of individuals as they advance through programs.
Food literacy assessment tool (Palumbo et al., 2017) based on Vidgen and Gallegos' Food Literacy Construct (Vidgen & Gallegos, 2014)	Three-tiered approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • functional (ability to plan and manage food) • interactive (ability to select and choose food) • critical (ability to prepare and consume food) 	Presented as three conceptual domains to create a survey tool of 101 items to test participants' level of food literacy.

Generally, models depicting food literacy use a multi-layered or tiered approach based on Nutbeam's scaffolding of three health layers to represent basic, intermediate and advanced levels of food literacy in order to accommodate the developmental needs of program users, such as students in schools and (often disadvantaged) young people in the community.

Velardo (2015) summarises the three-layered food/nutrition literacy approach and provides relevant examples for home economics teachers to apply in their food programs. These include Functional food/nutrition literacy ('declarative' knowledge of understanding how to read food labels or the foods required for a healthy diet); Interactive food/nutrition literacy ('procedural' application of knowing how to plan, shop and prepare the foods to make a healthy meal). The third layer; Critical food/nutrition literacy encompasses higher ordered-principles that might motivate an individual to make food decisions based on concepts such as food miles, ethical or sustainable food supply. Ronto et al. (Ronto, Ball, Pendergast, & Harris, 2016a) uses the term *macroaspects* of food literacy to describe these higher-ordered principles which were prioritised less by the respondents due to time and curriculum constraints in favour of the *microaspects* of food literacy, the cooking skills and use of tools and equipment, that were usually taught. Notwithstanding, the skills in making healthy food is acknowledged as an 'essential component of translating nutrition knowledge into dietary practice...' (Velardo, 2015) and operates in Benn's (2014) description of the concept of nutrition literacy or '*Bildung*'. Here, Benn describes a hierarchical approach to food from meeting physiological dietary requirements in Level 1, to structuring food into groups (Level 2) and then transforming them

into food (Level 3) that reflects the dietary practices and socio-cultural habits over time and place (Level 4).

In an extension of Benn's socio-cultural approach (Level 4), Renwick (2013) proposes a food literacy model adapted from Green's (1999) Health literacy model. Targeting home economics teachers, Renwick uses an example of the globalisation of food supply to outline critical food literacy in three scaffolded dimensions (*Operational*, *Cultural* and *Critical*). At the Operational (basic) level, learners might investigate the foods available in short supply; at the Cultural (intermediate) level learners might apply this knowledge and evaluate their own and family's food choices on dietary health. At the Critical (advanced) level, learners might integrate this knowledge to make informed decisions on the likely impact on global food supply and the environment.

Renwick then explains how teachers could use the model to stimulate learners to engage in *meta-cognitive* critical thinking and to become active, rather than passive learners. To do this, teachers start the learning process with a familiar content base. Once the learners engage with the content, teachers encourage them to move beyond their own world where together they embark on a journey to become critical and reflective thinkers (Fordyce-Voorham & Lai Yeung W-L, 2016) in a process that may be described as 'differentiated learning' (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2014).

The Food Literacy Model (Figure 1) integrates the attributes of the most relevant models (Renwick, 2013; Slater, 2013) that are largely hierarchical or layered in design. However, the Food Literacy Model best aligns with the updated framework 'Critical Food Literacy Competencies for Young Adults' (Slater et al., 2018) that incorporates components such as sustainability and confidence in a multi-directional format. Multi-directional models such as these allow the teacher and student to move flexibly in, and between each dimension to accommodate differentiated learning.

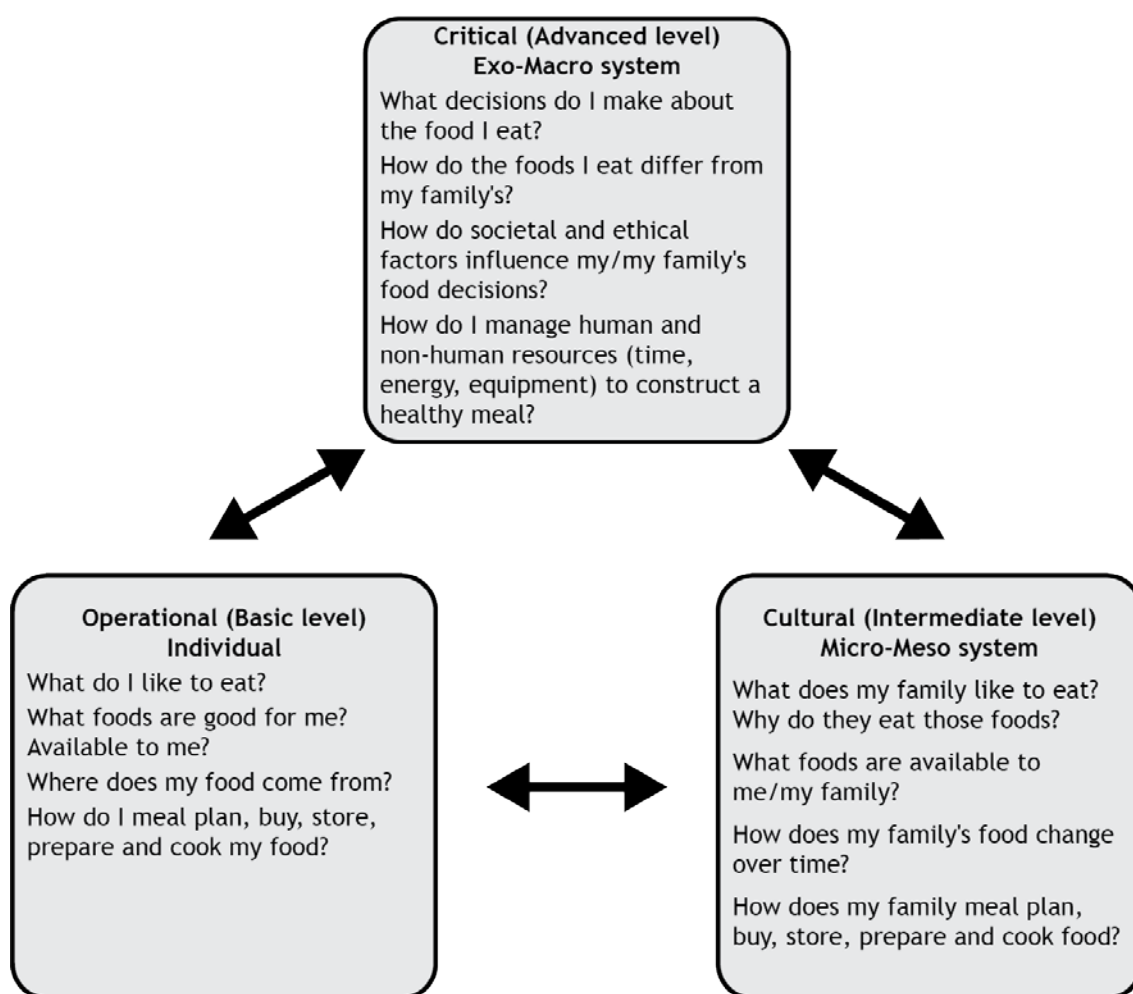


Figure 1 A food literacy model for schools (Fordyce-Voorham, 2015)

The use of the model in food education programs

The food literacy model for schools consists of three levels comprising Basic, Intermediate and Advanced food literacy skills.

Basic level

The food tasks performed at this level focus on the learners and their interactions with food. Examples of food literacy at this level include an understanding of:

- A learner's food likes and dislikes
- how different varieties of food are accessed (for example, fresh and processed)
- the origins of food ('paddock to plate')
- chemical (nutritional) and sensory (aesthetic) properties of food in relation to health.

This also includes the ability of learners to prepare and cook food for themselves and to enjoy the pleasure of eating good food shared with others. This level aligns with Renwick's (2013) *Operational dimension* in her critical food literacy model, *Functional food literacy* and especially the *Interactive food literacy* in Slater's (2013) food literacy framework and the *Relational Competency* in the more recent framework (Slater et al., 2018). Others nominate this as a critical level of food literacy and argue that this interactive experience provides sufficient impetus to develop people's understanding of the consequences of food-related decisions on individual well-being, sustainability and wider social issues (Palumbo et al., 2017).

Intermediate level

The food tasks performed at this level involve the individual interacting with people (family, teachers, students and local vendors) in their near environment.

Examples of food literacy at this level include an understanding of:

- family food likes and dislikes
- who makes food decisions ('gate-keeping' of food—who and what influences the food planned, purchased, stored, prepared and consumed in the home and school)
- availability of, and access to food in the home (for example, farmyard and backyard/balcony gardens for production and/or preservation of, for example, eggs, fruits, nuts and vegetables) and in the community (for example, supermarkets; strip shopping fresh-food vendors such as butchers, greengrocers and bakeries; roadside stalls and farmers' markets).

It also includes the ability to:

- contribute to family food decision-making
- prepare and cook healthy meals for the family.

This level aligns with Renwick's (2013) *Cultural dimension*, the *Critical food literacy* described by Slater (2013) and the *Relational competencies* nominated in the more recent framework (Slater et al., 2018).

Advanced level

The food tasks performed at this level involve the individual interacting with the social environment (media, culture, society, technology) and making ethical decisions about food. Examples include knowledge and understanding of social (including television, digital and print media, marketing activities and technology), ethical, sustainability and cultural factors influencing family food decisions and choices. This also includes the ability to manage resources to prepare and cook healthy meals.

This aligns with Renwick's (2013) *Critical dimension*, Slater's (2013) *Critical food literacy* and *Food Literacy Competencies for Young Adults* (Slater et al., 2018). This concept of a food-literate individual operating as a citizen able to make ethical and responsible food decisions also aligns with Schnögl et al.'s (2006) *European food literacy*.

Each level operates independently or interrelates as indicated by the bidirectional arrows. An individual can access and return to any level without the need to progress from the basic through to the intermediate and advanced levels of food literacy skills. A feature of this model (Figure 1) is its purpose-built and generic design for use by teachers or community food educators, irrespective of mandated curriculum. Further, the model is sufficiently generic to accommodate local, national and global food education curricula in school settings and applies equally to practitioners in non-formal settings in community food programs.

Preliminary testing and reporting of the results of the Food Literacy Model

This section summarises the results of a pilot study reported fully elsewhere (Fordyce-Voorham, 2015). The aim of this pilot study was to test the model by linking 21 questions based on the three levels of the model to provide initial feedback on the development and progress of students' procedural (practical) food skills.

