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Home Economics: Transformative practice, ecology and everyday life

Kerry Renwick, Guest Editor
University of British Columbia

When describing ways to make the complexities of everyday life visible Vaines (1992) highlighted how dynamic living systems are associated with harmony and diversity. She described how our daily lives interact with our family and therefore interconnected to other living systems through intricate and complex webs (Vaines, 1995, 1999). With this in mind, Vaines argued for a deep ecology to both understand and unify the field of Home Economics. Vaines is drawn to the term ecology because it draws from the Greek roots meaning *oikos* or household (Vaines, 1985, 1992). She argues that its value is in how it can enable both a looking out from the family as well as a way to consider the nature of family. As a result of this reasoning, Home Economics and Human Ecology are used as interchangeable terms by Vaines (1992).

The integrated and complex nature of living systems led Vaines to develop a series of maps (Vaines, 1999, 2004) as a way to support home economics professionals in their understanding of everyday life especially family life (Vaines, 2004). Her use of map-making helps in charting and therefore revealing the wholeness of the everyday while also acknowledging that maps continue to evolve and are therefore never complete (Vaines, 1995, 1999, 2004). Vaines comments that they “reflect reality but are not substitutes for reality” (Vaines, 1995, p. 2). However, Vaines’ concern for the professional and transformative practice of Home Economists means that her maps do provide guidance on what the profession stands for in bringing about a better world (Vaines, 1985).

Vaines has argued for the exploration of local stories and everyday life in specific places (Vaines, 1999). These are important alternative *ways of knowing* that are of value to the Home Economics field given that “Science often hides wholeness, complexities, and symbolic meanings as well as historical, lifeworld and narrative richness” (Vaines, 1993, n.p.). Thus Vaines’ valuing of narrative and lifeworld are two of the *many ways of knowing* that opens up possibilities for equitable and just approaches to our work (Vaines, 1985).

With this perspective in mind, the papers presented in this issue are focused on how Vaines’ has invited Home Economics professionals to engage with the metaphor of *the world is our home*. Since the 1980s, Vaines’ intellectual work has focused on reclaiming a holistic rather than reductionist approach within the field, and recognition that the everyday choices we make in service of capitalism are not in our interests as human beings nor of the web of life we are inherently a part of. Engaging with transformative practice, ecology and everyday life are all implicated in the practice of home economics. Therefore how can home economics create responses to a changing environment in ways that reconnects us to an ecological whole? How might it enable concern for a world that is our home? How might we transform our everyday practices to live with rather than damage our world-home?

Thus this issue focuses on the ways in which the field of Home Economics practice in the 21st Century is both evolving and transforming. Largely drawn from the *XV Canadian Symposium—Home Economics | Family Studies | Human Ecology | Family & Consumer Science Education* (Edstrom & Renwick, 2019) held in Vancouver in February 2019, eight home economists and related professionals offer their responses to Vaines’ metaphor of *the world is our home* and how her maps can work to inform their professional practice.

The following papers are elaborations of Vaines’ writings about ecology as a unifying theme, are based on the recognition of interrelationships of all living things and when seen as a whole it is greater

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than its parts. Thus using Vaines' metaphor of the world as our home, what we do as home economists needs to be eco-centered.

There is a strong social justice theme in these papers as the authors think through what it means to engage with transformative practice while working towards a greater good. The themes of social justice are framed around rethinking home economics for decolonizing practice and racism; for working with children who live in poverty; developing an eco-centred profession that includes being food literate in critical ways. While some of the work presented in this issue is explicitly positioned in North America it is offered in a way that can be used to inform practice in other geographic and cultural contexts.

Basque and Britto write about the importance of antiracist theories informing our work at a time of increasing social unrest including those which are being driven by race. While they are located in Canada/North America the observations Basque and Britto offer are equally evident in other global locations where race relations are in tension because of the interplay of class, gender, status and power (Bhattacharyya, Gabriel, & Small, 2016). The authors position their work on Vaines' assertion that as a profession home economics is grounded as moral practice. Vaines also acknowledges that the profession is transforming as it meets contemporary social challenges such as racism. In their paper, Basque and Britto offer ways to frame how to engage with anti-racist strategies in the home economics classroom.

Drawing on Vaines' use of ecology as a unifying theme, Smith posits that the transformation of the home economics profession lies within its capacity to focus on everyday practices without losing sight of other larger and holistic influences. Smith uses Vaines' work to articulate a framework for home economics that invites us to consider what a decolonized home economics profession might look like. A discussion about how this can occur is offered and begins with an acceptance of many worldviews rather than rely solely on a Western perspective that generates ignorance (Battiste, 2013).

Chapman draws from Vaines' work on ecology to explore ways for the home economics profession to offer emerging practitioners greater capacity to respond to current ecological issues by moving the gaze towards an eco-centred future. Drawing on historical documents and narratives from practitioners Chapman explores some uncomfortable realities about the profession being complicit in colonizing processes that have privileged Euro-centric positions that have generated both cultural and environmental concerns. As a profession, we are challenged to re-engage with our mission for familial well-being in diverse and inclusive ways, and care for our world as home.

Continuing this theme Derbyshire writes about how home economics education has been both implicated in the colonialist project to assimilate First Nation people in Canada. This is not a unique experience to Canada as similar work has been undertaken in other colonized contexts and is a difficult legacy that the profession needs to acknowledge. Derbyshire argues that we need to re-consider how our work in classrooms should encompass knowledge systems through a process that Battiste (2013) calls "two-eyed seeing". This helps us to meld in respectful ways our personal knowing with that of Indigenous knowing that responds to Vaines' concern about perpetuating Western perspectives.

In their engagement with Vaines' metaphor, Powell and Renwick write that critical food literacy is a way to understand how we are connected to the larger food systems, social justice, and sustainability. In their paper, they describe two school garden initiatives in Vancouver, BC in context of Vaines' concern for understanding the mundane of growing food while becoming both connected and ecologically responsible. Both examples provide ways to think about how young people can be responsible and caring as they are mindful about their everyday life. These examples demonstrate the value in using Vaines' *many ways of knowing* and *spheres of influence map* to reconcile the various tension that are emerging in the discourse of food literacy.

Writing about the relationship between poverty and positive school experiences Enns' paper reminds us of how social disadvantage is manifested in numerous ways and with cascading consequences. Poverty is a global problem that has not abated, even in privileged countries such as Canada, due to the way in which neoliberalism supports a brand of politics and economics that actually sustains poverty (Bush, 2007; Roccu, 2016). Enns presents a case for teachers to specifically attend to the ways in which poverty compromises a young person's ability to engage and learn. We are reminded

about Vaines' concern that we, as home economists professionals should engage in reflective, transformative practice for social justice.

The article by Mugliett has a focus on how home economics teachers can adjust their pedagogical practices to be inclusive of new ICT to address a potential divide between teachers' experiences and that of their students who are heavily invested in using technology. While this paper does not explicitly respond to Vaines' ideas it does address the need for home economics educators to add information technology to the suite of technologies that we already utilize. In doing so we are in a better position to engage with Vaines' many ways of knowing especially around our professional development and the needs of emerging C21st home economics professionals.

Kerry Renwick

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Biography

Dr Kerry Renwick is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia. She teaches in the Bachelor of Education (home economics and health education) preparing secondary educators. Dr Renwick was chair for the XV Canadian Symposium held in Vancouver in February 2019.

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Anti-racist pedagogy: What does it look like in the classroom?

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Abstract

“Racism is a moral issue and of concern for moral educators, with recent social movements such as #BlackLivesMatter highlighting how far we are from obliterating racial oppression and the unearned privilege whiteness confers” (Lynch et al., 2017, p. 129). Vaines suggests that Home Economics is a profession grounded in morality, and one that is in a process of transformation (1997). Should this transformational process not, therefore, hold ongoing issues such as racism as a priority when developing clearer definitions of its mission and the pedagogical models that will enable this mission to be fulfilled? Much thought has gone into deconstructing the multicultural educational model and replacing it with the deliberately critical, anti-racist pedagogical approach, though there remains much room for development of this pedagogy in pre-tertiary education. Our paper provides an introduction to the theoretical principles of anti-racist pedagogy, what it means for students and teachers, as well as specific strategies and lessons that can be used within the Home Economics classroom.

KEYWORDS: RACISM, ANTI-RACIST PEDAGOGY, SCHOOL AS HOME, HOME ECONOMICS, REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

The school as our home

Teaching is a political act (Freire, 1972) that influences how students engage with society as citizens. For this reason, practitioners must reflect critically and remain grounded in the discomfort that comes when choosing transformative practice. This discomfort is familiar to the teaching home economist who must understand and integrate the complex webs of life into their craft. These diverse and intricate webs are interconnected, unifying us organically to each other and our environment (Vaines, 1994). Schools are one of the many living systems that constitute these webs and students bring to the classroom backpacks filled with the histories and values of the private spheres by which they have been cultured. Eleanore Vaines (1994) has taught us that the *World as our Home* metaphor presents a moral vision centered on deep care for one another. Applying this lens to anti-racist pedagogy, the *School as Our Home* implores teachers to take action. Anti-racist pedagogy uncovers and deconstructs hidden societal oppression and endeavours to mend the systems that perpetuate racial inequality amongst students and greater society.

Deconstructing racism in schools

Although most educators are familiar with blatant racism, less obvious categories infiltrate our classrooms every day. Aversive racism describes the camouflaged biases that are embedded in class materials, curriculum and teaching strategies, as well as the grouping and tracking of students based on racial assumptions (Blakeney, 2005; Tatum, 1997). Cultural discontinuity, another form, can be seen when the cultural and ethnic values of students do not match the Eurocentric values of their schools, often leading to low motivation and communication issues (Blakeney, 2005; Taggart, 2017). Race, therefore, affects academic success, with research suggesting that students feel pressured to choose between belonging racially and being academically successful (Blakeney, 2005; Ontario Alliance of Black School Educators [OABSE], 2015).

Another element of growing concern is the disparity between diverse student populations and racial diversity among teachers (Blakeney, 2005). This *teacher diversity gap* can lead to blocks and see underrepresented students at an academic disadvantage (Carr & Klassen, 1997; OABSE, 2015). For schools to be racially just, teachers need to develop competencies to address cultural and race issues as well as be supported by their community and administration (Priest et al., 2016).

Defining anti-racist pedagogy

While the prevailing multicultural education model intends to celebrate diversity, it often proves to perpetuate stereotypes and feed a cycle of oppression (McMahon, 2003). Recognition of similarities and differences is important, however, an over-emphasis on difference—as embodied by multicultural education models—can limit understandings of certain groups as being *different but nice*, an attitude that does not equitably serve communities grappling with racially tense political climates (Pedersen & Walker, 2005).

Anti-racist pedagogy seeks to eliminate social oppression through reflection and action. This empowering and democratic practice is different from multicultural education as it actively challenges individual and systemic oppression at the interpersonal, institutional and cultural levels (Blakeney, 2005; OABSE, 2015). Anti-racist pedagogy promotes race-awareness, understandings of personal privilege and the development of a deep consciousness about how perceptions of race permeate our own and others' lives. It incites us to take action and to create a new anti-racist structure for society (Lynch, Swartz, & Isaacs, 2017).

What does it mean to be an anti-racist pedagogue?

The anti-racist pedagogue *acts critically* and with intention by facilitating dialogue, questioning personal values, deconstructing whiteness and assuming heterogeneity (Blakeney, 2005; Haymes, 1995; McMahon, 2003). Anti-racist educators seek to preserve and translate language so that cultural meanings are deconstructed, mutually understood and accessible to all (McMahon, 2003; Ritchie, 1995). They are aware of—but not inhibited by—the potential discomforts that these practices will bring.

- i) The anti-racist pedagogue *engages their school community* by creating professional development opportunities to discuss personal and collective theories of racial identity, even if through the explicit use of hypothetical scenarios (Lawrence & Tatum, as cited in Blakeney, 2005). They make an effort to create an anti-racist policy alongside families and administration, while evaluating existing school policies and practices (Fairbanks, Dodds, Hall, Horner, & Peterat, 1994).
- ii) The anti-racist pedagogue *questions classroom practices*, critically evaluating who benefits from particular teaching/learning styles, and languages and reflecting on their own perceptions of academic success (Blakeney, 2005). They evaluate and re-write curriculum components to be heterogeneously inclusive and they make space for students to lead social change behaviours with empathy and morality (Fairbanks et al., 1994; Gay, 1995; McMahon, 2003).
- iii) The anti-racist pedagogue *sets the tone* by creating a safe and peaceful space to have meaningful, empathetic conversations about race (Davis-Manigaulte, Yorks, & Kasi, 2006). Listening skills are explicitly supported and time constraints are empathetically considered.

Transforming the home economics classroom

While this pedagogical practice is largely about adopting an anti-racist mindset, we have designed a few learning experiences that apply the anti-racist mindset to the Home Economics classroom context. The ideas below are largely inspired by resources featured on the Oxfam Education, Resources for Rethinking and Teaching Tolerance Websites, whose URLs can be found in our reference section.

Reimagining the patchwork quilt

The Canadian mosaic metaphor is thought to reflect the attitudes and values about immigration and immigrants that permeate culture and perceptions. Redefining the Canadian mosaic metaphor in the

form of a patchwork quilt provides an opportunity to deconstruct and reconstruct perceptions of race within the classroom.

Students can be invited to represent their various ethnicities and cultures through the creation of a patch (with the alternative option of representing a musical, literary, ancestral or public figure). In sewing these pieces together using a Eurocentric *quilt block* design there arises an opportunity to comment on the relationships between pieces, represented by the strips of fabric between each block. These strips needn't be inconspicuous or understated—anti-racist pedagogy has arisen from the need to illuminate the relationships between the heterogeneous cultures and histories that make up our society and recognise how they have been ignored, suppressed and unrepresented. These strips require critical reflection in their formation—how can the tensions, neglect and misunderstandings of these relationships be represented? Students might choose to represent these according to a psychological colour spectrum (Dael, Perseguers, Marchand, Antonietti, & Mohr, 2016), texture spectrum or symbolic stitching method. Where a traditional quilt tends towards order and colour scheme in unifying the focal blocks, an emphasis on the joining strips and their representative messages might be considered anti-aesthetic. Just as the anti-aesthetic art movement grew out of anger towards society's ignorance regarding life's harsh realities and serious issues (Meyer & Ross, 2004), so too can this experience make space for relationships to be illuminated, juxtaposing the softness of a quilt with the hard questions it presents, to both the students engaging with it and the wider community.

Seedfolks

Seedfolks is a children's novel by Paul Fleishman, documenting a chapter in the lives of a culturally diverse community in Cleveland. Through the planting of an urban garden a place is created where residents can share their personal stories of struggle and through empathy-building, a community is born (Resources for Rethinking, 2018). A critical evaluation of this story could serve as a provocation for the co-construction of an anti-racist project thread.