Methodology

The pilot study of a small convenience sample of 15 to 16-year-old students ($n = 22$) was conducted in an independent K-12 girls' school in Melbourne, Australia. The students responded to a series of questions that aligned with each of the three levels of the model after they had completed a fifteen-week semester Food unit comprising two 75-minute lessons each week. The aim of the questionnaire was to provide feedback to teachers on students' food skills acquisition and how effectively they delivered this in the classroom based on the students' level of agreement to the question items. The questionnaire comprised 21 items related to food skills acquisition across the three levels.

Eleven pedagogical questions covering teaching and learning practices and program delivery were also included in the student questionnaire to make 32 questions (21 food literacy and 11 pedagogical questions). An additional question (Qn 8) was included post-questionnaire in the Basic section to accommodate an individual's confidence in their ability to cook a healthy meal for themselves, a fundamental indicator of program success (Caraher, Seeley, Wu, & Lloyd, 2013; Stead et al., 2004; Wrieden et al., 2007). Table 2 displays the questions and the preliminary results (shown in percentages). The 'Strongly Disagree' label was removed from the presentation of data as no respondent selected this level of response to any question.

Response Rate

Of the 22 students who had completed the program, 15 students responded and completed the questionnaire, representing a 68 per cent response rate. Seven students declined the request to complete the post-program questionnaire.

Face validity based on the respondents' ability to complete the test within 10-15 minutes without recourse to teacher assistance aligned with the measurement proposed by Nevo (1985) when non-professional users (students) rate tests (questionnaires) as suitable for use.

Table 2 Respondents reported level of agreement of food skills acquisition for Basic, Intermediate and Advanced levels of food literacy

Basic		SA %	A %	N %	D %
1.	I have a better understanding of what fruits and vegetables are in season and how to prepare and cook them.	40	47	13	0
2.	I am more likely to try a new food.	33	33	20	14 ⁵
3.	I have a better understanding of the food I need to eat to keep me healthy.	27	53	20	0
4.	I have more confidence to prepare and cook new and familiar recipes.	40	40	20	0
5.	I have a better understanding of where fresh food comes from and how I can buy it.	40	27	27	6
6.	I have a better understanding of how I can make food look and taste better.	40	33	27	0
7.	I feel more confident that I can prepare and cook a healthy meal for myself ³ .				
Intermediate		SA	A	N	D
1.	I have a better understanding of judging how much food to make to avoid food waste	40	48 ⁵	6	6
2.	I have a better understanding of why I choose to eat particular foods.	33	53	7	7
3.	I have a better understanding of why my family chooses to eat particular foods.	40	27	27	6
4.	I have a better understanding of how the media ¹ influences people's food choices.	27	40	20	13
5.	I feel more confident that I can contribute to the way my family decides what to eat.	40	40	20	0
6.	I feel more confident that I can buy sufficient food to satisfy my family's appetite without food wastage.	33	47	20	0
7.	I feel more confident that I can buy, prepare and cook a healthy meal for my family.	53	34 ⁵	13	0
Advanced		SA	A	N	D
1.	I can justify my decisions for eating the foods I do.	27	40	20	13
2.	I feel more confident in integrating tasks in order to finish work efficiently within the time limit.	33	47	20	0
3.	I have more confidence in managing safety, heat control and food hygiene during food preparation	40	47	13	0
4.	I have more confidence in judging the information about food presented in the media	27	40	20	13
5.	I have more confidence in making ethical decisions about the foods I eat.	33	27	40	0
6.	I feel that I could present a case for a moral or ethical decision about food ² .	33	34 ⁵	13	20
7.	I can identify factors that might influence why people in different countries eat different foods to me.	53 ⁵	20	27	0
8.	I have the skills to evaluate my own and other's eating, shopping and sustainability practices ⁴ .	40	40	20	0

1. Television, print and Internet
2. For example; banning caged eggs or eating one meat-free meal a week
3. Not reported
4. For example, acting on food conservation measures to prevent food wastage.
5. Rounded up to next whole number to equal 100%

Results

These preliminary results displayed a high level of agreement amongst the respondents that the food skills program delivered over one semester had improved their food skills acquisition, based on the questions covered in the three levels of the food literacy model.

At the **Basic** level, there was a high level of agreement (up to 87% for Strongly Agreed (SA) and Agreed (A)) that the program increased respondents' ability to cook fruit and vegetables (Qn 1), eat for health (Qn 3), cook for health (Qn 6) and cook confidently (Qn 4). Up to one-third of respondents

recorded lower levels of agreement (Neutral (N) or Disagreed (D)) for trying a new food (Qn 2) and sourcing and purchasing fresh food (Q 5).

At the **Intermediate level**, there was a high level of agreement (up to 87% Strongly Agreed or Agreed) that the program increased respondents' ability to buy, prepare food and cook confidently (Qn 7), make food choices (Qn 2) and avoid food waste (Qn 6). A slightly lower percentage (up to 80%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to better judge food quantities (Qn 1) and participate in family food decision making (Qn 5). Less certain were respondents' level of agreement (67%) for understanding media and familial influences on food choices (Qns 3 and 4).

At the **Advanced level**, there was a high level of agreement (up to 87%) that the program increased respondents' ability to manage practical tasks safely, hygienically (Qn 3) and efficiently (Qn 2) as well as being able to evaluate their own and other's eating, shopping and sustainable practices (Qn 8). Less certain were respondents' level of agreement (67%) for judging the information presented in the media (Qn 4) and making judgements (Qn 1) and ethical decisions about food (Qns 5 and 6).

In summary, the initial findings suggested that the questionnaire was a successful tool on two indicators. Firstly, the questionnaire showed that at least two-thirds of respondents reported that the program increased their food skills ability for 20 of the 21 items. Secondly, respondents were able to distinguish between the three levels of food literacy for the 21 items, as there was a correlation with the increased level of neutrality and disagreement amongst respondents and the advancement of food literacy skills. As to be expected, respondents nominated a higher level of neutrality or disagreement as the questions progressed from the basic to the advanced levels of food literacy skills. This suggested that the level of food literacy would advance alongside the students' length of exposure to, and level of participation through a sequential food skills program.

Discussion

The concept of a multi-directional approach used in both this model and the Critical Food Literacy Competencies for Young Adults framework (Slater et al., 2018) provides flexibility for home economics teachers to design food literacy programs that support students' sequential food skills development and healthy eating behaviours. Here, students with no previous exposure to food skills programs could enter a program at a basic level whilst returning students could recommence at a more advanced level or move in and between the basic, intermediate or advanced levels.

In the current pilot study, the interactive structure of the program design involved teacher and student-directed activities that provided opportunities for students to make specific and useful feedback on the program quality. Several participants chose to make comments for program improvement; these related to specific articulation of the skills covered in class that better matched the questionnaire items and provided more opportunities to cater for individualised student learning. Differentiation in the classroom is important for engaging students (Dalton, 2015) and to ensure that they have multiple options to advance their learning (Tomlinson, 2013).

Student involvement in the program design has additional merits that contribute to the success of food literacy programs, including healthier eating behaviours. The findings made in a recent Australian survey of 205 home economics teachers reported that students' active engagement in practical food tasks contributed to their healthier diets and eating practices (Ronto et al., 2016a, 2016b). Conclusions drawn from this survey endorsed the findings elsewhere that teachers prioritised the essential food skills (Fordyce-Voorham, 2010; Pendergast & Dewhurst, 2012) and focused on what has been described as *microaspects* of food literacy; namely cooking skills rather than the *macroaspects* of food literacy, such as environmental sustainability and ethical food decisions. In the same survey, the teachers reasoned that the *macroaspects*, the more 'theoretical' content, had been typically covered in other subject areas and consequently focused more on the practical skills that had not been covered elsewhere. Therefore, it makes sense that a course based on the food literacy model and embeds these macroaspects and microaspects would be an efficient way of helping teachers to condense the learning content and cover these higher-ordered critical food literacy skills, particularly in a way that engages students through practical tasks that they enjoy. The results of this pilot study show how this could be done in small-scale food literacy/skills programs where time and crowded curriculum constraints are a continual source of frustration for teachers (Ronto et al., 2016a; Smith, 2009).

Implications for research and practice

Whilst small-scale in approach, the results have been encouraging and more testing would provide further data to refine the survey instrument. Nevertheless, the generic design of the instrument makes it applicable to a diverse range of schools and gives it broad appeal for use both by teachers in schools and food educators in community settings, where food education programs may operate. The proposed food literacy model is evidence-based and underpins the survey, an important consideration in the design of any healthy eating intervention (Hoelscher, Evans, Parcel, & Kelder, 2002). While more testing needs to be performed on the model and the survey instrument, the current questionnaire (Table 2) can already be adapted for use by any food educator to assist with the design, implementation and evaluation of their programs.

Limitations

This pilot study was small with a convenience cohort of a selected year level of students studying food skills at one school. More testing at this, and other schools including co-educational, state, Catholic and independent schools across metropolitan and regional areas would need to be done to verify and broaden the results to a more diverse student population. Sequential testing of the instrument administered in subsequent year levels as students advanced through the school would provide further insights into their progression of food skills and transferability to healthy eating behaviours in the longer term.

Conclusions

The results of a pilot study of a small sample of 15 to 16-year-old students based on a questionnaire that covered 21 incrementally complex nominated food skills, suggest that essential food skills can be acquired in small-scale food literacy and skill-based healthy eating programs. The questionnaire items based on the Food Literacy Model provide teachers with an evidence-based tool to build and evaluate their programs. However, more testing on this and other models described would need to be done to validate the current findings and provide further evidence on which teachers can design and evaluate programs that develop students' food literacy as well as cultivate an environment that stimulates and differentiates their learning.

Biography

Sandra Fordyce-Voorham trained in Home Economics and has been working as a food educator in schools for many years. Her PhD (University of Wollongong) research augments the consultancy work she is currently undertaking in promoting food skills in schools and communities. She is a past-President of Home Economics Victoria and former Education Chair with the International Federation for Home Economics. She is a co-author of *The Food Book* which is used widely in food education programs in schools across Australia

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INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
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REFEREED PAPER

Ambassadors for the profession, not just rebranding

Sue LT McGregor
McGregor Consulting Group

Abstract

Inspired by the longstanding home economics discourse around its professional image, this position paper explains the essence and benefits of branding, rebranding and the new idea of ambassadorships. Ambassadors are on a mission to work on behalf of the profession in ways more substantial than tweaking images (i.e., branding and rebranding). They know that rhetoric (persuasive and effective communication), dialogue (coming to common understandings), and diplomacy (skill and tact dealing with recalcitrant or misguided people) are needed. The ambassador approach respects the longstanding concern for our professional image and shifts the discourse to our reality (here and now constraints and opportunities). An artful and strategic blend of branding, rebranding and ambassadorship is proposed as an important strategy for future proofing the profession and discipline.