Students could begin on this journey by dividing the text into the thirteen chapters of its residents and sharing each story, inclusive of cultural nuances and struggles, through a language/medium of their choice. Through reflective discussion, led by critical questioning, students and teachers will have the opportunity to unpack, share and reshape their own perspectives of race, racism, immigration, ethnicity and more. Teachers could facilitate a culminating and continuing project in the establishment of a kitchen garden or produce plot, to further the perspectives gained through the investigation of *Seedfolks*. Students could source seeds from families to reflect the multitude of heritages represented, caring for them collaboratively and creating daily rituals that enable students to tune into their own and others' personal stories. Alternatively, students could be challenged to create a menu that uses culturally significant ingredients brought in from their respective homes.

In either case, time and attention must be granted to prioritize the process of critical reflection regarding these seeds, ingredients or foods. Food has historically been racialized through corporate and government policy and action as well as colonial attitudes: indigenous peoples have been robbed of their needs and rights to cultivate land (Van Teeseling, 2017); Communities of colour experience lower quality, variety and availability of preferred foods (Billings & Cabbil, 2011); Culturally diverse cuisine can perpetuate a culture of superficial tolerance for multiculturalism where perceptions of racial issues may otherwise remain negative (Keenan, 2015). Without critical reflection, these activities might only prove to meet a multicultural education agenda. Appropriately facilitated collaboration and dialogue, however, can provide opportunities to discuss issues such as cultural appropriation, the limitations of tolerance and food sovereignty, among other threads.

Where does food come from?

While farmers' markets, urban gardens and other community initiatives advocate for a reconnection to food sourcing and supply chains, there remains a disconnect from the origins of our food. By unpacking a heterogeneous grocery bag students are presented with an opportunity to discuss their understandings, explore their assumptions and share their wonderings about the origins of what others and we eat (Oxfam Education, n. d.). This is an open-ended activity that can take many directions.

Teachers may like to predetermine their facilitation questions and direction before delving in, or employ a student-centred approach by responding to the directions in which the children lead discussion. A student-centred approach would enable teachers to explore students' existing perceptions and understandings, tuning in to the areas that will most interest students or enabling them pathways towards maximum growth. In either case, teachers will need to carefully consider the items they put into the bag to ensure that they enable students to compare and contrast their own perspectives with their peers as well as groups that may not be represented in the classroom. Focal points could include uncommon fresh ingredients, non-English labeled packages and non-Eurocentric quantity amounts. Questions and wondering statements should challenge students' perceptions related to countries of origin, race and ethnicity, language and culture. Extension activities could include taking students to the local supermarket, ethnic grocery store, farmers' market, or stores and markets that are farther afield, offering produce that they may not see locally.

Conclusion and recommendations

The moral vision of the anti-racist pedagogue might be realized through Reflective Practice, an approach that Vaines suggests requires continual attention so that "the person committing herself/himself to becoming a moral/ethical person [can] comprehend the complexities of their commitment over time" (1997, part 1, para 7). Anti-racist pedagogy recognizes this need for continued attention and that emancipation from oppression must evolve, starting in the school as our home. It advocates for the empowerment of individuals and their communities to take a stand against the many ways that racism permeates the everyday lives of so many. By looking beyond our intentions and critically examining their effects can we take real action against racial inequity? Kendi suggests, "if the effect of a policy is an injustice or an inequity, it's racist... We no longer, the way we should be defining racist and antiracist, have to worry at all about intent" (NPR, 2019, n.p.).

The reality is that many school districts in Canada have anti-racist policies, but for several, the implementation is ineffective and needs more attention to move from policy to action (Centre for Race and Culture [CRC], 2013). We recommend three good practice steps to move anti-racist policies to action adapted from the Centre for Race and Culture (2013):

1. Implementation should be lead by anti-racist education from the district, including cultural competency training for students and staff as well as ongoing training and support to deal with racism.
2. A whole school [school as home] approach should be adopted by involving students, teachers and parents to partake in anti-racist initiatives.
3. Curriculum inequities should be addressed to reflect the diverse and unique cultural backgrounds of the region.

If, as Home Economists, we are to remain committed to the pursuit of a common good then we must continuously revisit our notion of what Home Economics should be, particularly its moral grounding and how it serves this mission (Vaines, 1997). By making space for heterogeneity we are able to tune into the many truths of our complex societies, embrace the diverse webs of life and be intentionally active in creating new stories for individuals that reflect morality, harmony and equality.

Biographies

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Re-visiting Vaines: Toward a decolonizing framework for home economics

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Abstract

Dr Eleanore Vaines, was an influential scholar in the field of home economics whose scholarly writing is known throughout the world and many consider her ahead of her time. While it is difficult to create a succinct rendition of the totality of Dr Vaines' scholarship, it is probably fair to say that from the beginning she set out to articulate a new professional orientation for home economics, one that would transform professional practice. She maintained that we must continue to transform home economics professional practice by: recognizing ecology as a unifying theme; understanding many ways of knowing and spheres of influence; seeking wholistic approaches to everyday life; and exploring the sacred nature of our place in the world. In this paper, I argue that implicitly she was challenging the canons, norms, and cognitive imperialism of settler colonialism and its influence on home economics. I focus on the synergies between Vaines' theorizing and post-colonial studies suggesting the ways her work can inform a decolonizing framework for home economics.

KEYWORDS: VAINES, ECOLOGY, DECOLONIZING

Introduction

As a Canadian home economics educator, my values and beliefs regarding home economics have been profoundly influenced by the work of Dr Eleanore Vaines. Since I enrolled undergraduate home economics professional practice course she taught at the University of British Columbia, in the mid-1980s, I have considered her a mentor. I found her arguments for reflective practice in home economics, for accepting an eco-centric philosophical position, and seeking more holistic approaches to everyday life, compelling. In this paper, I review her work in light of current international initiatives to decolonize the academy. I begin with setting the theoretical context by reviewing the literature on decolonization, then I examine Vaines' texts particularly her use of textual strategies to represent reflective practice, and I make the case that the sub-text of her theorizing overlaps with the key actions of decolonization and therefore can assist in beginning the decolonizing of home economics.

The context: A written statement that precedes

Theoretical perspective

I locate this study in post-colonial studies (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2006). Post-colonialism addresses the effects of colonization. Post-colonial theory takes a basic position against imperialism and promoting patriotism to the Motherland and Euro-centricity (de Zwart, 2005). It is important to note that the *post* in post-colonialism does not imply that colonialism has ended, but rather its on-going consequences are contested (Hickling-Hudson, Matthews, & Woods, 2004). I begin with a short discussion of the concept of decolonization. Then I do a "post colonial reading" (Ashcroft, Griffiths,

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& Tiffin, 2013, p. 173) of Vaines' (1988, 1997a) notion of a reflective practice journey. While most post-colonial readings tend to interrogate with the intent of drawing deliberate attention to the profound and inescapable effects of colonization, I do the opposite and take an appreciative inquiry approach (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2003; Whitney & Cooperrider, 2011) focusing on the best of what is implied in Vaines' work that implies decolonization in order to build a foundation for the future. Appreciative inquiry is a more positive form of inquiry that is generative, building on the qualities that are already available to us (Norum, 2008).

I have chosen to use *decolonizing* rather than *indigenization*. As I am not indigenous (see note 1. pp. 21) and I believe *indigenizing* is the role of indigenous scholars. While attending to Indigenous thought is crucial, a focus on *Indigenizing* might encourage the avoidance of self-critical work required of decolonization allowing colonial institutions to maintain their power and affirming Eurocentric superiority (Battiste, 2016; Hill, 2012). Decolonization puts the colonizer at the center of attention and has the potential of resisting re-colonization, a subsequent colonization and exploitation on the part of institutions that exploits Indigenous peoples' knowledge in pursuit of neo-colonial goals. As a white settler, I can address my role and the role of my profession in colonization.

The context: A situation in which something exists

Colonization and decolonization

In order to understand colonialism one needs to understand its history. According to Said (1978), colonialism is a consequence of imperialism. The term colony comes from the Latin word *colonus*, meaning farmer which indicates that typically the practice colonialism involved the transfer of people to a new territory, where they lived as permanent settlers but maintained political allegiance to their country of origin. Imperialism comes from the Latin term *imperium*, meaning to command. Thus, the term imperialism draws attention to the way that the country of origin exercises power over the new territory. The term colonialism is frequently used to describe settlements in North America, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, and South America that were controlled by a large population of permanent European residents.

The field of postcolonial studies was influenced by Edward Said's (1978) book *Orientalism*. He conducted a discourse analysis of the production of knowledge about the Middle East and used the term orientalism to describe a set of concepts, assumptions, and discursive practices that were used to produce, interpret, and evaluate knowledge about non-European peoples. This mindset of the colonizer which characterizes the colonized as exotic, primitive and inferior allowed and continues to allow, the colonizer to rationalize imperial conquest. Said's analysis made it possible for scholars to deconstruct literary and historical texts in order to understand how they reflected and reinforced the imperialist project. Attention is directed to the philosophical, political, economic and sociocultural consequences of colonialism and questioning claims of academic knowledge and intellectual authority.

Indigenous Peoples all over the world have faced a similar fate at the hands of colonizing powers. This includes loss of their land; assaults on their language and culture; subjugation and enslavement; dismissal of their spirituality; economic exploitation of their art and plant knowledge without consent, acknowledgement, or benefit to them; and the imposition of the superiority of Western knowledge, rationality, science and civilization (Bradley & Herrera, 2016; Hall & Tandon, 2017; Patel, 2015).

My ancestors came from Ireland, France, Norway, and Scotland to settle in Canada for access to land and a better life. They were settler colonialist. Settler colonialism is a distinct type of colonialism in which outsiders come to a land inhabited by Indigenous people and claim it as theirs (Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, 2014). Settler colonizing involves the replacement of indigenous populations with an invasive settler society that, over time, develops a distinctive identity of political dominance over Indigenous peoples (Barker & Battell Lowman, n.d.). As Tuck (2016) explains:

Settler colonialism is different from other colonial formations that focus on extractions of labour and resources: often, in addition to these extractions, settler colonialism is ultimately about the pursuit of land for settlement. Settler colonialism requires the destruction of Indigenous communities to clear the land for settlement. Through

genocide, assimilation, appropriation, and state violence, Indigenous presence is erased. (p. 150)

Colonial educational institutions have been and continue to be, complicit in the colonial project of normalizing Western epistemologies and erasure of Indigenous presence (Ball, 1983; Khalifa, Khalil, Marsh, & Halloran, 2018; Tuck, 2016; Willinsky, 1998). Academies have been dominated by epistemologies that have devalued Indigenous ways of knowing and set the context for continued marginalization of Indigenous students, communities, culture and histories. For example, Griffith (2018) describes education in Canada as

riddled with ideologies and colonial constructions that extend the project of imperialism, and white supremacy. Consequently, Indigenous knowledge has been eliminated, leaving the Canadian education system to be one that thrives on placing significance on Western Eurocentric knowledges, thus only encouraging students and educators to further negate the value of Indigenous knowledge. (p. 29)

Using processes such as *orientalism* (Said, 1978), *cognitive imperialism* (Battiste, 2011), *neo-colonialism* (Ryan, 2008), *epistemicide* (Hall & Tandon, 2017; Hall, 2016), and *invisibilizing, normalizing, and othering* (Khalifa, Khalil, Marsh, & Halloran, 2018) educational institutions have systematically ensured the dominance of the colonizers. Orientalism involves essentializing societies as static and undeveloped, inferior and primitive that can be studied, depicted and reproduced by the dominant society, which is superior (Khalifa et al., 2018; Said, 1978). Cognitive imperialism seeks to validate one source of knowledge and the result is assimilation of the dominant values and norms, languages. Neo-colonialism refers to actions that continue to maintain the colonial influence, either those of the colonial rulers or new practices of capitalism, globalisation and cultural imperialism. Epistemicide refers to the killing of Indigenous knowledge systems. When epistemology of the colonizer becomes *normal*, indigenous knowledge becomes the *other* and is invisible. These frameworks operate and are reproduced in the social and structural organization of educational systems, in curriculum, instructional practices, assessment and evaluation, and so on.

Although there is great diversity and depth in decolonial theories (Battiste, 2013), there is fairly common agreement that decolonization is “the process of revealing and dismantling colonialist power in all its forms” (Ashcroft et al., 2013, p. 56). Here, decolonization is understood as “an intensely political transformative process” moving from awareness to responsibility “with the goal of regenerating Indigenous nationhood and place-relationships while dismantling structures of settler colonialism” (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2016, p. 111).

Aside from de Zwart’s (2005) use of *white sauce* as a metaphor for colonialism in home economics, Bermúdez, Muruthi, and Jordan’s (2016) call for decolonizing research in family science, and McDowell and Hernández’s (2010) framework for supporting decolonizing practices family therapy, I found little evidence of attention to decolonization in the home economics (see note 2., p. xx) literature. There are many reports in other areas of actions to address decolonizing particularly education at all levels (Battiste, 2016, 2013; Battiste, Bell, & Findlay, 2002; Griffith, 2018; Hall & Tandon, 2017; Mbembe, 2016). There are on-going discussions in other disciplines and fields of study, for example, social work (Clark et al., 2010; Coates, 2016; Gray, Coates, & Hetherington, 2016; Ibrahima & Mattaini, 2019), health (Darroch & Giles, 2014), psychiatry (Sherwood, 2009), science (Aikenhead, 2006; Ryan, 2008), food studies (Bradley & Herrera, 2016), citizenship education (Smith & Rogers, 2016), and research methodology (Aveling, 2013; Patel, 2015; Smith, 2013) to give but a few examples. These studies illustrate that more scholars are adopting the process of decolonizing to challenge colonial paradigms and research methods.

As a cautionary note, Tuck and Yang (2012) have critiqued the recent proliferation of decolonization warning of the danger of it becoming a metaphor that, “kills the very possibility of decolonization; it resettles whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler” (p. 3). They echo Popkewitz (1980) who used the term *slogan system* to describe when an initiative becomes a rallying cry without regard for the underlying values or social interests being served.

The text: Information supplied by a source

The theorizing of Eleanore Vaines, an invitation to decolonizing?

I now turn to the scholarship of Dr Eleanore Vaines, professor emeritus of the School of Family and Nutritional Sciences at the University of British Columbia. Dr Vaines taught the professional courses in the home economics degree program from the early 1980s until her retirement in 2000. Her writing could be characterized as an on-going systematic examination of professional practice. In the early years, she advocated the role of a professional home economist as a “transforming actor” concerned with “social action because we are concerned with improving the social condition,” emphasizing critical thinking that supports the “possibility for every person to participate in and realize meaning in their lives and to live in harmony with other global citizens” (Vaines, 1983). In order to make this view, which she labeled reflective practice, clear, she originally contrasted it with “customary practice” (basically an atheoretical approach preserving the traditions of the profession), “instrumental practice” (applying the laws of science, guided by empirical theories), “interactive practice” (seeking to understand using interpretive theory and historical analysis) (Vaines & Wilson, 1986; Wilson & Vaines, 1985). Over the years she continued to conceptualize what reflective practice could mean for home economics, with the last documented version in 1997 (Vaines, 1997a), describing *the Reflective Practice Journey*.

For the sake of space I share Figure 1, *Becoming a Professional Home Economist: Finding Our Way of Being in the World*, published in 1997 (Vaines, 1997a, 1997b). Vaines called this figure “another stage of translating Reflective Practice for HE” (1997a, p. 12) and it was published near her retirement.

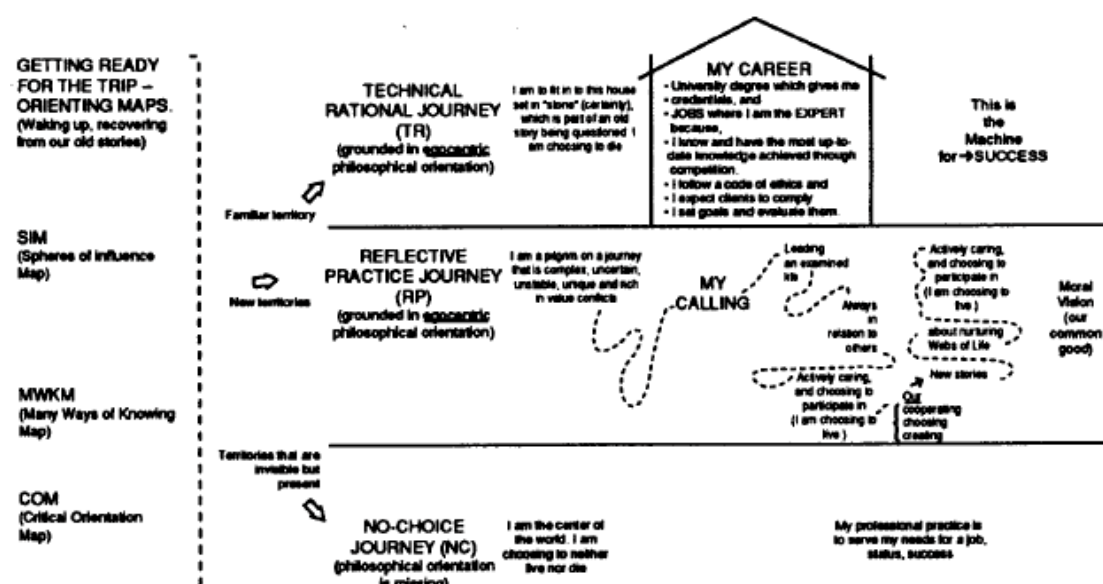


Figure 1 Becoming a Professional Home Economist: Finding Our Way of Being in the World (Vaines, 1997a; 1997b)

She introduced the figure:

When I discovered Reflective Practice in the early 1980s I was immediately drawn to it as a way of being in the world. Grounded in the metaphor the WORLD IS OUR HOME, I felt “at home”. I still do not fully understand Reflective Practice. To say that I do would mean that I am practicing RP fully. But I see my life and my work as more of a calling than a career. I believe I must learn to think in wholes and honor the details that help sustain webs of life. I believe the role of a professional is to listen, facilitate and learn together with those we seek to help (Vaines, 1997a, p. 1).

She contrasts a Reflective Practice Journey located in eco-centered philosophy to two other common perspectives on professional practice. One she labels *No Choice* corresponding to her earlier view of customary practice. It has no particular philosophical underpinning, while the other; a technical rational journey is informed by ego-centered instrumental philosophy.

Getting ready for the trip: Spheres of Influence Map

In the left margin of Figure 1, Getting Ready for the Trip, three Orienting Maps are provided to prepare home economics professionals for the Reflective Practice Journey. The first is the Spheres of Influence Map (Figure 2).

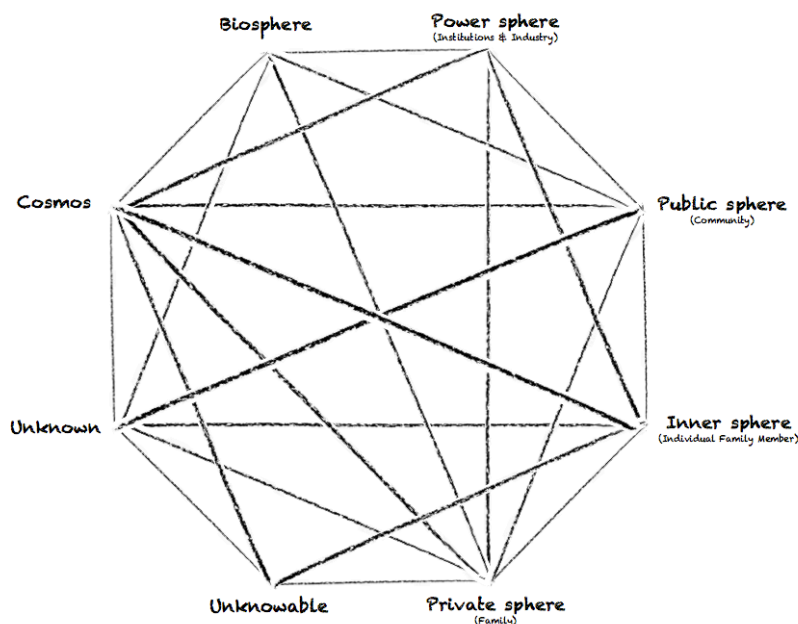


Figure 2 Spheres of Influence Map (Vaines, 1996).

In an unpublished paper, Vaines (1996) describes the different spheres and why it is important to acknowledge their significance for the home economics professional. She claims

every system is related to every other system in some way and to some degree and the whole of these parts is greater than the sum of their parts. The Spheres of Influence integrated as a whole interactive interdependent system provides a way for the HMEC community to examine and critique fundamental changes. It energizes a movement...to a view, which reflects a more complex lived reality [necessary] to participate in shaping a culture of decency. This new story is about working together to live a moral vision of what it means to be human and live together in harmony. It is a harmony full of diversity, mystery and complexity. (n.p.)

She goes on to explain the spheres are grounded in metaphor(s) that are intimately inter-related.

The metaphor that underlies cosmos and Biosphere is World as Home. The metaphor that is the foundation of the Power Sphere is World as Machine. The Public, Private and Inner Spheres are situated in three interrelated metaphors: Home as Factory, Home as Interrelationships and Home as Moral Center. These are lived out in the street, the home, and within the self. The Known/Unknown Sphere of Influence is affected by all the underlying metaphors and the tensions these create between and among them. (p. 15)

She concludes:

If only one metaphor dominates, long-term consequences are manifested in pathologies and impoverished human understandings and experiences. Lived as a coherent whole, these metaphors provide rich possibilities for a moral vision guiding thought and action. (p. 15)

Getting ready for the trip: Many Ways of Knowing Map

The second orienting map is Many Ways of Knowing Map is actually presented in two parts: Part 1 an image (Figure 3); and Part 2 a chart (Table 1).

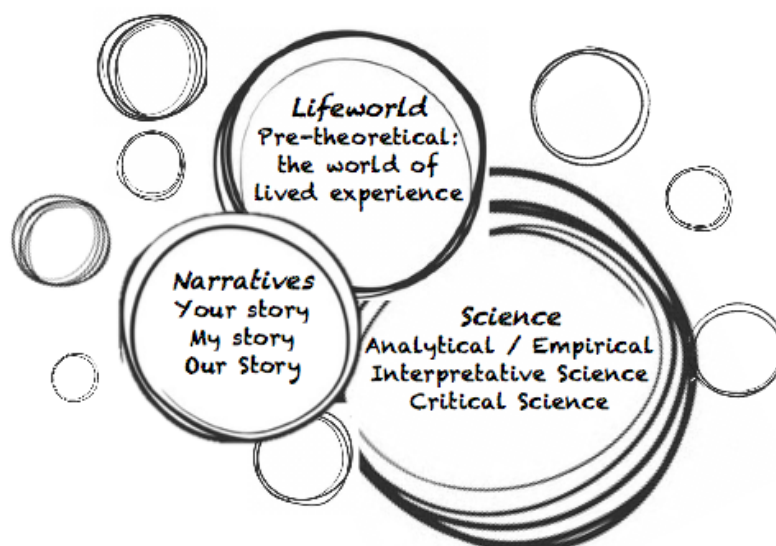


Figure 3 Many Ways of Knowing Map (Vaines, 1993)

The *Many Ways of Knowing Map* demonstrates that relying on scientific, positivistic, ways of knowing which has dominated the field is incomplete. She identifies at least two other ways of knowing that we should consider: lifeworld, the knowing of lived experience; and narrative ways of knowing, the knowing from storying. But her diagram also indicates that there are also many other as yet named ways of knowing to be explored.

To elaborate what the *Many Ways of Knowing Map* means for Home Economics, she created an additional “map” in the form of a chart, *Many Ways of Knowing Map 2* (Vaines, 1996). I only reproduce the section of that chart related to the *Reflective Practice Journey*, which she describes as a “wholistic view” and a “family perspective on everyday life” (Table 1). In it, she outlines some of the underlying beliefs and concepts and shows what using many ways of knowing might look like in professional practice.

Table 1 Excerpt from *Many Ways of Knowing Map 2* (Vaines, 1993)

Family Perspective on Everyday Life (Wholistic View)	
Worldview	World is an intimately interrelated, organic whole; our Home
Way of Knowing	<i>Integrating</i> : knowing, seeing, becoming, grounded in ethics of caring and a search for wisdom
Meaning of the Everyday	A family view, the world a complex, WEBS OF LIFE, “transactional”, community; intersubjective and interdependent
Story Theme	Empowered through active participation in shaping our new story together
Sphere(s) of Influence	All Spheres of Influence as an interdependent whole
Language	Brings together all the above to discover a way of being sustainable and meaningful users who are in intersubjective, intergenerational relationships
Time	Temporal
Place/Space	Family as environment, and Family in the near environment, Home in relation to the World as Home
Reveals	A wholeness rather than fragmentation of everyday life (politics, institution, and language are intimately interrelated); moral vision of everyday life is revealed together. WEBS OF LIFE.

Vaines (1993, 1995, 1997a, 1997b) believed that the valued end of reflective practice was to seek ways of realizing a moral vision which brings together many ways of knowing in order to view the work of the profession as part of an interconnected whole. She was concerned that when knowledge and stories are viewed as separate and estranged, oppression and contradictions blind participants

to the full possibilities of what it means to be human and live together in harmony. She claimed that when ways of knowing are interwoven, our comprehension of the everyday lives of families opens up to richer and fuller meanings. This can result in more meaningful curriculum development, more relevant research and better questions in the guiding of practice and policy formation.

Getting ready for the trip: Critical Orientation Map

In the late 1980s, Eleanore Vaines began to explore ecology as a unifying theme for transforming Home Economics and the reflective home economics professional. In 1988, she created a chart, *Contrasts Between Two Reality Modes*, demonstrating the tensions between two philosophical positions: ego-centred and eco-centred reality modes. The eco-centered reality mode is based on an ecological worldview where: everything is related to everything in some way; organisms are embedded in community, they are interdependent, in reciprocal relation; persons see themselves as part of a whole; there is a blending of past/present/future; and the world is our home (Vaines, 1990). She continued to develop this line of philosophical reasoning and in 1994 published an article in the *Canadian Home Economics Journal* suggesting that the field of Home Economics could become “a leader by living the metaphor, World As Home” (Vaines, 1994, p. 62) if it adopted the notion of ecology “as two inter-related generalizations: Every living system is related to every other living system in some way and to some degree, and the whole of these systems is greater than the sum of their parts” (p. 60). In articulating ecology as unifying theme for home economics, Vaines (1994) asks us to “imagine ourselves in harmony with air, water, people, plants and events” and to see that “our actions come to reflect our connectedness, our symbiotic relationship with everything and everyone” (p. 10). In doing so, the ordinary, the mundane task of everyday life such as food provision, acquiring water, taking care of children and the elderly, all the “perennial practical problems” of families, become meaningful and sacred. Thus, ecology, for Vaines, is also a way for home economics professionals to talk about a particular quality of life worth living, a moral vision of everyday life related to the common good. In an early version of the *Critical Orientation Map* (Vaines, 1990) (this map was also presented as Characteristics of Philosophical Positions by Vaines in 1990) she outlines three philosophical positions that appear to be providing the foundational values and beliefs for professional practice: the ego-centric position; the eco-centered position; and the uncommitted position. In a later version, titled Modes of Practice Map (Vaines, 1997b), she linked these positions with reflective practice, technical rational practices, and no choice mode of practice respectively. It is clear that Vaines considers the eco-centered/reflective practice orientation the most ethically defensible position for home economists to hold so I include an excerpt from the map that provides a description of that orientation.

Table 2 Reflective Practice from Modes of Practice: Three Territories And Their Boundaries (Vaines, 1997b).

Mode of practice	Reflective Practice
Philosophical Foundation	Practical science as a moral basis. Axiology (what is good?) is the focus of theory-practice activities. Eco-centered.
Grounding Metaphor	The World is our Home (organic wholeness)
Historical Grounding	Everyday life is in harmony with pre-theoretical, the natural attitude which engages persons in making choices (organic worldview)
View of the Field	A complex and sophisticated field with a mission grounded in a moral vision. HE/FCSE is a profession that is informed by a mission.
Being a Professional	A calling one is socialized into in order to share gifts with others in the community context to fulfill the mission of the field in socially responsible ways.
Dominant Way(s) of Knowing	A blending of science (analytical-empirical, interpretive and critical), narrative, and lifeworld ways of knowing. Theory and practice are interrelated.
Place of Values/Moral	The meta-theoretical assumptions show that the setting aside of truth in favor of morality is one of the distinguishing features.
Place of Power	Through each person’s active participation in everyday life, they can choose to empower themselves by working with others. They define their own needs and the best answer for them.
Everyday Life	The extraordinary nature of everyday life is discovered in the mundane, the taken-for-granted. Everyday life is sacred.
Vision of End of Practice	For individuals and families to empower themselves as active participants in shaping a new story. A moral vision involving seeking a common good for all living systems in socially responsible ways.

According to Vaines (1997b), Reflective Practice can be manifested in many ways. Embracing Reflective Practice is not simply a matter of acquiring and utilizing new ideas and techniques. It is rather a matter of becoming a person *choosing to make visible and open to examination all that one believes, knows, and does*. Reflective Practitioners must *see themselves and others as a community of learners rather than passive students*. Central to learning communities is listening because it enhances relationships with others and is as important as the telling of scientific knowledge. Dialoguing then provides a means of working together and growing to care for and appreciate other viewpoints.

Sub-text: Reading between the lines—What is implied?

A decolonized home economics?