KEYWORDS: HOME ECONOMICS, PROFESSIONAL IMAGE, BRANDING AND REBRANDING, BRAND AMBASSADORS, FUTURE PROOFING

The position developed in this paper was inspired by the longstanding home economics¹ discourse around its professional image. The profession and academic discipline have long lamented the lack of respect, authority and legitimacy at a time when it is most needed (Deacon, 2012; Pendergast, 2009; Pendergast & McGregor, 2007). Many countries have rebranded the profession by changing its name, thinking this strategy is the panacea to our troubles (McGregor, 2010). Conversely, in its study about rebranding home economics, the International Federation for Home Economics' (IFHE) Think Tank Committee (2013) concluded that the brand equity of the name was strong enough to eschew renaming, opting instead for rebranding and repositioning home economics.

The research question guiding the argument developed in this paper is whether (re)branding is the best strategy for future proofing the profession - is there a better approach? Future proofing refers to "anticipating future developments to minimize negative impacts and optimize opportunities" (Pendergast, 2009, p. 517). To that end, this paper explains the essence and benefits of branding, rebranding, and ambassadorships. Both parts of a brand, the tangible (e.g., logo, color, and slogan) and intangible (e.g., perceptions of, feelings about, meanings of), may epitomize character and values (IFHE Think Tank Committee, 2013). However, ambassadors are the human representation of a branded entity (Smith, Kendall, Knighton, & Wright, 2018). They are able to engage in conversations, dialogue, debates and discourse about the profession and discipline. The latter align with the IFHE Think Tank Committee's (2013) idea of repositioning the profession rather than

¹ This article uses the globally-recognized name of home economics fully respecting that some countries have opted for other names: family and consumer sciences, consumer sciences, family studies, family ecology, human ecology, and human sciences.

renaming it. This paper proposes that combining branding and rebranding with ambassadorship is a viable approach to future proof the profession and discipline.

For clarification, home economics is both an academic discipline and a profession. A discipline is a branch of knowledge studied and gained in a specific field of study in higher education. Disciplines are comparatively self-contained, isolated domains of learning, sustained and evolved through research and scholarship. A profession is a vocation founded upon specialized training in a discipline leading to licensing and certification to practice. Professions involve a responsibility to ethically serve the public using a complex, evolving body of knowledge that is informed by disciplinary scholarship (McGregor, 2011).

Branding

Brand is Old English *brond*, ‘flame, fire, torch’ (Harper, 2018). In marketing, a *brand* (noun) is a name, term, slogan, design, symbol (image) or other feature that professions and organizations can use to distinguish themselves from their rivals in the eyes of the public (Fahy & Jobber, 2015). As a verb, ‘to brand’ means to put a mark on something to show people that you *own it*. It would mean conceiving the profession as a trademarked product or service. A *trademark* is a legally-registered, distinctive characteristic by which something comes to be known. It is an insignia, logo and/or slogan that distinguishes one thing from all others (Anderson, 2014; Kwortnik, 2011). Figure 1 illustrates several branding images used by various home economics associations around the world (African, Canadian American and international, used with permission). A critical analysis of these images would be a telling enterprise, left for another time.



Figure 1 Examples of home economics associations' branding images

Any branding initiative should meet several criteria (Knox & Bickerton, 2003) while addressing the needs of both the profession and the public. Regarding the former, brands should (a) be developed from the outside in and promoted from the inside out; (b) be based on vision, mission and ends valued by everyone who will be using the identity; and (c) empower home economists to use it to demonstrate their identity. Regarding the public, the brand should (d) be promoted with consistent visuals and messaging so that people know they are dealing with a stable and secure entity, (e) evoke the right emotional response from the public, and (f) be developed with the public in mind to create a better ‘customer’ experience (see also McGregor, 2007). From this perspective, branding is seen as a good thing, but is it enough for future proofing home economics?

Deacon (2012, p. 86) argued that the home economics profession must be presented as a “branded and marketable ‘package’ which brings together our unique perspective of the family, our specialized and consolidated knowledge, and communicates obvious, proud and coherent collegial solidarity” (p. 86). Like her, those who favor branding the profession often argue that, to be more visible and

accessible, we must be able to define a distinctive characteristic by which people come to know us. A good brand benefits the profession because it can help build public recognition by telling people that we are in the running for the services and products they are seeking. Customer and public recognition can help the profession gain a more competitive market edge. People who share the same values articulated through the profession's branding process are more inclined to turn to the profession for help and insights and to remain loyal. And a strong, well-known brand (i.e., a public image) can enhance the profession's credibility and perceived legitimacy (Fanaras, 2013).

Rebranding

Brand as torch is telling because torches eventually burn out and must be discarded or relit (i.e., rebranded). This means people can anticipate needing to reexamine their brand from time to time. For instance, home economics is not the only profession concerned with individual and family well being and quality of life. We must continually communicate how we are different and make people value us and want us. Deacon (2012) believed that successful and thoughtful rebranding is necessary. It would involve dealing with pervasive and damning home economics memes, those "enduring packets of cultural knowledge about Home Economics that have survived through generations" (p. 85), replacing them with newer, vanguard images of and messaging about the profession.

Rebranding involves creating a new look for an *established* brand with the intention of developing a differentiated identity in the minds of people who rely on the profession or its organizations, or who would value it if they could be convinced of its merit (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). Rebranding is necessary when the organization is felt or seen to be out of touch with the public. Perhaps the profession lacks awareness in the marketplace. Or the existing brand no longer reflects what the profession does. Maybe people in the field do not know how to talk about the profession. Or the profession is struggling with attracting new people (Hinge, 2011). Rebranding can be undertaken for one of several reasons, including underperformance, underappreciation, misunderstanding, and rejuvenation of a brand (Shetty, 2011). Whatever the reason, "rebranding is more than a new suit of clothes. It's about bringing new clarity and focus to your entire business" (Hinge, 2011, p.16).

How does a business, profession or organization know that it is time to consider rebranding itself? Hinge (2011) developed a 12-point checklist (see below) and suggested that if even two items are checked, it is time to take a long, hard look at the existing brand. For home economics, all 12 items are relevant (see list below) but items 4, 7, 11 and 12 seem to be especially crucial to our ability to future proof the profession. These four items deal, respectively, with the stagnant growth of the profession, our inability to explain our relevance and legitimacy, the complex changes in families and society, and the real need to take the profession to the next level. The remaining eight signs that it is time to rebrand are noted below (adapted from Hinge, 2011):

1. getting fewer leads than in the past (i.e., inquiries into or interest in the profession)
2. entering a new market
3. introducing significantly new services or products
4. profession's growth has slowed, stopped or started to reverse
5. new competitors have entered the market for the profession's services
6. visual brand looks tired compared to the competition
7. struggle to describe the profession or how it is different from the competition
8. losing a higher percentage of competitive bids than in the past
9. profession has changed significantly since last adjusting the brand
10. struggling to attract top talent and new recruits
11. nature of clients and customers has changed significantly
12. trying to figure out how to take the profession to the next level.

Successful rebranding has many powerful and persuasive benefits. Hinge (2011) identified 20 reasons to rebrand a firm with many reasons resonating with rebranding a profession and academic discipline like home economics. Not only would the profession look and sound more contemporary and

sophisticated, but practitioners would be better able to explain what home economics is and does and not be ashamed to associate with it. Concurrently, the public would be better able to understand what home economics is about and more inclined to use us and refer people to us. Credibility would increase and the profession would be considered a leading contender for practice, research, funding, advocacy, and collaborative partnerships. People would seek us out because we would be seen to have legitimacy and authority. Home economics would gain visibility to the public, and the profession could command higher valuation than in the past.

Shetty (2011) cautioned against taking a narrow approach when rebranding, which would entail simply renaming or changing the logo or slogan while ignoring the underlying structural factors that are likely much more crucial. Harden, Hall, and Pucciarelli (2018) discussed structural factors as they pertain to home economics. They suggested that the North American profession began to lose ground in the 1930s and again in the 1970s when it faced the conflagration of several structural factors. At the apex of the profession's decline, the majority (70%) of non-home economists surveyed felt that the profession's major function and role in society were relatively unknown (Crosbie, 1978), explained by several factors. As specializations proliferated, the original focus on social reform and social responsibility waned. Specializations also lead to a reduced ability or inclination to engage in integrative practice meaning we were not viewed as able to solve complex problems, only technical, quick-fix, specialized problems. Founded by women and originally focused on women in the home, the profession took some serious hits from the radical feminist movement. It asserted that women can only be free if they rid themselves of the inherently oppressive and dominating patriarchal ideology and the male-controlled capitalistic hierarchy (Echols, 1989).

To continue, declining enrolments and a perceived misalignment of home economics departments' missions with institutional missions have also been attributed to our decline and dismissal. Misguided and prejudiced journalism continues to underserve and undermines the profession. The lingering stereotype of "women who cook and sew" (Harden et al., 2018, p. 20), viewed by others as a negative, low-valued enterprise, continues to hurt our image. Maskow (1982) added the two practices of employing faculty from other disciplines due to a lack of doctoral-preparation programs in home economics and neglecting to deal with the decline of 'orientation to the profession' courses in higher education programs (see also McGregor, 2015, 2018). Both practices have paved the way for generations of students to not see themselves as home economists by whatever name because they lacked an opportunity to develop a personal philosophy of, and identity with, the field.

To offset the structural challenges undermining the profession and discipline, home economists, attendant associations and the academic discipline must differentiate themselves from the competition. They must clearly articulate their diverse role, mission, vision and philosophy and the difference they offer to the saturated world of people focused on the well being and quality of life of individuals and families. Messaging is an important element when it comes to (re)positioning the profession as a valuable and viable entity for addressing global and societal complexities as they impact individuals, families and communities. What is it that we do? Why should people turn to us? Any (re)branding needs to include information about the changes home economics intends to make and how - the actual intended impact of our work and contributions (see Pass, 2017).

Steel and Black (2010) commented on the challenge of distilling the complexity and multiplicity of a large entity like a university campus to a clear, concise institutional brand. The same challenges hold for home economics. The holistic, interdisciplinary and integrated profession and discipline are deeply complex with multiple specializations as well as generalized skill sets, competencies and, ideally, philosophical positions (Kieren, Vaines, & Badir, 1984). Capturing this complexity in a pithy brand is indeed a challenge and, quite frankly, insufficient given the threats to the profession and discipline's future.

Steel and Black's (2010) description of a complex institutional brand is readily extrapolated to the home economics profession and discipline. An institutional brand is so "much more than mere promotional window dressing" (p. 98). A complex profession's brand would be a concise, compelling expression of its identity. It would be a distillation of the profession's mission, vision and values that help focus passion and enthusiasm among practitioners and between practitioners and stakeholders. The brand would attract external audiences to the profession and discipline. It would serve as an organizing principle that helps (re)position the profession among its competitors. The profession's brand would also reflect the unique and distinctive value that it and the home economics discipline bring to the world (Steel & Black, 2010).

Ambassadors

Despite that successfully rebranding the profession presents the prospect of positive change (Deacon, 2012; Hinge, 2011), another alternative (or supplement) is for home economics practitioners to view themselves as ambassadors of the profession (McGregor, 2007). Ambassador stems from Medieval Latin *ambactia*, 'mission' (Harper, 2018). As ambassadors, we could firmly position the profession and discipline in the center of the complex 21st century. We could act on the power of our "convergent moment, a time of opportunity where several key societal factors are occurring simultaneously" (Pendergast, 2009, p. 504).

McGregor (2007) explained that ambassador refers to a spokesperson for the profession, an accredited, personal representative authorized to represent the profession and carry its message to areas within and outside the field of practice, to others' attention. This message would refer to our mission, unique approach to practice, valued ends and such. Ambassadors are entrusted with extensive power. Their main function is to advance the interests of the profession, professional associations and academic discipline, both quietly behind the scenes and in the public eye. Ambassadors would have promotional material on hand and be well versed in an agreed-to value statement about the profession and academic discipline. They would readily share these messages in their networks, spreading the word about the profession and its invaluable, differentiated contributions to society.

People become ambassadors for various reasons but mostly so they can (a) help out with creating positive momentum for the profession or organization, (b) express their honour of being associated with the branded entity, (c) gain easy and quick access to information about the profession and what is happening, and (d) attend meetings and events and have the chance to network with other professionals (Andersson & Ekman, 2009). They construed this as "public diplomacy [work], in which interaction and dialog sometimes are considered value-creating factors" (p. 48). The downside is that ambassadorships may not be sustainable if the person only sees them as having a temporary purpose for personal gain, rather than benefiting the profession at large over the long term. Also, people often drift away from ambassadorship positions because of unsustainable commitments over time (Andersson & Ekman, 2009).

Brand Ambassador

The idea of a *brand ambassador* is related to being an ambassador for the profession. Evolving out of brand management (Andersson & Ekman, 2009), a brand ambassador is a relatively new, under-researched academic concept (Smith et al., 2018). It is a paid, appointed or self-selected position within an organization (or discipline). The person is charged with representing the organization in a positive manner and increasing brand uptake and engagement with the organization (including brand awareness, increased sales, and strengthened public image). This person is the mouthpiece, the human representative, of the branded organization. Brand ambassadors have to authenticate the brand, nurture it so the organization can grow and thrive, and defend and protect its reputation when required (Clive, 2017; Neuvoo, 2017).

Brand ambassadors are also expected to (a) humanize the branded organization, (b) facilitate relational connections and (c) engage with a full range of stakeholder groups as they (d) carry organizational messages, (e) reinforce the organization's identity and (f) legitimize the organization in the public's eye (Smith et al., 2018). They are also responsible for the organization's visibility made possible through a deep understanding of its mission, values, functions and contributions to society. This responsibility entails ongoing monitoring of the profession, organization and discipline's evolution, philosophy, public acceptance, and customer/client/partner's needs (Neuvoo, 2017), as well as the disciplinary knowledge base.

This role is not fraught free. Brand ambassadorships revolve around negotiating influence, identity, and risk of representation. Respectively, anyone in this role assumes the potential for influence because the role comes with a voice and empowerment. Their role is to help the branded organization dominate in certain areas, achieved by exerting influence. Brand ambassadors have to balance this influence with their identity as an organization's ambassador. This identity will be informed by and inform their personality, all of which can impact the organization's image and vice versa. Indeed, brand ambassadors have to negotiate the real risk of seeming to overtly promote or advocate for an organization, which, done irresponsibly, can have negative consequences for the organization's

legitimacy, image and reputation (Clive, 2017; Smith et al., 2018). A lot rides on the brand ambassador's shoulders, a segue to the idea of supportive networking.

Brand Ambassador Network

Related to the brand ambassador concept is the idea of a *brand ambassador network* (Andersson & Ekman, 2009) - a complex, interlocking system of like-minded people formed for mutual assistance (Harper, 2018). This idea has merit for home economics, which is a vast network of practitioners operating locally, nationally, regionally and internationally. Extrapolating from Andersson and Ekman's (2009) application of networks to place branding, a brand ambassador network for home economics would be defined as a network aimed at promoting the profession's image, attractiveness and relevance. This network would comprise home economists with strong connections with and within the profession. Such networks would likely vary in size, structure and purpose, depending on the context (e.g., country, culture, history).

The potential of the profession and discipline can be harnessed through brand ambassador networks. Within the network, ambassadors would use word of mouth and written communication to perpetuate a "credible testimony of the distinctive character" of the profession and academic discipline to the public at large (Andersson & Ekman, 2009, p. 43). They would do this through their ambassador network, which is presumed to be a channel of communication through which to assist in enhancing the general competitiveness and relevance of the profession and discipline. These "human networks . . . are considered an invaluable resource for meeting and adapting to change" (p. 43). They are also key to any developmental initiatives struck by the profession or organization. The more mature and consolidated the brand ambassador network, the more effective it is in strengthening and future proofing the profession and academic discipline. When discussing rebranding, Deacon (2012) affirmed the need for "an obvious, proud and coherent collegial solidarity" (p. 86) within the home economics brand.

Brand ambassador networks would further serve to mobilize and nurture local home economists' pride in and allegiance to the profession, and boost their self-confidence. "Brand ambassador networks evoke feelings of intimacy and create interaction as well as help reach a wide audience of people that would not otherwise be reached" by individual practitioners (Pelkonen, 2018, p. 11). Through these human networks, local home economists can become more aware of the value and achievements of the profession and discipline leading to improved support for and association with home economics. Andersson and Ekman (2009) referred to this as "value creation through relationships" (p. 44). Of deep relevance to home economics and its concern for its image, Andersson and Ekman (2009) reasoned that brand ambassador networks extend branding beyond communications to include behaviors thus emphasizing reality rather than image. This means the focus would be on what actually exists (i.e., how we are behaving and being perceived, and why) instead of an idealistic, unrealistic image of what should exist. The ideal cannot emerge without due consideration of reality.

Andersson and Ekman (2009) further recommended that brand ambassador networks need someone to coordinate and moderate the interaction within and beyond the network. They found that usually one person assumes or is assigned to this role, which combines image building, associated (re)branding and wider conversations. McGregor (2007) actually advocated for all home economists to assume the ambassadorship role instead of one particular person being appointed to a particular network. In some instances, a symbiotic relationship emerges wherein the network (formalized or not) benefits from the reputation of one of its ambassadors or vice versa. Andersson and Ekman (2009) also encountered ambassador councils that acted as an advisory board for the network, guiding and informing the ambassadors' work. This idea resonates with home economics' inclination to value interconnected, system-based, reciprocal relationships.

Summary and Conclusions

Figure 2 summarizes the main distinctions among the four interlocked concepts shaping the argument in this paper. Done well, and the key is *done well*, branding can work for the profession and academic discipline. That being said, this success depends on those engaged in creating the brand being attuned to the deep underlying structural issues shaping the strength, viability and relevance of the profession. Structural awareness staves of misguided initiatives (Shetty, 2011). If it is determined that the success of the profession is being threatened, one strategy is to *rebrand* it by coming up

with a new way(s) to reposition and differentiate it in the public's mind. But simply changing the brand (image) may not be enough. History tells us that new names and redesigned logos and slogans fell short of what was needed (Deacon, 2012; Harden et al., 2018; McGregor, 2007, 2010; Pendergast & McGregor, 2007).

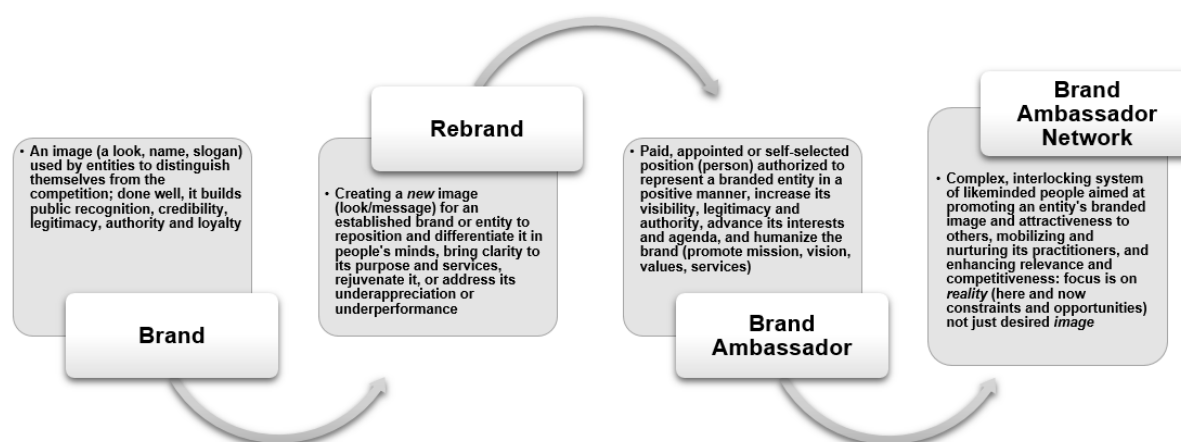


Figure 2 Main distinctions among branding, rebranding, and ambassadorship

This paper argued that it is time to entertain a different, additional strategy. Ambassadors are on a mission to work on behalf of the profession in ways more substantial than tweaking images (i.e., branding and rebranding). They know that rhetoric (persuasive and effective communication), dialogue (coming to common understandings), and diplomacy (skill and tact dealing with recalcitrant or misguided people) is needed. To make this happen, home economists are encouraged to consider the newer ideas of brand ambassadorships and brand ambassador networks.