In re-reading Vaines' work, it struck me that in it there were aspects of her work that could be considered decolonizing. According to Battiste (2004) "postcolonial is not only about the criticism and deconstruction of colonization and domination, but also about the reconstruction and transformation" (p. 2). It is possible to consider the "maps" Vaines created as a form of deconstruction and reconstruction. Deconstruction in the form of conscientization (Smith, 2003) making the profession aware of, and challenging, the two common views of professional practice—the technical-rational journey and the no choice journey. Vaines points out the weaknesses of a technical rationale approach such as transmitting accumulated scientific knowledge with knowing as remembering information, telling people how to achieve a good life, accepting that the profession is compartmentalized in to separate spheres, and setting out to solve problems that the professional defines to fulfill clients' perceived wants and needs—all forms of cognitive imperialism (Battiste, 2013). She outlines the limitation of a no choice attitude such as using the profession to serve one's own interest for status and success, maintaining current norms, responding to what is, and doing the job in the most economically beneficial way—all values associated with settler colonialism. Then she offers a *reconstruction*—the reflective practice journey. The reconstruction was a vision of a transformed home economics that resonates with the deconstruction literature in that it moves beyond the technical rational view (Munroe, Borden, Murray Orr, Toney, & Meader, 2013), emphasizes the co-construction of knowledge (Khalifa et al., 2018 and a shared collective vision (Smith, 2003), eschews the dominant ways of knowing and being (Ibrahima & Mattaini, 2019) in order to *change the order of the world* (Tuck, 2016; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Intertextuality: The recognizable echoes of other texts in a text

Possibilities for decolonizing home economics

Although Vaines does not describe her work as decolonization and there is no mention of Indigenous perspectives, there are aspects of her work that resonate with decolonial scholarship and Indigenous studies. In this section in the spirit of appreciative inquiry, I ask "in what ways can Vaines' theorizing of the Reflective Practice Journey assist us with decolonizing home economics? What concepts are available to us that we can build on?"

I suggest that there are at least five characteristics of Vaines' Reflective Practice Journey that echo recommendations in decolonization literature the could set the stage for decolonizing home economics: the world as home; recognizing ecology as a unifying theme; understanding many ways of knowing and spheres of influence; seeking wholistic approaches to everyday life; and exploring the sacred nature of our place in the world. They are not mutually exclusive but I discuss each separately.

By making clear that the *home* in *home economics* is the "World as Home" (Vaines, 1994, p. 62), Vaines' theorizing echoes a shared Indigenous value with respect to their relationship with the natural world- the unification of the human community with the natural world (Miller, 2008; Royal, 2002). Thus, implies taking a decolonial stance against the settler-colonial anthropocentric point of view that privileges human/nature separation.

By identifying ecology as a unifying theme Vaines was echoing one of the earliest founders of home economics Ellen Swallow Richards, who said "The quality of life, depends upon the ability of society to teach its members how to live in harmony with their environment—defined first as family, then the community, then the world and its resources" (as cited in Zack, 2002, p. 23). Thus both advocate

home economics as the study of how the Earth Household works and the relationships that interlink all members of the Earth Household. This resonates with Indigenous conceptions of being as connected to the earth's rhythms and Mother Earth and thus can be interpreted as a decolonizing movement questioning the individualistic view of Western superiority that sees the earth as a resource to be exploited for material gain (Hill, 2012).

By acknowledging many ways of knowing, including lifeworld, narrative/storytelling and several additional unnamed possibilities (Fig. 3), Vaines was challenging the dominant Euro-western narrative or *regime of truth* of scientific empiricism as the only legitimate source of knowledge (Smith, 2013) and opening the door to validating Indigenous knowledges, epistemologies and ontologies (Battiste, 2013; Hill, 2012; Regan, 2010; Smith, 2005). This could be interpreted as an decolonizing action aimed at avoiding erasing, excluding, trivializing or devaluing Indigenous ways of knowing as has been so common in colonial literature (Battiste, 2013; Brown & Strega, 2005; Smith, 2013).

Her use of wholism/wholesight is similar to the importance that Indigenous knowledges place on life and being as wholistic, complex, and interdependent (Archibald et al., 1995; Patel, 2015; Pidgeon 2016). It resonates the decolonial move of challenging the abstraction and decontextualization so characteristic of modernist scientific knowledge and Western epistemic traditions that claim detachment of the known from the knower (Patel, 2015). In critiquing compartmentalizing a whole into its parts, Vaines echoes Battiste (2013) who claims such compartmentalization is endemic to colonization and control.

Vaines' notion of the sacred nature of everyday life also resonates with Indigenous philosophies. Miller (2008) poignantly affirms that an Indigenous paradigm holds that "because everything in the cosmos is sacred, all human activities are sacred" (p. 28).

For Aboriginal people the future is predictable, we will survive to the extent that we believe we are the breath of life and thus hold the essential knowledge of living in a sacred trust for those that follow. There are many Aboriginal legends and teachings cautioning us against believing we are the embodiment of life. (Blackstock, 2007, p. 69)

In an Indigenous approach, there is "an inseparable weave of secular and sacred dimensions" (Hoffman, 2013, p. 190). Vaines' acknowledgement of the spiritual could also be interpreted as decolonizing.

Decolonizing home economics: Where to start

In this paper, I have highlighted the scholarship of Dr Eleanore Vaines and its contribution to the field of Home Economics cautiously suggesting that her maps are both normative and pedagogical tools with a decolonization sub-text and her key concepts—the world is our home; ecology as a unifying theme; many ways of knowing; wholism; and the sacred nature of everyday life—could be the starting point for continued decolonizing the profession.

Decolonizing is not an event that happens once for all at a given time and place, but an ongoing process (Battiste, 2013, Smith, 2013). In a previous paper (Smith, 2019), I have suggested that decolonizing home economics would require a multi-pronged approach that could involve the following: beginning with self-work; seeking methods to decolonize curriculum and pedagogy; and decolonizing research.

Begin with self-work

Decolonizing needs to begin within the mind and spirit of professionals so that they can seek to accept that there are worldviews that exist other than the dominant Western perspective and acknowledge that many current practices exist within a Eurocentric framework (Smith, 2016). Much history has been hidden or suppressed unintentionally and intentionally, and there is so much ignorance that needs to be overcome (Battiste, 2013). What do we know about colonialism? How have we been complicit in the colonial project? Do our goals, purposes and mission statements have traces of imperialism and assimilation? Do they assert the presence and humanity of Indigenous peoples (Battiste, 2013; Smith, 2013)? Do they advocate restoring Indigenous control over their lands, and support Indigenous rights to control and possess their knowledge, languages, and cultures (Hill, 2012; Khalifa et al., 2018)? Do they support action in the struggle for a fairer and healthier world? (Hall &

Tandon, 2017). Decolonial praxis is the processes, methods, and practices of unsettling the “everyday routines that reassert colonial social relations” (Gahman & Legault, 2017, pp. 8).

Our responsibility is to make a commitment to both unlearn and learn –to unlearn racism and superiority in all its manifestations, while examining our own social constructions in our judgments and learn new ways of knowing, valuing others, accepting diversity, and making equity and inclusion foundations for all. (Battiste, 2013, p. 166).

Seek methods to decolonize our curriculum content and pedagogy

We need to seek methods to decolonize our curriculum content and pedagogy (Archibald, 2008; Battiste, 2013, 2016; Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003; Tejeda, Espinoza, & Gutierrez, 2003). Is our curriculum Eurocentric? Does it require unmasking whiteness (de Zwart, 2005; McKay, 1999)? Is the portrayal of Indigenous peoples fragmented, distorted, tokenistic, othering? (Kivel, 2002; Said, 1978). Do they explain the impact of colonization? (Battiste, 2013). Do they undo the racist legacies of the past? (Mbembe, 2016). Do they foster many ways of knowing? Do they include eco-spiritual approaches? (Coates & Hetherington, 2016b). Have we worked with Indigenous communities, their leaders and elders to articulate Indigenous knowledge for a culturally responsive place-based curriculum? (Battiste, 2004; Battiste, Bell, & Findlay, 2002).

Educators must reject colonial curricula that offer students a fragmented and distorted picture of Indigenous peoples, and offer students a critical perspective of the historical context that created that fragmentation. In order to effect change, educators must help students understand the Eurocentric assumptions of superiority within the context of history and to recognize the continued dominance of these assumptions in all forms of contemporary knowledge. (Battiste, 2013, p. 186)

Decolonize our research

So much research with/on Indigenous people has perpetuated colonial relationships among people, practices, and land (Patel, 2015) that research for indigenous people has been a negative experience, a metaphor for colonialism (Smith, 2013). Therefore we need to learn to conduct research “in ways that meet the needs of Indigenous communities and are non-exploitative, culturally appropriate and inclusive, or we need to relinquish our roles as researchers within Indigenous contexts and make way for Indigenous researchers” (Aveling, 2013, p. 204). References such as *Decolonizing Methodologies*, outlined by L. T. Smith (2013) and others (Bermúdez et al., 2016; Brown & Strega, 2005; Darroch & Giles, 2014; Dawson, Toombs, & Mushquash, 2017; Patel, 2015) can provide guidance.

Conclusion

Decolonization is not easy, especially since this movement is occurring in a world with a deeply seated colonial structure and a long history the colonization of Indigenous peoples (Pidgeon, 2016) and many of us are caught in-between as we remain “implicated by our own participation in systems that are rooted in Eurocentric, colonialist and oppressive traditions” (Asher, 2009, p. 8). Stirling (2015) points out we will be “caught in political and practical conundrums as [we] attempt to engage in decolonization” (p. xi). However, if we believe, like Vaines (1997) that we must take the Reflective Practice Journey,

grounded in ecocentric philosophy, where we are pilgrims on a journey that is complex, uncertain, unstable, unique and rich in value conflicts [guided by a] calling [that requires us] to lead and examine life always in relation with others, actively choosing to participate in creating new stories about nurturing webs of life in the world our home, guided by a moral vision of our common good (p. 12)

we can do no other.

Biography

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Author notes

1. In this paper, I use the terms *Aboriginal*, *Indigenous*, *First Nations*, and *First Peoples* interchangeably. I recognize that there are subtle differences and each has its advantages and disadvantages. For example, *Aboriginal*, when used in the Canadian context refers to the first inhabitants of Canada, and includes First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and is not to be confused with the common term for the Indigenous peoples of Australia. The term *First Nations* is useful because the emphasis is placed on the plural recognizing the diversity of people but it doesn't recognize Metis. *Indigenous* is a term used most frequently used in an international, transnational, or global context, for example, UN documents. I do not use the term *Indian* preferring instead to name the nation identity, e.g., Gitksan, Blackfoot, although the term *Indian* in Canada can be used as legal identity of a First Nations' person who is registered under the Indian Act.
2. My preference is to use *home economics* as a keyword but in my searches, I also used *home science*, *family science*, *human ecology*, *family studies*, *family and consumer science* and *domestic science* as other descriptors used for the field of study.

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Shaping an eco-centred future by learning from the past

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Abstract

In 1976, Dr Eleanore Vaines invited University of Alberta (U of A) colleagues in Edmonton, Canada to reflect on how higher-education, home-economics curricula could engage students in environmental terms to understand diverse families' needs in everyday life. Over 40 years later, as early warning signs of climate crisis are materializing into full-fledged realities, how are human-ecology/home-economics (HE) professionals preparing students as professionals? How well are HEs shifting their roles away from ego-centricity? This article explores moments in North-American, history for guidance toward an eco-centred future. Studying how the HE field has been complicit with Euro-centric, patriarchal, colonialist ideologies with devastating effects for Indigenous families, how do we reconcile that part of our past with instances when HE professionals pushed against those same ideologies? We have been part of ego-centric problems; yet, we can also contribute to possibilities. With an eco-centred philosophical orientation (Vaines, 1990), I see potential for HEs to integrate spirituality as one of many ways of knowing. Grounding myself in Celtic spiritual tradition, I seek to learn from Indigenous, HE colleagues so that we might, together, describe decolonized roles for the HE profession to accompany diverse families in "the World [as] our Home" (Vaines, 1997, p. 2).

KEYWORDS: ECO-CENTRED, COURAGE, HOME ECONOMICS, HISTORY, SPIRIT

Introduction

In November 1976, Dr Eleanore Vaines invited University of Alberta colleagues in Edmonton, Canada to reflect on how higher-education, home-economics curricula could engage students in environmental terms to understand diverse families' needs in everyday life. The colleagues were preparing to launch a new course, "Perspectives in Home Economics" (Home Economics 300). To inform home economists in Alberta of this post-secondary, educational development, Lefebvre (1977) summarized that Vaines:

...stressed the importance of thinking of home economics in terms of environmental systems. ... For some time she has been concerned that first year students do not have the experiential [sic] base from which to ask important questions related to environmental issues. Undergraduates, says Vaines, tend to be concerned with 'I', What will 'I' do? and How will 'I' develop? confining themselves to interest in problems directly related to themselves. She would, however, like to see them directing their concerns to those that must be dealt with in the future if they, as home economists, are to fulfill their role in working with people whose needs, interests, and ethnic backgrounds differ from their own. Students, says Dr Vaines, have difficulty relating to these needs. Because of this she sees a great need for home economists to define the role they play, or will need to play in the future, in terms of families in their near environment. (pp. 22-23)

In 1977, Home Economics 300 was launched as a way to nurture a generalist, holistic lens to complement students' specializations in Family Studies; Clothing and Textiles; and Foods and Nutrition (AHEA, 1981). The change in curriculum occurred within the same year that the U of A unit

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transformed from the School of Household Economics to the Faculty of Home Economics. As Dean Doris Badir wrote, “The change from ‘Household’ to ‘Home’ [was a way] to make the name more descriptive of the Faculty’s areas of concern” (1979, para. 11). For reference, Vaines (Lefebvre, 1977) framed “home” in terms of “near environment” which she later described as helpful “to identify the perennial problems which face families—the need to provide food, clothing and shelter for the family and its members” (Vaines, 1997, p. 5). Near environments make up the “World [that] is our home”, a metaphor for “grounding” home economics, as “a complex and sophisticated field with a mission grounded in a moral vision” (Vaines, 1997, Figure 1).



Figure 1 Ellie Vaines, Roy Rodgers, UBC, Seminar [ca. 1977], Accession 1981-170-009, University of Alberta Archives. Reproduced with permission from the University of Alberta Archives

That ecological lens continued to grow at the U of A, evident in the eventual fusion of the lens with the academic unit’s new name in 1993; it became the Department of Human Ecology. In the 1990s, a new variation of the generalist course was launched as *Introduction to Principles and Practice in Human Ecology* (HECOL 100). As the facilitator of that course, I am inspired by the “Environmental Revolution” (Brown, 2007, i.e., from the 1960s to present). I believe that human ecology/home economics (HE) is well-positioned to accompany individuals, families, and communities amid the current transformation of life with Earth. As a non-Indigenous, white, feminist woman, my personal journey is anchored by a multi-generational migration through Europe via Ireland and across Canada. Increasingly, I realize how I am part of a profession that was organized amid North American, Industrial-Revolution ideologies in the early 1900s. Norms were characterized by ego-centricity (e.g., Euro-centric, colonialist, patriarchy). In the 21st century, ego-centricity is not serving Earth well.

With Vaines’ 1976 concern in mind, I respond to the need to define HE professionals’ role in Earth’s future and to what being an HE professional can mean: “A calling one is socialized into in order to share their gifts with others in their community context to fulfill the mission of the field in socially responsible ways” (Vaines, 1997, Fig. 1). Knowing the importance of understanding how our past shapes our future (Kieren, Vaines, & Badir, 1984, p. 1), my approach is to explore moments in North-American HE history for guidance toward an eco-centred future. First, I consider HE reflective practice and how it relates to “reflexive imagination” (Shaw & Crowther, 2017, p. 48). Then, I explore how HE curricula adopted ideologies that oppressed Indigenous children and their families even as HEs embraced a mission of working with families toward well-being. With that sobering insight, I reflect on instances in which HEs courageously pushed back those ideologies that constrained families and the HE profession. Recognizing complicity, I reflect on how and what to learn from the past and how to proceed in the face of global crises that threaten life with Earth. Prompted into an existential mode, I consider spirituality as one of the many ways of knowing that characterise an eco-centred philosophical orientation (Vaines, 1990). Grounding myself in Celtic spirituality, I seek to learn from Indigenous, HE colleagues and Indigenous ways of knowing. How might we, together, describe decolonized roles for the HE profession for the ongoing transformative potential of “the World [as] Our Home” (Vaines, 1997, p. 2)?