These two approaches focus on our reality (i.e., here and now constraints and opportunities) and how that reality necessitates different messaging that privileges legitimacy, recognized authority and relevancy over name and logo, assuming the latter are means not ends. Ambassadors would appreciate that the home economics profession's reputation, respect and status, indeed its very existence, hinges on forceful, convincing and sustained messaging of our differentiated, powerful contributions to society. An artful and strategic blend of branding, rebranding and ambassadorship is proposed as an important strategy for future proofing the profession and discipline.

Biography

Sue L. T. McGregor (PhD, IPHE, and Professor Emerita) is a Canadian home economist (nearly 50 years) retired from Mount Saint Vincent University. She has a keen interest in home economics philosophy and leadership (along with consumer studies, transdisciplinarity, and research paradigms and methodologies). Sue is the recipient of Kappa Omicron Nu's (KON) Marjorie M. Brown Distinguished Professor Award (for home economics leadership), and is Docent in Home Economics at the University of Helsinki. With Donna Pendergast (Australia) and Kaija Turkki (Finland), she co-edited (2012) *The Next 100 years: Creating Home Economics Futures*. She published *Understanding and Evaluating Research* (SAGE) in 2018. Her home economics scholarship is at www.consultmcmgregor.com.

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Changing Food Culture for Food Wellbeing

Juliet Wiseman
Bournemouth University, UK

Jane Murphy
Bournemouth University, UK

Jacqui Hewitt-Taylor
Bournemouth University, UK

Abstract

This study investigates what people, in an urban and a rural setting in England, value about their local and home-grown food culture and how this shapes food choices which contribute to a broad definition of Food Wellbeing. Qualitative, ethnographic methods were used to uncover aspects of food relationships which are positive for the environment, communities and personal health. The connections provided by direct contact with local fresh food are explored. Communities such as those featured in this research, with high levels of food expertise, can contribute towards improving food cultures to attain better health outcomes for the planet, for people and for the individual.

KEYWORDS: CULTURE, VALUES, LOCAL FOOD, NUTRITION, CONNECTION.

Background and rationale

Recent decades have seen a rise in concern about unsustainable food systems (Government Office for Science, 2011), and nutritionally inadequate diets (World Health Organisation, 2015), throughout Europe and the UK. Levels of obesity in the UK amongst children and adults are a major public health concern, with 58% of women and 65% of men overweight or obese and one in three children (year 6) overweight or obese (National Health Service, 2016). In England, 3.8 million people suffer from diabetes (90% type 2), with levels estimated to rise to 4.9 million by 2035 (Public Health England, 2016). An industrial food system, promoting the convenience and affordability of highly processed food, has contributed to an obesogenic environment and poor health outcomes (Swinburn et al., 2011; Winson, 2014; Lang & Barling, 2013).

Impacts of the industrial food system include loss of connection with food sources and disruption of food cultures (Pretty, 2002), and a current prevailing food culture which does not normalise health and sustainable eating (Food Foundation, 2016). UK citizens have lost food skills and knowledge (WRAP, 2014) and children lack exposure to fresh foods (Bevan et al., 2016). Many children and adults are not eating the recommended (at least 5-A-Day) amounts of fruit and vegetables (National Centre for Social Research, 2018).

Local food networks and home growing (in many forms) represent ways of re-connecting people with food, with closer food connections potentially creating wellbeing (O’Kane, 2016; Gillespie & Smith, 2008). Growing and choosing local food may enable people to make choices favourable to their own health, for example, in consuming more fruit and vegetables. (Litt et al., 2011; Bos & Kneafsey,

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Correspondence: Dr Juliet Wiseman ✉ Ju-w@xtra.co.nz

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2014). Understanding the experiences of people who create their own positive food environments presents insights which might be used to create widespread cultural and positive health changes.

Study Aim

The aim of this study is to explore and describe the values, motivations, skills and behaviours of people who are deeply connected with their food through growing and supporting local food, and how this relates to personal wellbeing. Food values relating to environment and community are well known but their relationship to nutritional health and wellbeing has not been extensively explored.

Methods

In a broad culture where cheapness and convenience drive many food choices, the study sought participants who had created or supported a local food environment. Cultural immersion enabled purposive sampling.

Qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were adopted to explore the values, beliefs, motivations and skills prevalent amongst local food growers and supporters of local food (Bisogni, Jastran, Seligson, & Thompson, 2012), based on an ethnographic approach (O'Reilly, 2012). Observations included both field notes and photographs in a range of settings related to growing or buying food. Interviews and focus groups were conducted with thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Lee, 2006).

Sample and Setting

The study was conducted on two sites in South West England, one urban and one rural, to capture contrasting environments, including the more traditional urban home growing and community food growing, with the contemporary, re-emerging, small farm-based systems (O'Kane, 2016). Study participants grew their own food, valued local food and did not conform to a mainstream food culture. In the urban setting, access to fresh, local food was restricted, whereas the rural setting had a well-developed local food culture based on small farms, local markets and locally owned shops.

Study participants were selected for an interest in growing food and selecting local food, to ensure experiences related to research aims. Urban participants were recruited from four community gardens and one council allotment. Rural participants were recruited from a variety of sources, based on a local growers' network, using purposive snowball sampling. The criteria for interview selection were: growing food at home or in a community garden or allotment. Some rural participants were growing commercially and others were involved in selling local food. Seventeen women and eight men were interviewed. Eleven interview participants had children living at home and three were partially or fully responsible for grandchildren. Participants were aged between 19 and 82 years.

Data collection

The methods of data collection used in the study were:

- *Participant observation* at formal and informal meetings and growing events and visits to food production sites; observations and photographs were taken at four community gardens and one allotment site and on two small farms. Multiple visits were made to a market, two community meetings, a community orchard and multiple visits to six home gardens (both urban and rural). Thirty days were spent in observation in an urban setting and approximately 40 days in the rural setting. A field diary included observation notes, reflections and photographs as aide-memoirs.
- *One-to-one interviews*: Fifteen urban interviews were conducted (10W/5M). Ten rural interviews were carried out (7W/3M). Interviews in both the urban and rural settings were conducted in participants' homes, or at convenient locations outside the home. These were recorded and transcribed within 48 hours.
- *Four focus groups* were convened, with 36 individuals (28W/8M) involved in local food; growers, traders, advocates, customers and volunteer food workers on local projects. Participants were recruited by advertising locally with meetings held in public buildings.

Ethics

The study was approved by Bournemouth University Research Ethics Committee. Written consent was obtained from each participant. Pseudonyms are used for participants.

Data analysis

Data from individual interviews, focus groups, observations and the field diary were analysed, using inductive thematic analysis. Sub-themes were identified and merged as appropriate to create three major themes (Lee, 2006). All leads were explored in interviews until saturation was reached in terms of major themes. Transcripts were analysed separately, and results combined by two researchers (IS, JW) to achieve agreement on major themes and sub-themes. Photos were used as an aide-memoir in analysis, alongside notes made during observations and in the field diary, to enable the depth and richness of the spoken and written data to be recalled. Scripts were returned to participants for confirmation of accuracy prior to analysis. Focus group recordings were peer-checked by an independent researcher (LH). During the focus group sessions, points were summarized regularly and fed back to the group to check the accuracy of interpretation.

Results

Growing food and understanding and caring about the origins of food, combined with trust in food sources, was associated with judgements about food enabling food choices which were positive for personal health. This knowledge of food sources underpinned food choices when shopping for food, and helped participants to make informed compromises when choices were not ideal. There was a demonstrated connection to *planetary health*, *community health*, and *personal health*, all of which were facets of a holistic sense of Food Wellbeing. Participants were motivated to grow food and source food produced ethically, despite the challenges involved.

Planetary Health

Participants' growing activities were strongly linked to planetary health. Growers were trying to work "with nature" rather than struggling against it, which led them to consider issues listed in Table 1. Growing with nature was explained in various ways, including:

We couldn't use slug pellets here, they would kill the birds and hedgehogs. They are going to build a hedgehog box. (Andrew)

We choose to grow things that don't need constant watering. (Brett)

I don't use weed killer and I let certain areas grow for the wildlife. (Alison)

This connection to the natural world was felt and reinforced through direct involvement with nature. One gardener was observed moving small frogs carefully from a patch to be cultivated to a nearby pond. Later she described how this action, rather than the digging and planting of seedlings that had been her original priority, had become the highlight of that afternoon.

A range of levels of knowledge underpinned an individual's actions. In some cases, but by no means all, strict organic or permaculture principles were followed. Even participants who were new to gardening described/demonstrated a connection with nature. Priorities placed on aspects of their relationship with nature varied. Barbara explained:

I like the nature side of it, the fact that it's organic is not top priority. I wouldn't use chemicals and that fits with liking nature and giving wildlife a place ... there is soil, micro-flora, birds ... I can't put a value on that.

Working with nature was also important to commercial growers, who showed a great sense of responsibility and connection to their land, animals and the wider environment. Chris explained:

When we first came we ate the food, it connects to the land and has that energy, you eat steak from degraded land and you are eating degraded food. (Chris)

Table 1 Themes and Sub-themes; Indicative Examples

Theme	Sub-theme Issues	Sub-theme Attitudes and Feelings
Planet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for habitat (e.g. Not using pesticides to protect habitat and other plants) • Caring for animals (e.g. Creating habitat) • Protecting/enhancing soil (e.g. Careful use of manure and choice of plants) • Using water sparingly (e.g. Careful choice of plants) • Not wasting resources (e.g. Free materials on the community gardens) • Not using unnecessary fuel (e.g. Considered use of vehicles, alternative fuels) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling part of nature • Learning from nature - observation and experience • Caring for things which can't care for themselves • Conserving • Trusting natural processes • Education/knowledge and skills • Pride/sense of achievement • Sense of responsibility
People and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for people in this community (e.g. Broadening access to local food) • Caring for people in wider community (e.g. Wanting to know working conditions in food choice) • Opportunities to connect (e.g. Volunteering on local farm days) • Opportunities to share knowledge (e.g. Seed share days, school garden) • Sharing food (e.g. Sharing harvest at community gardens) • Supporting local growers (e.g. Choosing local even if it costs more) • Trusting local growers (e.g. Knowing their ethics and hard work) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pride in local community • Feeling that we belong - to community, garden, allotment • Need to give back • Need to learn and to share learning with others • Wanting a better community • Being creative • Wanting a better future for children
Person and personal health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health includes physical, emotional and spiritual (i.e., A holistic view of health) • Fresh food is alive and contributes (e.g. Local food ensures this) • The ability to know what is good (e.g. How it looks, where it comes from) • Encouraging others to eat better (e.g. Community gardens/education) • Quality of fresh food (e.g. Knowing enough about fresh food to make judgements) • Modelling/encouraging good food choices for children (e.g. Letting children eat harvest straight from the plant) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding health • Confidence in food and how to judge healthiness • Eating "differently" from most people • Pride in food skills, cooking from scratch • Wish to share food skills • Wanting children to eat well • Needing more choice

Several visits to Chris's farm revealed his strict environmental principles, as illustrated in the field-diary entry shown below:

Ethical Farming in Action

Notes taken on three visits to this farm describe how all farm vehicles were run on recycled food oil. During one visit Chris was working on a farm vehicle cleaning valves blocked with food oil. A sick lamb was being nursed intensively and with considerable effort, to overcome an infection, even though this is a seemingly low-value animal. Time and energy is required to operate in ways considered ethical.

Some growers felt a spiritual connection to the land through their growing:

There is something more going on than I can know, call it water, air or whatever: if I am willing to be guided I will be supported. (Carole)

Planetary concerns were also important for people when making their food purchasing choices. The specific issues around food choice are listed in below:

- Animal welfare (production)
- Human welfare (production)
- Degree of packaging (take and disposal)
- Locality / distance travelled (emissions, storage)
- Natural resources used (water, soil, air, plants, and animals)
- Seasonality

and summed up by Danielle:

I think it's [food is] something that everyone can connect with. We eat three times a day and there is potential to make impact. In my experience, even intelligent people don't make that connection and I don't know why. (Danielle)

In town, the availability of food that facilitated such a connection was problematic. For example, whilst animal welfare was a consideration in choosing food, most participants could not afford meat with welfare guarantees. Some found opportunities through contact with local farms and using their cooking skills, however not all participants possessed such resources:

I get a lamb (from a local farm where welfare is known) and it has two hearts, two livers; they are free, no one else wants them. (Eve)

In the rural location with a thriving local food culture, participants could be confident about where local produce had come from and how it was produced; this trust is valued. Animal welfare was a consideration for producers and food purchasers. A sheep farmer always goes with his animals to slaughter, to be assured of their welfare until death. Having a local abattoir was essential to this and the loss of such facilities was highlighted as a difficulty for small producers who wish to operate ethically.

The desirability of using seasonal food was frequently discussed, with growers expressing confidence that they knew what was in season. Choices were made based on this rather than the type of vegetable. For example, cabbage would be bought in preference to imported beans. Where buying seasonal food was not possible, particularly for urban participants, other planetary considerations came into play, for example, the food's country of origin:

We just look at the label and see how far it travelled; if it's Kenya then I rather not buy it. (Francis)

The fact that country of origin labelling is not universal was a barrier to decision making.

Zoe's choice to buy *Wonky Veg* boxes from a supermarket showed multiple motivations: Cheapness and family health were important considerations but so too was the fact that these vegetables are not being wasted. She acknowledged that, in some ways, organic vegetables might be preferable but her family budget would not stretch to this.

Overall, therefore, planetary connections were important for participants, although the ease with which these could be enacted varied according to the availability of food that met individuals' ideals and the availability of information on the source of food. A lack of information about supermarket food contrasted with the known local food background, and the confidence created by local and personally grown food.

Connecting to People

In both urban and rural settings, connections within communities through food were important. In town, allotment holders were loosely connected with each other through shared resources, information and expertise. The ability to share produce on allotments with wider family and friends was valued. In the community gardens, there was a closer teamwork connection, sharing ideas, jobs, produce and responsibilities. Eating food grown communally was celebrated as a bonding exercise, and the gardens offered a sense of belonging:

... the main thing we get is fruit, we share it...the social side is definitely the main thing, it's ace, brilliant, and you get the odd rhubarb and gooseberries too. (Don)

In the urban setting, participants saw growing their own as the only way of acquiring local food. Discussion around buying local food centered on its absence (although one local butcher was mentioned). One participant pointed out a parade of shops on her estate, which once featured both a greengrocer and butcher and now has no fresh food shops (now only empty shops, off-licence, takeaway and hairdresser). In contrast, in the rural setting, there was a variety of local food sources and connections, including locally owned high street shops, local markets, farm gate shops, a local food sales van, regular work days on small farms or community orchards and allotments, voluntary activities such as "seed share days" and social visits to farms. Being a part of the local food community and supporting local growers and traders was a commonly stated reason for enjoying eating local produce:

This is a blessed area where people have a strong connection to food. (Greta)

Markets were central to the rural community, both as social opportunities, and for growers and traders:

There's a nice buzz you know (in the market) it's not just about buying it's good to see who's there. (Hilary)

I [grower] was desperate to have a community to work with; that is vital. I wouldn't still be here without that. I think by just offering it to the wider community those links came in. (Carole)

A consistent theme in the rural interviews and focus groups was the importance of supporting a community of trusted and respected commercial growers, traders and small shops, who were friends and neighbours, and whose activities added value to the town:

You don't need to have inferior produce from God knows where, when you can have better and support your community. (Janet)

Reasons to support local shops and the main thing is they are spoken to and become like part of the family. (Eddie)

Knowing and trusting people was a form of quality assurance or certification, even when producers were not certified organic (because of the cost of doing so) they were still recognized as ethical :

The people we sell to know us ... absolutely it is the best form of certification and without the feedback we would have flagged. (Chris)

Nonetheless, despite the value which participants placed on the local traders, there was a widespread awareness that they struggled to make a living:

Even award-winning farmers are on the edge of desperation; everyone loves their food but it's a labour of love! (Frank)

Look at my seedlings (on the window sill) that is not professional, I need a poly-tunnel and power but I don't know if I will be here next year, no security ... (Kathy)

For participants in both settings, an important part of being connected with the community was learning from one another. Hilary commented:

There is a big grow your own culture here. I love meeting people and getting tips ... it's community spirit.

John has worked his urban allotment for 44 years and is recognized by other gardeners as a source of valuable information. The following describes an observed example of this.

Concern for people outside the community also influenced people's food choices, with some participants expressing that choosing food of unknown origin could affect others in terms of methods of food production, treatment of people involved in the food industry. Some highlighted that, while they cared about these issues, they often had insufficient information to make informed shopping choices.

Vegetable box schemes were chosen by some urban participants as a way of providing a degree of connection with the producers of fresh food:

With [named an organic food boxing scheme, but not locally sourced] I like the interaction between the people who produce the food and the buyer and the user. I made marmalade from Seville oranges and labelled it with the farm they come from. (Lauren)

Community was placed ahead of wider environmental concerns by some, leading them to choose locally produced boxes rather than those from larger scale operators, despite these not being certified organic. Complexity of decision making (in a less than ideal environment) was described by Val:

I am ethical first and then local and seasonal [in my food choices].

Connecting with the community was also discussed in terms of how to become more inclusive, and share local produce with people for whom it was currently inaccessible for financial, cultural or logistical reasons. This was extensively discussed in all focus groups. A discussion highlights this:

This was the main purpose in a talk about pricing that took place between two growers, who disagreed on pricing; one wanting to make their food accessible to all, even if it removed profit from it, and the other seeing this as unsustainable. A local food group is aiming to help more local people to be involved, and discussion at one of their meetings focused on solutions such as extending local shopping hours. There was also recognition of a cultural barrier for some in enjoying local food. It was said that this way of eating was not “normal” for many people. There are many, active volunteer growing projects which are potentially a way to involve people in local food through school gardens, allotment and a community orchard. These growing projects have connections to the commercial growers.

Overall, food production and purchasing provided participants with a valued and mutually beneficial connection to their communities. This connection enabled them to have confidence in their food.

Personal health

Participants were asked if they believed that they (and their families) were eating healthily and about the contribution made by the homegrown and locally grown produce. Shopping choices were also discussed, including preferred places to shop and what drove food purchasing decisions. All participants were either the main household cook, and/or shopper, or contributed to that process.

What is meant by health

Participants indicated that growing food at home and choosing local food enhanced their personal health. However, the term “health” was sometimes interpreted more widely than in purely physical terms.

Do you mean my physical health? Or emotional, spiritual ... because they are all the same to me, I am not sure there is a difference ... (Danielle)

It makes us feel better, homegrown food, let's put it that way. It's wellbeing. There must be goodness in there because it's organic and they're not chemicals and it tastes better, there, it does taste better. (Alison)

Carole, who eats mostly from her own small farm, pointed out the freshness and aliveness of her produce and its contribution to her own health. She believed that others without this opportunity might be missing out on important food value:

I am amazed when people say; “I eat a salad every day” ... where did it come from? Who picked it and when? All those things go into the value.

The concept of what constituted healthy food was also broad, with freshness, taste and an “aliveness” all being a part of this. The factors described as important for “healthy food” are shown below. It was generally perceived that all local and fresh foods were “good for you”. Knowing where a food came from, who grew it and how fresh it was were linked to healthiness.

Healthy food is:

- Able to be shared

- “Alive” and contributes to health in ways which cannot be explained
- Enjoyable/tastes great
- Exclusive of sugar, additives, sprays, chemicals
- Food with a known growing history
- Fresh
- Inclusive of lots of fruit and vegetables
- A source of important nutrients
- More than just nutrients

Eating well enough? A good or perfect diet.

Most participants believed that they ate healthily and that family members did too. Only one person, Tony, expressed that he didn't eat as well as he should, liking sweet foods and being overweight. In contrast, Hilary believed that being overweight was not a sign that she wasn't eating healthily; she was, as she said:

Disgustingly healthy, but I must be eating too much of something as I am too heavy.

For some participants, the plethora of nutrition information available caused confusion. Lauren, who always cooked from scratch for her young family, including vegetables and fruit at all meals, and using no processed food, was uncertain about the healthiness of their diet as she had read conflicting information. However, commonsense judgements generally enabled her to see that her food choices were positive:

The more I read the more uncertain I am that I am eating healthily; well I mean it's not rubbish, and the main thing is in moderation, stops me getting overweight.

Some participants held the view that they were “doing well enough” with eating healthily, and that not all foods needed to be healthy so long as fresh food, preferably of known origin, was the basis of the family diet.