Reflecting on the present

Some observers of global society refer to our present as the Great Unraveling, “an account, backed by evidence, of the collapse of ecological and social systems, the disturbance of climate, the depletion of resources, and the mass extinction of species” (Macy & Johnstone, 2012, p. 5). Such collapse and disturbance show up as “wicked [issues]... for which there can be no final solution, since any resolution generates further issues, and where solutions are not true or false or good or bad, but the best that can be done at the time” (Brown, Deane, Harris, & Russell, 2010, p. 4). Those authors argue that a society has to change itself to be able to respond in meaningful ways and then ask, “So what can we ask of the decision-maker of the future?” (p. 4).

The current cohort of HECOL 100 students are some of the future decision-makers in everyday life; they are also part of the “Fridays for Future” cohort, “a peoples [sic] movement following the call from @GretaThunberg to school strike” (<https://www.fridaysforfuture.org/>). Vaines (1997) describes decision-making as linked to “...crucial dimensions of living well: reflectiveness, social and political engagement, and inner composure” (p. 43). How might HE professionals consider our roles, to help prepare students to contribute to much-needed change in global societies?

I have been exploring the U of A Archives and asking HE colleagues and mentors for insights. As I read and listen, I learn that HE professionals were socialized by normative ideologies of their time. In 1979, Dean Doris Badir reported, “During its history, Home Economics has been induced by Society continually to change its areas of concern” (para. 13). In 1983, Schön (Clift, 2014) articulated the concept of “the reflective practitioner” in terms of “the development of reflection as being embedded in an ability to frame a problem, and to then reframe a problem” (p. 2). With “The World [as] Our Home” (Vaines, 1997, p. 2) metaphor, I see post-secondary student curiosity as motivation for the HE profession to engage in collective, reflective practice about the past (e.g., in North America) and to learn from complicity with Euro-centric, colonialist, patriarchal ideologies. Those norms are part of an ego-centric orientation; however, we can strive to enhance understanding of an eco-centred approach (Vaines, 2004a).

Complicity

In response to an Indigenous student’s question in 2016 about the contradiction between HE’s mission yet participation in the Canadian Residential School system, I began a sobering journey. I grapple with how HE curricula were part of Canada’s “cultural genocide” policy (Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRC], 2015, p. 1), which attempted to destroy Indigenous cultures. I re-examine my HE professional identity, wondering how I might try to reconcile this complicity.

The Canadian Residential School system was designed to assimilate Indigenous children into “white” society (TRC, 2015a, pp. 5-6). Realizing that HE curricula were part of that system is horrifying, given HE’s mission. According to the United Church of Canada Archives (n.d.), a residential school operated in the Edmonton, Alberta area (1924-1966) with programs in Home Economics and Industrial Arts. Until the mid-1950s, children were in classes for only half days, spending the rest of each day working to maintain the school. In 1927, staff included a “sewing teacher,” a “cooking teacher,” and a “laundry instructor” (L. Hallman, personal communication, Nov. 5, 2019).

Canadians are learning that, in more than 130 residential schools (TRC, n.d.):

...the schools were sorely underfunded. Teachings focused primarily on practical skills. Girls were primed for domestic service and taught to do laundry, sew, cook, and clean. Boys were taught carpentry, tinsmithing, and farming. Many students attended class part-time and worked for the school the rest of the time: girls did the housekeeping; boys, general maintenance and agriculture. This work, which was involuntary and unpaid, was presented as practical training for the students, but many of the residential schools could not run without it. (Hanson, 2009, para. 9)

In the HE historical record in Alberta, we do not dedicate much space to this oppression. In an HE, provincial publication, brief mention was made in 1965 that, “In the province there were now 295 home economics classrooms, including those at 4 Indian [sic] and 2 private schools” (AHEA, 1981, p. 54). According to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, one archival record (1956) refers to “a Home Economics teacher who was employed by the Edmonton Indian Agency and traveled to

various schools” (K. Ashbury, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2019). This is limited knowledge; however, “...limitations are not excuses for inaction” (Pete, Schneider, & O’Reilly, 2013, p. 106).

Pushing against oppressive ideologies

Dominant norms of Euro-centric colonialism and patriarchy in the late Industrial Revolution shaped the organization of the HE profession in North America in the early 1900s. A mechanistic worldview characterized that period with a belief that a problem could be teased apart piece by piece, studied in a cause-and-effect way, toward a predictable outcome (Vaines, 1990, 2004b, p. 142). Rationality and logic were prioritized over intuition (Whelan, 2010). To begin to reconcile the colonizing part of our past, I turn to “reflexive imagination”, “the capacity to see oneself, one’s identity and traditions, as simultaneously part of both the problem and the possibility of democratic life” (Shaw & Crowther, 2017, p. 48). What else might HEs learn from our professional history?

In 1918, the Department of Household Economics was established in the Faculty of Arts and Science at the University of Alberta (founded in 1908). Miss Mabel Patrick was hired to develop curriculum in response to home-oriented issues. She remembered that her “...first few months included ... convincing people that the course included more than cooking and sewing” (AHEA, 1981, p. 19). At the time, women had limited access to post-secondary education (AHEA, 1981) and society held normative ideas about household work. With hindsight, researchers see that housework was constructed as a gendered concept in the Industrial Revolution to describe a private-sphere activity worth less than paid work in the public sphere (Ferree, 1990). In advocating for resources (including for a salary for herself), Miss Patrick was pushing against what Apple (2015) has described as the “cooking and sewing cliché” (p. 60) only ten years after the professional organization of HE in the Lake Placid Conferences (1899-1908). Miss Patrick (her preferred title; AHEA, 1981, p. 153) perceived a stereotypical view of reality for women in education; she identified the direction in which she knew that the Department of Household Economics could move; and she took steps in that direction. She went on to be named the Director of the School of Household Economics, retiring in 1956.

Miss Patrick was not alone in objecting to a gendered expectation for household economics. Writing about Caroline L. Hunt, one of the American delegates at multiple Lake Placid Conferences, Apple (2015) reports that Hunt was hired in 1903 to create a home-economics program at the University of Wisconsin, Madison:

[Hunt] argued that the function of such university study ‘should be to teach women the social significance of the control which they have over wealth, of the fact that they can determine to a large extent what shall be made and under what condition it shall be made’ (Hunt 1908). Furthermore, she said, ‘I see no place for cooking and sewing in such courses except as they give an understanding of materials and processes.’ (p. 57)

While Hunt tried to push aside Industrial-era ideology, the University of Wisconsin sought to entrench it; educating students in “domesticity and manual skills clashed with Hunt’s academic rigor and activist philosophy” (Apple, 2015, p. 58). She left the university in 1908 and contributed at the Bureau of Home Economics and participated in the women’s suffrage movement.

Some of the HE profession’s founding members (e.g., Hunt) and those they mentored (e.g., Patrick) pushed against the Industrial-era ideology; however, the cliché persisted in Residential Schools and in non-Indigenous society. In 2018, Ayala Johnson (Personal Communication, Jan. 21, 2018), a Canadian scholar and school teacher, lamented:

When I think about human-ecology/home-economics history, the key moments that come to mind for me are the Lake Placid Conferences, particularly the choice of name... I think the selection of the name ‘home economics’ affected the field negatively. I think about how the field was developed in school curricula by focusing on the formal teaching of European domesticity, with the help of the popularization of the manual training movement in the early twentieth century. It seems to me that not much has changed since then ... such training/education misses the point of the mission of the field...

Regarding a similar point, Apple (2015) describes hopes of American authors of the 1913 national home-economics syllabus that through the study of home economics, that students would develop “the power to ameliorate social ills” (p. 58); however, Apple also observes that:

Over the decades ... the sense of social responsibility disappeared. The objective continued to be to educate girls and women, and more recently boys and men, to be good consumers, but it was consumerism for the benefit of self and family (pp. 58-59).

Despite these early curricular aspirations, HE professionals faced societal reliance on unpaid women's work to maintain families. How could the HE profession push past that oppression in which women were socialized to socialize the next generation of women (Ferree, 1990) to remain invisible in the private sphere of home?

In the 1970s, HE was perceived by at least part of the women's movement as oppressing rather than also being oppressed by patriarchy. Reflecting on HE stories of the past century at the U of A, Dr Dianne Kieren related an "uncomfortable" time on campus when HE was perceived by feminists, ironically, through a patriarchal lens:

Doris [Badir] and all of us [in HE] had to argue, 'Okay, how do we come to the table with you if you don't respect what we're about?' ... It was uncomfortable. It was not easy to work on women's issues at first with the feminist movement because they wanted to shove us out and say that, 'You would not be useful on our committee because you had contributed to this.' ... there was a turning point. I think you just have to persist. Once they got to know us. ... And I would say that they probably became some of our best friends on those committees. And we fought together for a lot of those policy changes. (personal communication, Nov. 17, 2017)

HE professionals recognized internal oppression within the women's movement; identified the importance of persisting and finding ways to work together; and then took steps in the direction of establishing mutually beneficial relationships.

Doris Badir framed the field as "always ... keeping itself abreast of the changing times" (1994, Mar. 24):

At some point during this early period the [Canadian] Report on the Royal Commission on the Status of Women appeared [1970]. I was very interested in this and offered to prepare a seminar for Family Studies and any others in [HE, U of A] who might be interested in the report and what it meant for us as part of a system which educated (at that time) only women, and which carried a reputation for, in some perceived way, of holding women in traditional roles in patriarchal systems. I was merely doing what home economics had always done—keeping itself abreast of the changing times. (p. 3)

Reflecting on patriarchal ideas, and in effect echoing Miss Patrick's request for resources, 50 years earlier, Dr Kieren described that:

It was a transition for women's roles, because many of us had to fight at the university. We had no maternity benefits, when I started as Chair [Family Studies, 1969] If you had a baby, you came back in two weeks; we covered for you. ... [With Doris Badir] We fought for opening day cares, because women needed day care. We fought also for dual-career couples. When we [my husband and I] first came [to the U of A], they only gave us one set of benefits; there were two of us and we had two full appointments. ... It took years for female professors to realize the discrepancies in pay and benefits that women experienced. (personal communication, Nov. 17, 2017)

These stories show leadership characterized by relationship building.

Efforts at relationship building can also be seen in the 1990s, as U of A family scholars began studying traumatic effects on families of Residential Schools:

When one considers the historical and social context of violence in the Northwest Territories ... Experts claim that the high crime rates, pervasiveness of family violence, incidence of alcoholism and suicide, high unemployment rates, lack of education, and poverty in northern communities are considered to be a result of the residential school experiences ... The current atmosphere of despair and hopelessness may create a

tolerance of violence, [which] ...contributes to the perpetuation of the victimization of Aboriginal women and children. (Reinke, 1997, p. 35)

Also, HE professionals applied growing insights in policy-making. For example, Dr Kieren recalls that:

Doris [Badir] led the whole thing on revising how social services were going to be distributed [in the late 1990s, in Alberta] and we set up the Ma'Mowe [Capital] Region [Child and Family Services Authority] ... trying to ... set up the proposal that half of your board will be Aboriginal and half not. She worked with Aboriginal people; this was long before people talked about reconciliation. And the Ma'Mowe board was the only one that really achieved having half and half. (personal communication, Nov. 17, 2017)

This effort required an examination of existing power dynamics and a belief in establishing respectful partnerships.

Proceeding with courage

If HE is to live into the potential to be “a complex and sophisticated field with a mission grounded in a moral vision” (Vaines, 1997, Fig. 1), I perceive that Canadian HE professionals need to reflect on the field’s complicity with assimilationist policy. We have a responsibility to reflect and understand dark parts of our HE history. However, acting on reflections can be difficult (Mälkki & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2012, p. 39). Until we acknowledge complicity in Residential Schools, our reconciling efforts will be limited. For non-Indigenous HEs, accepting a sense of collective responsibility will not be easy.

I wonder how those HE professionals in Alberta’s HE history found their courage. Did justice inspire them? In 1973, at the Alberta HE Association Convention, Doris Badir stated:

... if ever we are going to achieve recognition and status for our profession and the discipline it encompasses, we must first turn our concern to the status of the tasks and the persons who perform those tasks with which the profession is concerned. ... We must become involved and aware—‘conscious’. (AHEA, 1981, p. 59)

Doris Badir’s observations suggest that she was aware of the need to push past a dominant narrative that “trivialized” (E. Vaines, personal communication Jan. 23, 2018) everyday life as gendered, colonized domesticity.

Being a member of a profession means sharing responsibility to apply a body of knowledge according to standards of practice and a commitment to serve (Sweitzer & King, 2014). Considering a future societal role for HE requires enhancing understanding of an eco-centred philosophical orientation “grounded in many ways of knowing” (Vaines, 1990, p. 7). Given that humanity continues to face “a crisis that extends across all spheres of human life—economic, political, industrial, militarist, ecological, social and most fundamentally, ethical and spiritual” (Stewart-Harawira, 2011, p. 80), I find myself trying to work with an existential puzzle, with dark pieces and pieces of possibility, seeking wholeness. When I reflect on past instances of pushing against oppressive ideologies, I re-frame these professionals as radical spirits because they recognized not only human needs in near environments but also their own need to be courageous in building relationships for everyday life in society.

How do I aspire to be an HE, radical spirit? I regard spirituality not only as a way of knowing but also as part of spiritual health and well-being (Deagon & Pendergast, 2012) and as a dimension of HE practice. I identify with Celtic spirituality, appreciating “the sacredness of all life” (Whelan, 2010, p. 5). A key point of reference is relationship with place in “daily life” (p. 37), understood in spiritual and material terms and with a responsibility to live with a balanced use of resources to meet daily needs. Through this spirituality, I find a way to “...embrace the darkness within ourselves and our society. It is an energy that insists that we stand still, open our hearts, and feel our own pain and the pain of the earth” (Whelan, 2010, p. 77).

How might HEs co-create learning spaces that honour the place and dignity of everyone present (Pete et al., 2013, p. 104)? I am learning to decolonize my thinking by listening to my students, as a growing number self-identify as Indigenous.

I am learning about *Wahkotowin*, a Cree concept; Jennifer Ward, a U of A colleague, described its meaning as “relational accountability to everything, including learning from students” (personal communication, Aug. 21, 2019). Decolonizing the profession by “re-centring Indigenous knowledge ways” (Pete et al., 2013, p. 101) and “re-storing Indigenous worldviews” (J. Ward, personal communication, Aug. 21, 2019) are much-needed practices. I am trying to facilitate HECOL 100 by “recognizing the validity of Indigenous worldviews” (J. Ward, personal communication, Aug. 21, 2019). I feel grateful to engage in conversations with two Indigenous, HE colleagues to explore how to find “common ground” (P. LaBoucane-Benson, personal communication, Dec. 5, 2017) and to “open doors” (S. Dion, personal communication, Nov. 6, 2019) to co-create understanding of how Indigenous ways of knowing and western-societal ways of knowing about HE interrelate. Cultural humility (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998) is required and depends on an ongoing intention to learn about possible membership in oppressive actions not only as an individual but also as members of institutions like the HE profession.