Mandy, for example, who sources much of her food from her own allotment, felt that her own and her partner's diet was “good enough”:

I'd say 7/10 for a healthy diet, good variety, not too much meat, everything home cooked ... but there is alcohol and we do have a few glasses of wine at weekends and we did recently try to stop eating sugar ...

Danielle's view concurred with this, arriving at the interview with a pie and a coffee, she explained that this didn't matter in health terms (in fact she enjoyed it and it contributed to her health in that way) because the rest of her diet was fresh, locally grown food.

In the town setting, the produce grown was key to the belief that people were eating well, although additional produce was bought. The amount that homegrown contributed was more on the allotments and less at the community gardens, however, some community gardeners were also growing at home. When choosing produce to buy compromises were made but these were based on knowledge of seasons, growing methods, the need to eat plenty of fruit and vegetables as well as doing the best possible within limited budgets. Fruit and vegetables were prioritised even when budgets were tight. Shopping around for cheap produce (such as the Wonky Veg boxes) was described by many of the urban participants.

The rural setting, provided more opportunity to supplement homegrown with local fresh produce from markets and farm shops. The contribution of homegrown was close to 100% only for two commercial growers and one home grower (this varied seasonally) but the values around home growing entered into food purchase decisions.

Eating Differently?

Home cooked food was said to be nicer, more nutritious, fresher and better quality. Cooking and knowing how to prepare food was seen as a necessary, and often an enjoyable skill. All participants

could and did prepare meals from fresh ingredients most days. Concern was expressed over the number of people who are lacking these skills. Most participants recalled learning to cook from a family member and considered it important for children to learn these skills. Having food skills was an important part of eating differently.

Differences from how others eat were discussed in relation to observed eating habits of strangers. Eve said:

I see them with their big takeaway cups on the way to work, they may have 20 teaspoons of sugar in those massive drinks ... then they wonder why they are so fat.

When I look at what they bring [to work] there is not fruit or vegetables, one person, it looks just like a child's lunch box [contains foods such as crisps and biscuits]. (Pam)

Or comparisons with wider family and friends, for example, Zoe:

My sister in law; I call it "ping" food what she gives her kids because you buy it and just ping it in the microwave.

She also explained that fresh fruit and vegetables were missing from this family diet.

In the rural setting, the discussion of "how I eat/how others eat" extended often into a discussion of how to encourage others to make use of the local food. This was thought to be desirable for the health of other families. Kathy explained:

I want to keep the prices down so people can afford it at the Spar shop...but it won't make any profit for me and some other growers ... (have disagreed with this approach).

Participants recognised a positive difference in the way they eat compared with other observed eating habits. For example, eating more produce, especially known and homegrown, and less processed food, less takeaway food and spending more time on cooking and food preparation and understanding more about food.

Children and Food

Participants with children felt that they ate well, would eat most things and ate the same as the adults in the house. This was not always a case of having a perfect diet, just "good enough" with the less desirable foods being eaten infrequently.

Eve (a grandparent) said:

I wouldn't let them have those cereals [sweetened] but I can't say much about that.

Growing food (which children observed) was thought to help them to accept fresh food to eat.

Yeah, I grew things I wanted to eat that was pretty much anything but the satisfaction is enormous and the taste is amazing, and I was particularly keen on giving my daughter really healthy, you know, vegetables ... (Francis)

He'll eat certain food from here [allotment] that he won't eat if you buy it from the shops, like corn, it's sweeter. (Nina)

All felt that seeing food growing was important for children; it would increase their connection and understanding. Many referred back to their own childhood and talked of the example of a parent or grandparent growing food. Lauren's children were allowed to pick things from the garden and eat them, she viewed this as a good educational opportunity.

Observations of children in all the community gardens indicated a lot of "playing around" and joining in occasional tasks (picking, watering) and informal shared knowledge:

What is this? [A purple potato] Is this a weed? Do worms grow again when you cut them in half? Hold it by the leaves, not the roots ... Why?

Food habits described by all interview participants and observed in meal situations throughout the research are shown below.

Habits which Create Food Wellbeing

- Cooking from scratch (fresh food as the basis for all meals)
- Using homegrown and locally grown fruit and vegetables, making seasonal choices
- Choosing local meat of known origin, eating less or in some cases, no meat
- Choosing whole-meal bread (and making bread at home)
- Not wasting anything
- Encouraging children to eat fruit and vegetables
- Letting children sample plants in the garden
- Not buying highly processed foods
- Eating together at table for most meals

In summary, participants considered the food/health relationship to be more than the physical health, occasioned by taking in particular nutrients. Food Wellbeing was derived from a connection between the person, the planet and the community, mediated through food. In following these principles, they reported eating in ways generally advocated for personal health (*The Eatwell Guide*, 2016). The key components and connections that enabled this Food Wellbeing to be created are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Food wellbeing: Connecting to Planet, People, Person

Planet	People (community)	Person
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grown in ways which enhance nature rather than destroy it • Growing practices which respect nature and are supported by nature • Allows/supports biodiversity • Conserves water • Improves soil • Produce is seasonal • Uses things which might be otherwise thrown out • Has not travelled unnecessarily • Has used minimum fuel in growing • Production ensures animal welfare • Is not wasteful • Does not include plastics or other packaging • Grown in ways which are not "greedy" and are respectful of other life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is fair to the producer • People involved in production at all levels are well treated (for example not dangerous working conditions or underpaid) • Is not taking food from communities which can't afford it or altering other people's systems unfavourably • Supports local community growers and traders • Increases levels of skill in the community and opportunity to share them • Sharing good quality food is the basis of strong community • Trusted local sources provide peace of mind (certification) • People have a right to good food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is good quality, fresh and tastes good; and so, contributes to a broad definition of health in many ways • Enhances enjoyment and enables recognition of real tastes • Won't be wasted • Increases personal skill levels • Increases amount and quality produce eaten • Quality produce replaces low quality processed food • Offers good levels of nutrients (fresh) • Helps children to understand where food comes from • Enables hands-on learning for children and adults • More affordable if you grow it yourself • It's clear that it's healthy—not confusing

Discussion

A Personal connection through food, to Planet and People (community) providing for Food Wellbeing

This study found that fresh, locally available food provides an important connection between people and their health, environment and one another, which creates the opportunity for food-related wellbeing. The value recognised in local fresh food meant that this was prized as the basis of good eating. Eating well was viewed as more than acquiring the right nutrients; it included a relationship with the environment and one another, which enhanced individual and community health. Food and

food value could be “known” by understanding how it was grown (and by whom) along with common sense judgements such as appearance, freshness and flavour. Nutrients were considered important but expected to be provided adequately by food chosen according to the values described. Good nutrition, in the sense of receiving adequate amounts of nutrients and not over consuming concentrated sources of energy, is a part of Food Wellbeing, but other aspects described by study participants such as confidence, trust, shared labour and goals, enjoyment of fresh food and a spiritual connection with land are also included.

A working definition of Food Wellbeing was developed as follows:

Food Wellbeing is possible when the following connections with food are present:

- Planet: An appreciation of where all food comes from and an understanding about how food choices impact on overall global sustainability; an environment which offers opportunities for personal connection to planet through food practices.
- People: A local living environment, which includes a food culture that enables the average a person to consistently source quality local food; A food culture including an appreciation of how food choices impact on the community and others. An environment which offers a connection to others through shared and understood food practices.
- Person: A sound practical understanding of how to maximise quality and trusted fresh food in the diet, along with growing / trading /purchase / preparation knowledge about fresh food and trusted food sources, with skills that support related habitual behaviour. These food practices being recognised as “normal” in that environment.

(Food Wellbeing is closely aligned to Food Sovereignty (www.globaljustice.org.uk/six-pillars-food-sovereignty) and Food Security (www.fao.org/WFS/) and recognizes the opportunity for nutritional health as well as wider wellbeing.)

Important contributors to the connections described in this study are: Recognition of the true value of food, trust in nature and other people and shared learning in and with nature and other local growers (including commercial growers). The effort and time that developing these connections requires was considered worthwhile, and there was evidence of a concern that this connection needed to be developed to embrace the wider population. Relationships with others created around food were very important: Town growers valued being able to feed their families and extended families well, sharing harvest and knowledge, and community gardens and rural growers valued the mutual support and exchange of expertise, while those buying food from a local rural system valued the expertise and trustworthiness of growers and their contribution to community.

Appreciating the *true value* of food

Participants understood the superior value of their homegrown and local food through recognising the possible negative aspects (hidden costs) of food produced in an industrial system in relation to environmental damage, health impacts (O’Kane, 2011), and impacts on local communities (Winter, 2016). They compared these potential negatives with the multiple values of their own trusted food. This awareness of value arose from involvement in growing good food (knowing the labour, choices, difficulties and opportunities this creates) and from the opportunity in this expert growing environment to discuss food production issues with other informed people. This underpinned the positive food choices, discussed and observed, where a high value is placed on foods which are environmentally, socially and nutritionally desirable, so that, within this thoughtful, responsible and informed food culture, sustainable and healthy food choices were normalised.

Eating Differently - a separate food culture

The study participants described “eating differently” (from the mainstream) and mostly feeling a level of confidence in eating well which depended on trusted fresh food. Some trade-offs and compromises were made in food choice and ideals were sacrificed where cost and availability of food limited choice. Choices made were compared positively with the choices made by other people not engaged in local food culture. These study participants have effectively created their own separate food culture, motivated by a range of factors in which personal health is important but environmental and social considerations are also deeply considered. Some participants expressed a spiritual

connection to land and food similar to those described by some indigenous cultures, which value land and food and express a responsibility to feed others (Kuhnlein, Erasmus, Spigelski, & Burlingame, 2013). A feature of many such food/land beliefs is that the land and water support both physical and spiritual health, and this depends on a relationship of respecting nature and working with it, rather than suppressing nature and exploiting resources. The New Zealand Māori culture, for instance, has a tradition of Kaitiakitanga (guardianship of land and water, respect for land and water and avoiding over-consumption), and Manaakitanga, caring for community and others, sharing food and giving food to build relationships. The skills and values of respected traditional food experts are passed on through generations ((Reid & Rout, 2016; Matoe & Russell, 2017). While this is a concept that is not widely recognised in the UK, in countries such as New Zealand and Australia a wider acknowledgement of indigenous food values may help towards a positive food cultural change.

Teaching broader food values

A change in food culture, which enables food wellbeing to be the norm, requires the values expressed by these study participants to be shared more widely in the population. This contrasts with the traditional focus on teaching of nutrition as a science, with the expectation of individuals prioritising a narrow individual view of health and interpreting nutrition recommendations into daily food choices which has not resulted in a healthy normal diet for all (Scrinis, 2008). Broader food values education, coupled with experiential learning involving food growing and preparation, have emerged as important in this study and education focused on these aims may well result in a culture which better supports individual health, even when this is not the sole aim.

Conclusions and recommendations

At present, the type of Food Wellbeing observed in this study is not easily achieved and is unevenly accessible. The wealth of expertise and motivation in many communities could be called upon to initiate and support a transition towards a better, more sustainable, food culture. Further research is recommended in the following areas:

1. Ways in which food and nutrition education can incorporate broad food values and foster connections which support positive cultural change.
2. Acknowledging in food education, the natural world/food culture traditions of the indigenous peoples (e.g. of Australia and New Zealand) where indigenous food and land values are strongly connected with good food citizenship.
3. The development of strategies to enable community Food Wellbeing practitioners/leaders in the community to share their knowledge and experience more widely, and in community-specific ways.

Biographies

Dr Juliet Wiseman has practised as a dietitian and has worked in public health nutrition and in university teaching for the past 20 years. This research is the result of winning a two-year grant in order to study sustainable local food and nutrition. Juliet has long been concerned by the loss of traditional and cultural foods and skills associated with this. At the same time, she has been involved in nutrition education and believes that a scientific/medical approach to teaching about food cannot achieve good health for any but a very motivated minority.

Professor Jane Murphy is a registered Nutritionist and Dietitian and Head of Education (Health Sciences) in the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences, Bournemouth University (BU), UK. Jane's research is committed to key nutritional problems faced by older people that impact on health and wellbeing especially the complex problems faced by people living with dementia. She co-leads the Ageing and Dementia Centre and has led key research to understand nutrition and delivering dignity in dementia care funded by the Burdett Trust for Nursing. (<http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/nutrition-dementia>). She has secured European Commission funded research (Horizon 2020) to understand the contribution of local sustainable food systems to nutritional health and wellbeing that will identify new competencies for training in public health nutrition.

Following a BSc(Hons) Psychology and MSc Information Systems, Dr Jacqui Hewitt-Taylor completed a PhD on the Social Psychology of Online Communication at Portsmouth University. Since then Jacqui has taught at BU and is responsible for units on Experimental Design, Research Methods, Social Psychology, Group Processes and CSCW. Research continues to investigate the impact of the Internet on interaction and I draw on this in teaching my final year unit on CyberPsychology. Jacqui is expert in qualitative research methodology.

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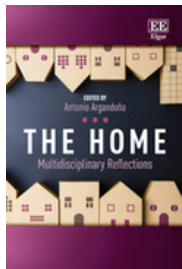
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INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
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REFEREED PAPER

The home: Multidisciplinary reflections (book review)



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Sue LT McGregor
McGregor Consulting Group

This edited collection titled *The Home* was spearheaded by the Home Renaissance Foundation (HRF), which markets itself as “taking the lead globally in telling the story of the home [because] academic research [has] often failed to see the home as an essential lens through which to understand human flourishing” (p. xii). At the book’s website, it is lauded as the “first major work to take the home as a center of analysis for global social problems.”

It was very challenging to remain objective when reading this book because it seemed to dismiss (i.e., regard as unworthy of consideration) the home economics discipline and profession, which has existed for over 100 years, while the HRF has existed for 12 years. The name of our discipline is *home*; yet, somehow, the editor of a book about *The Home* excluded our theoretical, philosophical and pragmatic contributions. In Chapter 1, Argandoña, the Editor, acknowledged that “the home has been a subject for study for philosophy and social sciences” (p. 10), but he did not reference home economics. This glaring omission initially tainted my judgement, although I tried to be as objective as I could, given the circumstances. I resisted pushing back as much as I could but admit to feeling compelled to educate readers to our contributions when it seemed appropriate.

Subtitled *Multidisciplinary Reflections*, this edited collection about *The Home* contained seven chapters from ten authors housed in seven disciplines (philosophy, economics, banking and finance, sociology, medicine/health, law, and human geography). It is 182 pages in length, contains bios for the ten contributors and has an index as well as a list of tables. There are two Forewords, one from the Editor, the Chairman of HRF, and one from Carlos Cavallé, Chairman of the Social Trends Institute. Dr Cavallé perpetuated the ostensible dismissal of home economics by claiming that “the home as a direct subject of study has not received its due of late.” Based on this erroneous assumption, he endorsed this collection because it “focuses the spotlight on the home itself... treat[ing] the home with the respect and seriousness it merits” (p. xvi). Feeling professionally slighted, my knee-jerk reaction was that home economics has always valued the home to the point of launching an entirely new discipline in the late 1800s and early 1900s called *home* economics.

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Corresponding author: Sue LT McGregor ✉ Sue.mcgregor@msvu.ca

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In the Introduction to the book, the editor says the book *uniquely* “studies the home as a multidimensional and multidisciplinary concept” (p. 1), using three examples: the relationship between work and family, the issue of housing, and the condition of poverty. Relative to our discipline and profession, which has historically been multi- and interdisciplinary, these are not unique given that they have been the mainstay of home economics for over a century. We call them practical, perennial problems and use a system of actions approach to address them. We have developed an entire philosophy to undergird our interdisciplinary, integrative, holistic approach to practice, which focuses on the home for the good of humanity (East, 1979).

After explaining that nearly everyone belongs to a family, Argandoña called this unit of analysis the home. I view this as serious conceptual slippage because family and home are two different things, both a challenge to define. I think *home* is the place where people live alone or in *families* and find meaning in their lives. He defined home as “*both* the people and the place, their joint action and their objectives, performing both an internal social function, often without being aware of it, and a function toward the rest of society” (p. 3). If he had availed himself of our body of knowledge and that of the UN International Year of the Family (spearheaded by home economists), he would have appreciated that we have already defined families’ functions and structures and differentiated family from home, acknowledging they are intricately interconnected (see McGregor, 2009).

To be fair, a detailed conceptualization of home is provided in Chapter 1 and it is worth reading. It aligns with the nascent conceptualizations I found in the literature when researching the concepts of home and household (McGregor, 2016). The author, Argandoña, identifies seven features of home that must be considered when studying the home (including multidimensionality, multidisciplinary, an openness to many perspectives, a descriptive and normative discourse, and an integrative and global approach). These sound so very familiar; especially if one is aware of Marjorie Brown’s philosophical musings about home economics (see McGregor, 2014, for an overview). Argandoña discussed the role of people and family in the home and the role of home in society, ending the chapter with five dimensions of home: temporal, spatial, economic, ethical and other (e.g., legal, cultural, political). This chapter is a useful conceptualization of home, affirming and augmenting the few existing in the literature.

There are other valuable contributions in this volume from which we can learn. Much like I did in a recent paper about home and household (McGregor, 2016), Chapter 2 presents a critical reflection of the concept of home based on two philosophers, Heidegger and Marías, and a poet, Rosales. Those home economists interested in the phenomenological approach to home will appreciate this chapter. In a similar philosophical vein, Chapter 3 presents the home as the place where “the individual’s identity is formed from the relation with the family in the home” (p. 4). “Home is not primarily a physical, material place but the origin of human relationships [best understood by focusing on] the primacy of the other over the self” (pp. 58-59). Liking philosophy and how it informs home economics, I enjoyed this chapter especially because it resonated with Japan’s home economics philosophy (Sekiguchi, 2004).

The author of Chapter 5 poses that both a society’s marriage culture and “parental stability [play a role] in the evolution not just of behaviours but also of ideas about marriage and the home” (p. 5). “The home is a place for acquiring knowledge, abilities and values.” The author maintained that how people are socialized to the concept of marriage affects the intergenerational stability of the home. Again, this premise has been a mainstay of home economics for over a century, prompting some, including Ellen Swallow Richards, to advocate for a new discipline to study the home and family.

Faulting the limits of “the economic theory of the family” (p. 5), the author of Chapter 6 proposes grounding the study of family in not only economic and exchange concepts but also gifts, reciprocity and generosity. The author anchored this discussion in “the ‘genome’ concept of the family” (p. 130). By genome, he meant “the latent structure that gives rise to that specific social structure known as the family relationship” (p. 129). Again, home economics has long valued the production and non-production functions of the family as an institution and how it plays out in gendered dynamics. We lobby for this perspective at the UN level, often through the work of the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE), which has consultative standing at several key UN committees, most from the latter’s inception. Gendered notions of the family and home have anchored home economics practice for many years.

In Chapter 8, the author reasoned that because the home is formed by people, it makes sense to understand people through their home. To that end, he developed six, what he called, geographical dimensions of home: physical, economic, political, human, social and cultural. I became aware of this type of approach to conceptualizing home when researching the piece that I wrote on home and household (McGregor, 2016). It is not a novel contribution, but its inclusion does augment existing, like-minded scholarship that strives to understand the home within its context.

Chapter 4 broached the issue of the lifetime impact of poverty and deprivation, claiming that its unique contribution was the author's concern for the "subtler and more important" (p. 5) impacts on a person such as a sense of loss of control as well as loss of life's meaning and purpose, which can be perpetuated in the next generation, creating a vicious cycle. In a less-than-compelling contribution, Chapter 7 focused on pensions for the elderly and how they should be understood not just from an individual perspective but that of the home collective. This was not compelling in the sense that it has been a concern for home economics for decades.

I surprised myself by concluding that I can recommend to home economists this edited collection about *The Home*. Once I got over, what felt was, the dismissal of home economics, I realized that these ten authors have insights and conceptualizations that either (a) affirm our long-standing practice (which is a good thing) or (b) augment some aspects of it (also a good thing). I encourage all home economists reading the book and this review to reach out to the Home Renaissance Foundation, the Editor and the authors, introduce yourself and see if something interesting can emerge from melding our century-old understanding of home and family with their scholarship that also privileged home and family.

Reviewer

Sue L. T. McGregor, PhD, IPHE, Professor Emerita

McGregor Consulting Group

www.consultmcgregor.com

sue.mcgregor@msvu.ca

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Author's biography

Please provide a brief (less than 100 words) paragraph for each author, including current role or memberships and an email address for correspondence. For example:

Professor Donna Pendergast, PhD, is Dean of the School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia. Donna researches and writes about Home Economics philosophy, education and practice.

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