I choose to frame our present as part of what Joanna Macy describes as the Great Turning, an “epochal transition from an industrial society committed to economic growth to a life-sustaining society committed to the healing and recovery of our world” (Macy & Johnstone, 2012, p. 5). Whelan (2010) frames this as “a life-enhancing society” (p. 75), in terms of Celtic spirituality, to create institutions that care for “the needs, not only of all humans, but of the whole earth community” (p. 75). This is a relationship-oriented approach toward nurturing “a sense of home” (p. 76) for all of life, practising reconciliation as an action of “repairing relationships” (J. Ward, personal communication, August 21, 2019). Grappling with grief and fear is a place from which to act with hope (Macy & Johnstone, 2012). I perceive these stories of HE professionals who pushed against oppressive ideologies as actively, radically hopeful, based on a willingness not only to *think* through problems and possible mistakes but also to *feel* the existential threat to Earth and the related need for wholeness, or “holiness, which is the aim of all spiritual journeys...” (Whelan, 2010, p. 56).

Conclusion

Recalling Dr Vaines’ question in 1976, I have framed this paper in terms of the future role of home economists/human ecologists (HEs) in accompanying higher-education students as they prepare to work with diverse families and their everyday needs. Exploring HE history in North America, particularly in Alberta, Canada, I use *reflexive imagination* (Shaw & Crowther, 2017); I grapple with how HE was shaped by Euro-centric, patriarchal, colonialist ideologies in the profession’s formative years. I consider how those ideologies shaped HE curricular complicity in the Residential School system; as a result, the profession contributed to intergenerational trauma for Indigenous families. In addition to being part of the problem, HE professionals also pushed against those ideologies as they constrained families and the profession, itself.

In response to acknowledging complicity yet also feeling inspired by instances of HE leadership for justice, I reflected on spirituality as part of an eco-centred philosophical orientation; as a non-Indigenous HE grounded by Celtic spirituality, I consider how to build partnerships with Indigenous, HE colleagues. Learning from the past, I see potential for HEs to draw on both the dark and inspiring parts of HE history, as a step into a holistic understanding of the potential of an eco-centred future. Responding to wicked issues requires holistic approaches within HE and with other people who are creating and applying knowledge in support of everyday life:

The twenty-first century is full of rich possibilities. Our new stories should be about choosing ways of living together that re-enchance, interrelate, and honour the webs of life. This means we must use our imaginations, see ourselves as co-creators and live in ways that consistently nurture the underlying metaphor, the world is our home. (Vaines, 2004c, pp. 135-136)

As HE professionals, let us engage higher-education, HE students with spiritual understanding of our shared lives to nurture the profession’s ongoing evolution to accompany diverse families, amid challenging transformations in everyday life with the home that we share, Earth.

Biography

Sherry Ann Chapman, PhD, MMSt, PHEc is Practicum Coordinator in the Department of Human Ecology, Faculty of Agricultural, Life, and Environmental Sciences, University of Alberta. She lives

on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River in Amiskwacîwâskahikan in Treaty 6 lands, the ancestral lands of the Papaschase, and the homeland of the Métis peoples; in keeping with her family's centuries-old migration from Europe, via Ireland, she has settled in what is known as Edmonton. As a lifelong learner, Sherry Ann facilitates learning about human-ecology/home-economics history, philosophy, ethics, and professional, reflective practice.

Author's statement

At the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, I facilitate the course, Human Ecology (HECOL) 100 "Introduction to Principles and Practice in Human Ecology" and am the Practicum Coordinator for the undergraduate program. I work with community partners to create experiential- and reflective-learning opportunities for students studying Family Science; Clothing, Textiles, and Material Culture; or Nutrition and Food Science (with a minor in Human Ecology). I strive to introduce students to a generalist understanding of home economics/human ecology (HE) as context for their specializations. In this article, I reflect on a recent HE history-research project at the University of Alberta and how local efforts to push past Euro-centric, colonialist, patriarchal norms can inspire HE professionals to contribute to an eco-centred future with Earth.

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Two-Eyed Seeing. Trauma-wise Curriculum: Siksikees'tsuhkoom (Blackfoot Lands) & Human Ecology

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Abstract

In an era where Home Economics classrooms still reverberate with colonial conceptions of home and family and the traumas associated with the residential school project in Canada, this analysis of Vaines' Human Ecology cannon is weighed for its potential to achieve Two-Eyed Seeing, a curricular framework from Indigenous Scholar Marie Battiste (Mi'kmaq, Potlotek First Nation). By proposing Vaines' Human Ecology as one eye and Nation-specific kinship and land-based ontologies as one eye, this paper calls Home Economists to action, to question, face, and supplant violence present in Home Economics ontologies that continue to disrupt Indigenous family integrity, moving towards trauma-wise curriculum in collaboration with Neighbour Nations. An ontological framework from the Blackfoot Confederacy is used as an example to model bedrock values for any community who has been the target of colonial educational assimilationist policies.

KEYWORDS: TWO-EYED SEEING, HUMAN ECOLOGY, CURRICULUM EPISTEMICIDE, TRAUMA WISDOM, FUTURE

Throughout the world, the impact of colonization on Indigenous families is evident. The goal of this critical inquiry for the field of Home Economics is to encourage educators to face cognitive imperialisms, also known as cultural racisms, or the imposition of western worldviews on peoples who have their own worldviews (Battiste, 2011, p. 193), moving towards transformative practice as envisioned by Eleanore Vaines. Forty years ago, Vaines (1979) began focusing her scholarship on (re)orienting Home Economics towards a highly relational framework of Human Ecology, inclusive of the *sacred nature of everyday life*. This is particularly important for schools grappling with being more trauma-informed. For the past two decades, *trauma-informed* practice has been used to describe the delivery of supports, where service providers, including those in the K-12 education system, are regularly acknowledging the impact of trauma and the importance of addressing traumatic stress in learning. I question if Home Economists engage in this questioning and (re)visioning with their Indigenous peers.

The traumas referred to in this paper include various aspects of colonization, directly, indirectly, and intergenerationally and their historic and on-going impact on Indigenous peoples. Trauma-informed interventions being adopted by K-12 schools continue to be western and in many cases, commercial programs that are typically agnostic of community and cultural differences and perspectives. Their selection perpetuates White privilege and the colonial state.

I unsettle and challenge the wholesale adoption of such programs and assert that we simply cannot proceed in Home Economics, in schooling, with K-12 curriculum and pedagogy, and allied professions without employing Battiste's *Two-Eyed Seeing*, thereby creating and resourcing spaces for Indigenous intelligences to thrive. I begin by outlining the limitations of trauma-informed practice and then advocate a broader approach informed by Two-Eyed Seeing, a theoretical perspective that embraces both Indigenous and western "ways of knowing", in a search for, "...creating fair and just educational systems and experiences...[built on]...a regeneration of new relationships among and between knowledge systems, as scholars competent in both knowledge systems seek to unite and reconcile them" (Battiste, 2013a, p. 100, emphasis added).

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For the Home Economics/Human Ecological lens, I draw upon the canon of Vaines (1979, 1994a, 1994b, 1996, 1999) as she progressively advocates many ways of knowing rooted in Human Ecology, with a willingness to accept and incorporate a variety of epistemologies and ontologies, including Indigenous intelligences. Next, I unsettle Home Economics ontologies and their presence in the residential school project, and then propose that it is necessary that the field (re)visit and (re)levate Vaines' legacy as a strong companion in the (re)framing of the field, (re)acquainting the reader with Human Ecology and the *sacred nature* of family and everyday life as a *new story*, a (re)vision for Home Economics that is inherently trauma-informed. This *one eye*, I propose, offers acuity with the *one eye* of Indigenous knowing, each community being unique. I argue that the intent behind *Two-Eyed Seeing* can be achieved, an example of K-12 *currere* as “social and subjective reconstruction that is expansive” (Pinar, 2012, p. 5), that supplants colonial legacies, and prevents the perpetuation of historic harms deliberately designed into the curriculum of every subject weaponized as a part of the residential school project in Canada. I proposed trauma-informed *in discipline* not *extra to*.

Finally, for Indigenous perspective, I highlight the nature of Indigenous intelligences, issues regarding the subjugation of curriculum and pedagogy, and ever-present strengths of place-based, kinship pedagogies, providing an example of a values-informed, land-based approach from my experiences with the Blackfoot Confederacy. I am a non-Indigenous scholar living on, positively influenced by, and engaged with the wisdoms of *Siksikess'tsuhkoom* (Blackfoot lands), *aawaahskataikiksi* (Elders and other Knowledge Holders considered eminent scholars), and Indigenous educators and scholar peers who have guided my journey for close to 30 years. I draw from these experiences with the intent that readers in other Indigenous territories globally, within any colonized context, might weigh and compare Two-Eyed Seeing informed the *Niitsitapii* (Blackfoot; *the real people*) example recognizing that knowing, perspectives, intelligences, wisdoms and applicability are unique to each Nation and community.

I encourage critical questioning of western trauma-informed practice in K-12 and community, and new forms of curriculum development that favour elevating and centring Indigenous intelligences, in pursuit of closing the gap between theory and practice, while transforming public policy initiatives and innovation to supplant legacies of colonization and harm visited upon Indigenous Nations. These curricula are anchored to trauma-giftedness and demonstrate how Two-Eyed Seeing might be critically achieved.

My position in the research

I acknowledge and accept the responsibility that this inquiry holds the potential for and risk of academic appropriation (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013). I address my responsibilities in the following ways:

With humility and gratitude, I understand myself to be emplaced and prepared as a scholar coming to the work of Two-Eyed Seeing, having received gifts and knowledge from Elders, new stories from my peers inside the academy, and having been friendly with and witness to the living, sacred experiences of educators, parents, and learners I have come to know in everyday life. I acknowledge specifically the friendships and prior co-investigations that have included Indigenous scholars Jeannie Smith-Davis M.A., M.Ed. (Piikani & Kainai Nation/Blackfoot); Spirit River Striped Wolf B.A. Policy Studies (Piikani Nation/ Blackfoot); Taryn Hamilton B.A. Justice Studies (Barren Lands First Nation/Cree & Dene); Braden Etzerza, B.Sc. Environmental Science (Metlakatla Nation/ Ts'msyen & Tahltan); Sarah Buffalo B.A. Indigenous Studies (Montana First Nation, Maskwacis/Cree) and Dr Karlee Fellner (Cree/Métis).

My role in friendship and as *witness* to the creation of new stories of curriculum emerging through my relationships is rooted to community settings where I have been invited in traditional, ceremonial, and in contemporary ways to be educated and involved for the past 30 years. In my case, my teachers are primarily from the four Nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy. My knowledges and relationships come with obligations, which I take as a part of myself-in-relation, my purpose my *ohtsitappspii*. I try hard and persevere, *iyyikákimmaak*, in being a good witness and carrier of protocol and knowledge when I have been invited to do so. Where I have faltered in my roles, I am most often gifted with new knowledge, generosity, and kindness. My life is richer and different for knowing even a little Blackfoot language. It allows me to think differently and gives me a way to decolonize my scholarship. With *aistommatop*, a good heart, I have formed enduring commitments to Indigenous futurities as my basic abilities have become more informed and fluent over the years.

I am very thankful for Indigenous scholars who have guided me to find my place and role in this research. Kovach (2015) discusses who can apply Indigenous methodological approaches in their research. The pragmatic response, “is the method is appropriate to the research question?” (p. 57). Equally, one must ask about one’s preparedness, the individual’s abilities to be knowledgeable about, conversant in, and comfortable with speaking to Indigenous knowledge systems and sharing one’s relationship to Indigenous thought. It is essential Kovach says, to understand the gravity of “the politicality surrounding Indigenous knowledge systems, given the history of assimilation” (p. 57). Finally, one must position, most willingly in my case, an identity standpoint that is anti-colonial.

Dr Sarah Hunt (Kwakwaka’wakw Nation) describes witnessing as an Indigenous methodology for engaging with the stories, knowledge and experience of Indigenous people. Witnessing provides a way to hold up the knowledge being shared without debating it, reframing it, or claiming it as your own (Hunt, 2018). I am committed to decolonizing scholarly methods, materials, and texts and unsettling and counter-producing my own cognitive imperialisms. I feel these experiences clarify my role and approach to any scholarly or creative inquiry in terms of ideas that I might trail and trace vs. areas, even with consent, that would be considered trespassing.

I wish to acknowledge and honour my Kokum, Carola Jones and her an Algonquin descendant from Toisnot Tuscarora and Seminole bloodlines for the knowledge she has transferred and entrusted to me to carry forward to my son and grandchildren. Finally, I am beholden to Pete Weasel Head, *Miiksskim*, who invited me to ceremony 25 years ago and to the *siksikess’tsuhkoom*, Blackfoot lands, where I continue to learn. I am very humbled to be a non-Indigenous witness, daughter granddaughter, sister, colleague and friend to these Nations and a few others.

Trauma-informed practice & well-becoming

Remedies for so-called “educational ills” have been on offer in North America since the 1950s. Educational remedies include all manner of consulting, training, co-curricular programs, assessments, test preparation, and community psychology programs and services that address everything from literacy, to bullying, to character development that are considered extra to curriculum. The rise of commercial educational products and services for *At-Risk* youth peaked in the mid-nineties (Heyneman, 2001).

Bowers (2009) then cautioned against “enclosure” or how educational interventions are framed, “... as ideology, through market forces, silences, and misconceptions that have their roots in the industrial system of production and consumption” (p. 197). Enclosure, in this case, refers to the process of transforming aspects of culture that are freely shared into what is privately owned, into a commercialized commodity, training, or service that has to be purchased. Trauma-informed care programs have become one such commodity. With origins in the juvenile justice system from the United States, programs are offered as a product for schools and service agencies (i.e., schools, mental health programs, youth justice services, and youth development agencies) to adopt in the US and Canada.

Many school districts in Canada, recognizing the impact of intergenerational trauma for their Indigenous students, seek solutions to classroom and school issues, turn to, and adopt trauma-informed modalities. Western approaches to trauma-informed practice include principles that guide, direct, and impact how youth trauma—mental, physical, and emotional health—is framed. These programs are typically still framed through deficit narratives rooted in conceptual western-European psychology that emphasize pathology and deviation from “the norm”. For example, the modality is often positioned as an improvement and alternative to using discipline to treat problematic and disruptive symptoms or specific classroom or school behaviors.

Schools that use trauma-informed practice might offer therapy or counseling to support the *restoration* of a student’s well-being. On one hand, the assumption beneath the practice recognizes disruptive behavior as “a symptom of a deeper harm, rather than willful defiance, or disrespect” (Ginwright, 2018, para. 4), but still positions behavior as a pathology (i.e., disruptive) that needs to be fixed (i.e., restoration). It is also believed that educators/schools who adopt trauma-informed practice, “...tend to be more empathetic and aware when observing and acting on so-called problematic behaviours in the classroom” (Government of Alberta, 2019, para. 7).

Substance Abuse and Medical Health Services (SAMHSA), is a division of the US Department of Health and Human Services and proponent of trauma-informed practice. SAMHSA's (Department of Health & Human Services, 2014) trauma-informed approach encompasses six key principles (p. 10):

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and Mutuality
5. Empowerment, Voice and Choice and
6. Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues.

While working definitions, concepts, key principles, and guidance have been prepared and published by governmental organizations like SAMHSA, and adopted and revised for the Canadian context by the Government of Canada's Public Health Agency (2018), both organizations acknowledge that trauma-informed care has not been rigorously explored in community, neither the framework nor its espoused effects (i.e., more empathetic educators).

Ginwright's (2018) critique of trauma-informed practice warns specifically about how narrowly trauma is defined as solely an individual experience, rather than a collective experience. This is not helpful for the type of violences visited systematically and deliberately on Indigenous persons in Canada through assimilationist educational policies. Further, because of the need to offer a product to many markets, these modalities are not sensitive to, nor do they differentiate the context for the original or on-going trauma(s). Ginwright also notes that these approaches often overlook, or worse, erase toxic systems, policies, and practices that created the trauma.

In the absence of evidence, the risk of *psychocolonizing* (Fellner, 2018a) *Othering* (Kumashiro, 2002), and re-traumatizing is too great a question in schools and classrooms that include Indigenous educators and students. Psychocolonization describes "using western deficit narratives and approaches that distance perspectives and realizations of Indigenous giftedness" (Fellner, 2016, p. 285). Today's trauma-informed movement misunderstands, again, that a White, western modality is the solution to achieving agency and outcomes of cultural safety, trust, support, mutuality, and voice in decolonizing issues related to trauma for Indigenous peoples. This is a tall order for survivors of residential school legacy, survivors of the Sixties Scoop, those who continue to be impacted by the Indian Act in Canada, those experiencing the removal of their children, or any Indigenous persons in any country subjected to historic assimilationist policies and their contemporary legacies, a very tall order indeed.

If we are decolonizing, and part of decolonizing and honouring Indigenous lifeways using Indigenous intelligences includes, "... meaningful and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies, and lands" (Waziyatawin & Yellow Bird, 2012, p. 3), then trauma-informed approaches must be subject to, at minimum *Two-Eyed Seeing* with Eminent Scholars, community-by-community, and perhaps wholesale rejection of modalities that are not compatible with Indigenous classrooms, schools, or learner needs. John Chambers Christopher and his collaborators (Christopher & Hickenbotton, 2008; Christopher, Richardson, & Slife, 2008) argue that all theories, particularly "heavily laden theories of well-being, are culturally embedded and thus cannot be culturally neutral or universal" (as cited in Falkenberg, 2019, p. 7).

Fellner (2016) presents a framework for decoloniality as a braid of sweetgrass, consisting of three strands: (1.) Deconstructing what is not working in service provision with Indigenous communities; (2.) Restor(y)ing colonial narratives through community-based Indigenous perspectives; and (3.) Identifying how Indigenous best practices may be engaged through community-based processes and transformations (p. 361). This is not an "add-on" that covers off SAMHSA's Principle #6 of trauma-informed practice, wherein cultural, gender and historical issues are meant to be addressed (SAMHSA, 2014, p. 10). Fellner's framework (—and similar) centre and source Indigenous intelligences first to resist enclosures underway in creating, promoting, and selling the ideology/products of western trauma-informed care for Indigenous persons, and then, offers a frameworks for Indigenizing and

answering the need to decolonize *well-becoming* for children, youth, their parents, families, and communities *in-relation* to one another, their Nations, language, food, regalia, lands, and ancestral knowledge. This type of questioning and unsettling of the trauma-informed movement for K-12 systems is necessary and relevant elsewhere, specifically in countries where any Indigenous education system experienced *epistemicide* as a part of colonization.

Just as colonial political and militaristic practices subjugated the globe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, “knowledge—the intellectual energy by which humans operate, became colonized as well” (Hall & Tandon, 2017, p. 8). Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007) first wrote about this process of dispossession as epistemicide, or the killing of knowledge systems. Kumashiro (2002) describes educational action that is first and foremost critical of Othering, encouraging educational modalities that change students and society.

This can be achieved by elevating critical inquiry and recognizing that part of colonial oppression in Canada is the historic force of enclosure that attempts to marginalize, suppress, distance, and destroy diverse Indigenous ways of knowing. This is not in dispute, a blank spot, or blind spot (Gough, 2008; Gough et al., 2003). Curriculum theorists, both past and present, document the effects of *knowledge asymmetry* achieved by cultural genocide, linguicide, and *epistemicide* when not critically engaged with these histories.

They also perpetuate, as Biesta notes (2009), the erosion of personhood through a lack of *educational subjectification*, or the processes by which learners experience themselves socially, culturally, through their roles, and the extent to which they experience democracy in expressing themselves or resisting how they are defined in their studies. Falkenberg’s (2019) framework, *WB2: Well-being and Well-becoming*, addresses the absolute necessity of students, their advocates, and their educational systems to ensure that “personal and communal connections and agentic capabilities be core and integral to ensure student and system flourishing as a part of decoloniality and solutions to trauma impacts that manifest in schools” (p. 23) and their subjects.

How then do we confront and engage the truth that the ontologies of Home Economics were weaponized, used to harm, punish, and deprive, and are one source of intergenerational trauma today? Can curriculum be transformed with trauma wisdom, Indigenous intelligence, to (re)build cultural commons’ eradicated by epistemicide?

Troubling home economics ontologies

Actioning Two-Eyed Seeing

The HEARTH Archive at Cornell University (2005) is a collection of the research, history, and traditions of the Home Economics field. The ontologies it represents, largely conceived of in the west, form part of colonial-settler epistemicide, a subject designed to promote *family and home* organized into the study and practice of cooking, child-rearing and development, home management and design, sewing and textiles, budgeting and economics, and health and hygiene. While there are expanded missions and social imperatives for Home Economics in the global context (see also IFHE.org/about-ifhe/who-we-are), little has been written or scrutinized about the legacy of Home Economics and its role in “civilizing” and “domesticating” Indigenous students, largely young girls and women.

By turns, Home Economics has been written about as being emancipatory for women, or criticized for sustaining gender roles and the patriarchy. This discourse and call-to-action focuses on the ways in which Home Economics knowledges were co-opted, weaponized, and played a significant role in enacting violence and systematically dismantling *family integrity* as a part of the colonial project in Canada and, I hypothesize, elsewhere. It then continues to question the way forward for trauma-wise ontologies. Family integrity simultaneously describes “the extent to which parents exercise authority over how their children might be raised and educated and the extent to which children, in turn, experience their parents’ love, support, protection and instruction to build normal, healthy relationships with their immediate and extended family, and to learn about their family’s tradition, culture, and way of life” (Anderson, Miller, & Newman, 2019, p. 307). In 1908, Frank Oliver, the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, commented to social reformer Samuel Hume Blake:

[O]ne of the most important commandments laid upon the human by the divine is love and respect by children for parents. It seems strange that in the name of religion a

system of education should have been instituted, the foundation principle of which not only ignored but contradicted this command (cited in Anderson et al., 2018, p. 314).

In their review of the spiritual foundations of Home Economics, Deagon and Pendergast (2019) discern Christian beliefs and values culturally embedded in their review of historic documents (p. 20). Drawn from the testimonies of residential school survivors, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) provides extensive documentation about the moral imperative to take “the Indian out of the child” so often achieved under the guise of domestics training. One of my cherished friends, Jeannie Smith-Davis (Pooksinawaakii) describes girls being organized for domestic work by age in her residential school experience:

The youngest, 6-7 years old were assigned to sorting laundry for the schools or to stitching pads used by the older girls for personal hygiene. As we got older, 9 or 10 years old, expectations would increase to washing and drying laundry and scrubbing the entire school. The Eldest, sometimes the ‘favoured’ girls, were eventually given supervisory roles. They pitted us against one another though... these girls were taught this and were, in some cases, as cruel as the sisters. There were severe punishments for not meeting expectations that were not easily understood in the first place. We would do these tasks we would eat, do Benediction, and then go to bed. There were no lessons or learning. They didn’t ‘teach’ us anything (Smith-Davis, 2018, personal conversation).

Anderson et al. (2018) note that much of the testimony provided to the Commission describes the impact of schools’ engineering of self-hatred and its efficacy in turning children against their parents, families, cultures, and people. Among many horrific examples that align to the ontologies of Home Economics, the tools of these cruelties including using sewing pins and needles through student’s tongues for speaking their language or for imperfections in their stitching; the preparation and serving of rotten food or, the restrictions or removal of food as punishment; shaming and sexualizing siblings; and racialization, violence and abuse visited upon students based on impossible expectations of hygiene and health.

It is tempting to be *presentist*, to want to judge, justify, or explain away what occurred given today’s values and concepts related to the field in transforming societies as we reflect on these historic wrongs and sit with this uncomfortable knowledge. I propose instead, that the field be relationally accountable to (re)visioning curricula that coincides with Indigenous intelligences, offering new ontological pathways, and removing curricula that carries legacy harms.

In 2005, respected Indigenous scholar Marie Battiste presented the grand challenge of decolonizing K-12 education as “balancing colonial legitimacy, authority, and disciplinary capacity with Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies” (p. 4). Fast-forward 15 years, Battiste (2013b) now frames the challenge as, “...creating fair and just educational systems and experiences, part of the ultimate struggle, a regeneration of new relationships among and between knowledge systems, as scholars competent in both knowledge systems seek to unite and reconcile them (p. 100). Mi’kmaw Elder Albert Marshall’s concept of *Etuaptmumk* (Two-Eyed Seeing) encompasses seeing, “From one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing, and to see from the other eye with the strengths of western ways of knowing, and to use both of these eyes together” (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012, p. 335). Scholars are increasingly using Marshall’s *Two-Eyed Seeing* as a framework to reconcile the use of western method and theory with Indigenous knowledge in education and other disciplines (see also Bartlett et al., 2015; Battiste, 2007; Hall et al., 2015; Marsh, et al., 2015; Marshall et al., 2015; Martin-Thompson, et al., 2017; Peltier, 2018; Vukic, et al., 2012).

As it pertains to unsettling curriculum, Pinar (2012) encourages “...the recovery of memory and history in ways that psychologically allow people to re-enter politically the public sphere in privately meaningful and ethically committed ways” (p. 31). I believe Human Ecology allows for this shift, to offer a different framework in communities who value family integrity, home and community, but achieved in pedagogies and ontologies that are more relational and accountable to human and non-human kin and the *sacred nature* of everyday life as a way to meeting and interact with Indigenous ontologies.

A new story from human ecology (One Eye)

At the forefront in defining the discipline of Human Ecology 40 years ago, Dr Eleanore Vaines (1979) surfaced the idea of “the individual and family in their near environment” (p. 14). Vaines was already challenging the “old stories” of Home Economics and domestics, mapping Human Ecology, shifting narratives from “civilizing” and “women’s work” towards highly intentional, sovereign, contextual, social, and relational complexity. By 1999, Vaines wrote and spoke with awareness of ancestral connection acknowledging Australian kinship, the individual *self in-relation* to family, nested and in-kinship with the land, “...before the sea covered the land through today” (p. 13).

Narrative ways of knowing (local stories) and *lifeworld ways of knowing* (everyday life in a particular place or ‘placed’) were two ideas she foregrounded in what became an impressive legacy of mapping, investigating, and understanding our deep ecologies and *complex webs of life* (Vaines, 1999, p. 17). Vaines encouraged these perspectives, mapping *Spheres of Influence* (1996)—*inner* as the individual/family member; *private* as family and kin; *public* as community members; and the *biosphere, cosmos, unknown, and unknowable* as equal and interrelated (p. 16). Vaines (1999) questioned and troubled the *power sphere*—colonial institutions and industry, our *inherited worldviews*, and *old stories*, seeing them as a limitation to interrelationship and flourishing (p. 22).

Vaines (1999) also encouraged illuminating *new journeys into new territories* by critically examining how rooted we are in old stories, those things that are so much a part of us that we have lost awareness of them and their influence, that we fail to question their usefulness, or over rely on them in ways that we stop remembering where we are from, or who our ancestors were. She hoped, that by being aware of and engaged with old stories, and by electing among available choices, one could design and live in “new stories” (p. 20). Concerned with individuals, families, and their near environment, she saw opportunity in new stories that incorporate deep ecologies as being transformative and powerful in everyday life. In turn, she believed that in relationships, individual family members might feel less isolated and more inclined to become authentic in relation to others, caring about themselves, their family, their community and the world (p. 23).

Vaines developed the *Many Ways of Knowing Map* [MWKM] (1994a, 1994b) and elaborated the MWKM (1996) recognizing that, “Your stories, my story, our stories are as important as scientific ‘truth’ in the analysis of multivariate, complex and chaotic interrelationships of families” (p. 17), arguing that,

“...Appropriate use of all of these ways of knowing can help us see what we have been unable to perceive before, help us to know rationally what we had heretofore missed, and to become people who care deeply for all living systems” (p. 23).

I involve Vaines’ in this review, not as a western necessary, to “legitimize” Indigenous ways of knowing, nor to participate in the colonial project of replacement (Tuck, & Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013, p. 76). Rather, I include Vaines as a means to demonstrate respect, the potential for “joining” perspectives, and as a relevant trauma-wise curriculum connection to engage current and next generation First Nations students (Battiste, 2013b, p. 98).

I believe that Human Ecology and *placed knowing* might be intersections that “... Nurture Indigenous knowledge, its dignity, identity, and integrity by making a direct change in school philosophy, policy, pedagogy and practice” (Battiste, 2013a, p. 99). Might *Siksikees’tuhkoom* (Blackfoot Lands) and *Nitsitapissini* (Blackfoot ways of life)—and similar unique to Nation, offer the wisdoms necessary to speak with, redesign, or companion with Human Ecology, form Two-Eyed Seeing while troubling and replacing colonial frameworks of Home Economics and family studies therein as sites of decolonial curricular action?

Indigenous intelligences, subjectification & land-based pedagogies (One Eye)

In exercising *Isspi’po’totsp* (Responsibility) for this work, it is necessary that critical systems of anti-oppressive curriculum and pedagogy be drawn forward. As noted, the concept of subjectification (Biesta, 2009; Fannon, 1961; Phoenix as cited in Eriksen, 2018) is compelling. Subjectification describes the process by which people come to experience themselves as educational beings. This occurs or does not through (1). *Socialization*: passing on current social and cultural values; (2). *Qualification*: by advancing students’ competencies and knowledge for functioning in society and

markets; and, (3). *Subjectification*: the process by which students experience democracy (or not) through *being*, allowing them to both express themselves and experience resistance in self-definition.

In a decolonizing context in Canada, incorporating *subjectification* is essential to countering historic and contemporary experiences of cultural genocide, oppression, marginalization and *Othering*. Therein, Biesta's views must be overtaken, in this case, by *Niitsitapii* (Blackfoot) pedagogical practices of experiential learning, oral knowledge sharing, and intergenerational cultural mentorship framed by *Aawaaahskataiksi* and *Siksikees'tsuhkoom* or land-based wisdom. *Aawaaahskataiksi* convey that one's self-definition includes *Niitsitapii* responsibilities to land and place; through kinship systems; by synthesizing the *Niitsitapii* concept of sacredness and process of spiritual development; by knowing one's responsibilities to contribute to unity, consciousness, and interconnection; and, by learning from Elders and Ancestors (Bastien & Kremer, 2004; Fellner, 2018b). In this way, *subjectification* is overwritten as an abstract academic, western concept.

In the context of the Kainai Nation, a student might come to be (re)acquainted with family integrity by understanding one's *Ohtsitappspii* (The purpose of their *Niitsitapii* existence); when one engages with *Sáhpahsimapi* (Collaborating in a good way); and demonstrates values of *Aispomotsiop* (Helping one another); *Aina'kowa* (Respect); *Nittapitapiisini* (Integrity); *Atsimoiskan* (A good heart); through *Kimmapipitsin* (Kindness); because of *Isskanaitapstsi* (Relationships); and, *Aistommatop* (Ability to embody these knowledges). These are recognized as kinship values. Vaines (1999) describes this way of being as "home, as one's moral centre" (p. 15). By centring *Ohtsitappspii*, any educational system, discipline, or ontology can be framed to emphasize *poo'miikapii*—collective harmony, balance and unity, as opportunities for students' to come into presence, recognizing one's unique giftedness, value, and potential. This is trauma-wise bedrock to begin the work of decolonizing ontology and curriculum.

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2014), a learned Nishnabeg Scholar and celebrated Indigenous author, poet, and artist reinforces these ideas of ensuring pedagogical wisdom, *that which is given to us lovingly by the spirits*, *gaa-izhi-zhaawendaagoziyaang*—is centred going forward:

This is what coming into wisdom within a Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe epistemology looks like. It takes place in the context of family, community and relations. It lacks overt coercion and authority, values so normalized within mainstream western pedagogy that they are rarely ever critiqued. The land, *Aki*, is both context and process. The process of coming to know is learner-led and profoundly spiritual in nature. Coming to know is the pursuit of a whole body intelligence, practiced in the context of freedom, and when realized collectively it generates generations of loving, creative, innovative, self-determining, inter-dependent, and self-regulating community minded individuals. It creates communities of individuals with the capacity to uphold and move forward our political traditions and systems of governance (p. 7).

By recognizing *Siksikees'tsuhkoom* (Blackfoot land knowledge and relationships) or *Aki* (Nishnaabeg land knowledge and relationships), Simpson and other Indigenous scholar-educators invert, contest, and dismantle long-held conventional ontologies. Perspectives from Blackfoot and Nishnaabeg intelligences and scholars are congruent with those of Vaines' and other emancipatory scholars. Human Ecology ontologies align with and are poised, if consensus is reached, to achieve the goals of Two-Eyed Seeing for the field.

Both cast the role of the educator—be they teacher, Elder, story, land, or place, as mediator to enrich students' understandings of differences between their respective cultural commons; Indigenous and/or western, relationships where they exist or have been eroded, and relevant inter-dependencies, both culturally-informed and contemporary. Emerging *poo'miikapii* modalities might draw upon knowledges of anti-oppressive curriculum and pedagogy, but never at the expense of helping students examine knowledge and experience from their own Indigenous intelligences (see also Calderon, 2014; Cole, 2016; Ermine, 1995; Little Bear, 2009; Wildcat, McDonald, Irlbacher-Fox, & Coulthard, 2014; Yunkaporta & Kirby, 2011).

Fellner (2018a) asserts rightly that

“[We] must critically reflect on how one of the greatest barriers to good work with Indigenous communities is the pervasive colonization that continues to be enacted

through the language we use in our work; child welfare systems; ongoing occupation of Indigenous lands; educational systems; the justice system; environmental destruction; and popular development discourse, which marginalizes Indigenous lifeways and limits how Indigeneity can manifest in organizations.” In education, adopting western trauma-informed practice distances and invalidates Indigenous intelligences and *placed* wisdom. We must recognize and question the impact of these practices on the learner and their family (p. 285).

Like any new habit or practice, Poo’miikapii requires vigilance and action against what the norms have been. It is therefore useful for all involved in education be they educational leaders, policy-makers, educators, or students themselves to remember that “normal” is socially constructed; to be deliberate in questioning and (un)learning what is taken as given; and, to develop as part of professional practice knowledge of and skills with *Two-Eyed Seeing* and trauma-wise curriculum within disciplines. Decolonizing must first occur at the ontological level and then the epistemic effects may move us to transformative practices and out of the *wounded space* (Battiste, 2018) together.

The land rises with Two-Eyed Seeing

Over fifty years ago, Fannon (1961) highlighted the intentional unconscious training instilled in the minds of *Othered* children through the racialized cultural representations presented to them. Fannon wrote of the trauma and dehumanizing impact of colonization on Indigenous peoples, discussing the broader social, cultural, and political implications necessary to establish a social movement for the decolonization of a person, of a people. He observed that when young children are exposed to stereotypical images and repeated negative narratives related to their affinity group, the children experience a psychopathology wherein images become a part of their personality. Neighbour Nations have survived the unthinkable. These are not distant pasts. In Canada, the last residential school, Gordon Indian Residential School (Saskatchewan) closed in 1996. Our neighbour Nations, their communities, their families, and their lands are agentic, powerful, gifted, clever, wise, resilient and intelligent. Yet these are not the images or narratives that Blackfoot students see of themselves, or leastwise, not nearly often enough.

Western modalities, often privileged by western education systems, cannot continue to essentialize Indigenous children, youth, and their families. It is imperative to dismantle visual, discursive, curricular, and systemic strategies that legitimize dominance and exert power over self-image and self-definition. *Placed* ontologies have such powerful resonance with Human Ecology, pedagogies from both offering sites and processes to be incredibly impactful and lead a different vision for coming through truth and towards reconciliation.

Three key principles of place-responsive pedagogy include:

1. One’s relationship to place as constituted in stories and other representations;
2. Place learning as local and embodied; and
3. Ideally, deep place learning occurs in a contact zone of contestation (Gough, 2008; Sommerville, 2008).

Applied, Niitsitapii (Blackfoot) intergenerational ways of knowing, kinship values, and non-human *placed* kin would strengthen cultural knowing alongside Fellner’s practices of trauma wisdom as preferred, privileged, and as sound as adopting a commercially available remedy or antidote to trauma, with the guidance of Elders, and for communities and Nations of the Confederacy. The development of balance, self-esteem, and one’s search for identity, connection, and safety would be culturally-informed, a hallmark of trauma giftedness through stitching, food, land, and family.

Fellner (2018a) compels that, “Embodying decoloniality in curriculum requires that the instructor actively challenges [colonial] systems and engage students in challenging these systems, working toward transformations that benefit Indigenous communities” (p. 286). The land as educator also brings us full circle to a place where *Two-Eyed Seeing* is possible, a place where the philosophy of giftedness, human value, and potential evident in the constructs of Human Ecology rest easily with *Indigenous intelligence*.

In a talking circle with Dr Fellner about her clinical practice, I will always remember a profound statement she made. As I recall, she spoke about the giftedness of the most troubled of individuals on their trauma journey. We had returned from a tour of several sacred sites on the Blackfoot Confederacy, having harvested medicines, taught by Elders in lawn chairs all day. She wondered out loud to our class if it was reasonable for some to ever form trusted human relationships, given cycle-upon-cycle of broken trusts and harms from others. She said she had an inkling that the land and these places could provide that relationship; that the land ever-present would always be there, without fail. This itself is balancing, safe, harmonizing. Atleo (2011) writes,

For Aboriginal children in residential schools, the comforts of home did not refer to technological progress, the convenience of running water, indoor plumbing, dishwashers, washing machines, televisions, radios, computers, and iPods. No the comforts of home for Aboriginal children, have, until recent history, always been associated with the pre-eminence of relationships within the context and dynamics of place” (p. 10).

There is no question that Atleo and many other Indigenous scholars see the land as the site for the *I-in-Relationship* dimension that Vaines also wrote about, which provides a necessary state of belonging, security, trust, and faith in the world. “It is the land where one develops the capacity to draw vision and meaning from non-ordinary states of consciousness” (Atleo, 2011, pp. 32-34), mirroring Vaines’ notions of the biosphere, cosmos, unknown and unknowable. With the land, one has the best of opportunities to come into presence by “walking out” epistemicide and experiencing resurgence in family integrity.

Iskiapima describes a Blackfoot concept of finding ways of guiding others onto a better path. Returning to the Niitsitapii example, does Human Ecology offer a better frame than Home Economics and its associations for *Iskiapima*? Can we trace critical decolonial curricula and learning outcomes that embody and respect highly diverse Nations where we live, learn, and work? Can *new stories*, and self-determined old stories occupy and enrich a Nation’s cultural commons, inclusive of activities, skills, and patterns of mutual support that centre Indigenous ancestors, ways of knowing, and trauma wisdom? And, how do we seek with humility and at what point do we begin this work of a unified and reconciled vision of Human Ecology education, laying down the old stories of Home Economics?

Conclusion

In completing this review and questioning, a navigation of sorts comes into focus, a prayer for us to “set down” the harms associated with Home Economics and shift towards practices and pedagogies in the giftedness space/human ecology *spheres of influence* mindset, for learners and their families, unified and reconciled, that are rich with:

- Nation-defined *Indigenous/Nation-specific intelligences* and placed pedagogies;
- Educator and student orientations to self-awareness and opportunities to grow further into self-definitions of *purpose and giftedness*;
- Informed by *poo’miikapii* (or similar Nation concepts) of *collective harmony, balance and unity*;
- Continued resurgence of Nations’ cultural commons, including restor(y)ing colonial narratives and ontologies with community-based Indigenous intelligence; and
- Increased commitment to *Two-Eyed Seeing* and consequential skills and abilities to choose, design, and create models that navigate out of the wounded space towards holism and right relationship.

At the same time, and as a part of enacting and emplacing healing, anti-oppressive, justice-focused pedagogies and practices, we must also recognize, respond, and contest practices that embody:

- Power-over, coercive, and authoritative modalities of “rightness” in our field;
- Deficit narratives that pathologize these moments or modalities of incredible potential for educational equity that will impact students, educators, educational leaders, communities, Nations and our relationships; and,
- *Psycholonization, Othering, Re-traumatizing* or other systemic racialized practices with constant, unwavering commitments to justice, voice, self-determination, and truth.

In summary, one's so-called "status of knowledge" ideally becomes supplanted, western ways of thinking become old stories, flipped instead to become contested and necessarily transformed to enact new stories and wisdoms unique to respective Nations and, if offered the prerogative to do this work together and benefits that will result. This requires discomfort, relational accountability, enlisting Eminent Scholars, engaging and embracing the land as educator, effort, vigilance, and resources. The legacies and on-going engagement of colonial systems ask that we examine our habits, often instinctively held as wrong-minded, and invite the wisdom of reconciled visions of education envisioned by Battiste and other Indigenous scholars and desired by so many. These questions and imperatives are a prayer offered for healing our relations (see also Cole, 2016; Fitznor, 2012; McConaghy, 2000; Morphy, 1995; Tanaka, 2016), for the lived experiences of students and families today, and for those yet to come.

Biography

Patricia May Derbyshire is an Associate Professor at Mount Royal University in Calgary Canada. She has worked in community-facing educational research and development for 25 years. Ms. May Derbyshire earned her Master's Degree in Conflict Analysis and Management, working with the Minister of Education and the Janoda Foundation in Sri Lanka and with Muslim, Sinhalese, and Tamil youth during the war, supervised by Dr. John Radford. Patti mapped Dr. Radford's peace and conflict systems designs from the final decade of the Apartheid era, when he worked in South Africa's violence-torn townships to build relational capacity at the onset of this critical societal transition. His work laid the foundation for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission under Nelson Mandela's leadership, impacting Patti's work with Indigenous communities past, present and future.

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“The world is our home”: Food literacy education and Vaines’ conceptualization of *ecology*

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Abstract

Eleanore Vaines developed a conceptualization of ecology for the field of home economics, and created a number of maps to describe her theorising of everyday life and understanding of the complex webs of living systems. Her theoretical work can be applied to help understand food literacy as a set of practices that go beyond individual behaviours and choices, extending to involvement in community efforts to shift to more sustainable and socially just food systems. This article uses Vaines’ work, including her “Spheres of Influence” and “Many Ways of Knowing” maps, to reconcile tensions in the discourse around food literacy. Two initiatives in Vancouver, BC, that focus on an ecological approach to learning about food are offered as a way to understand how food literacy can build pathways that integrate natural and social environments. These initiatives demonstrate how shared, community locations can be sites for engagement with food in meaningful and transformative ways.

KEYWORDS: FOOD LITERACY, VAINES, HUMAN ECOLOGY, SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

Concerns about disconnections between populations and both the sources of their food and plants, animals, soils, and other aspects of the physical earth have long been voiced. Though he was not the first to do so, Wendell Berry of Kentucky took up these concerns in many of his writings; in 1972, for example, he noted that “all meaningful contact between ourselves and the earth is broken. We do not understand the earth in terms either of what it offers us or of what it requires of us, and I think it is the rule that people inevitably destroy what they do not understand... Most of us, for example, not only do not know how to produce the best food in the best way—we don’t know how to produce any kind in any way” (Berry, 1972, p. 74-75). Berry continued this theme in his 1977 *The Unsettling of America*: “The concept of country, homeland, dwelling place becomes simplified as ‘the environment’—that is, what surrounds us. Once we see our place, our part of the world, as *surrounding* us, we have already made a profound division between it and ourselves” (Berry, 1977, p. 22).

Eleanore Vaines identified Berry as setting the stage for her discussion of these concerns and framing them in terms of the field of home economics in her 1994 article, “Ecology as a Unifying Theme for Home Economics / Human Ecology.” After addressing the definitions of ecology used by other fields, including biology, sociology, and political science, she frames the term for the field of home economics/human ecology as “best described by two interrelated generalizations: Every living system is related to every other living system in some way and to some degree, and the whole of these systems is greater than the sum of their parts.” (p. 60). Vaines foregrounded the role of home and families by describing them as being “interconnected, intricate, and complex webs in relation to other living systems” (p. 60). In her exploration of what ecology would mean in context of the home economics field, Vaines (1994) identified multiple *Spheres of Influence* (see Figure 1) including the Cosmos, the Biosphere, the Power Sphere, the Public Sphere, the Private Sphere, the Inner Sphere, the Unknown and the Unknowable. These spheres interlock and overlap to honour the “complexity, diversity, and harmonies, both seen and unseen, as inherent qualities required by all living systems”

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(Vaines, 1994, p. 60). In order to demonstrate the complex nature of these systems Vaines developed a series of maps (see the collection in Smith, Peterat and de Zwart (2004)) as a way to describe and demonstrate her theorizing and contribute to practice that is transformational (Vaines, 2004) Through her maps, Vaines provides guidance to integrating key pieces and ways to see the complexities of everyday (family) life. While Vaines provided a framework for adopting an ecological systems approach to home economics education a quarter-century ago, this approach has received limited traction in classrooms.

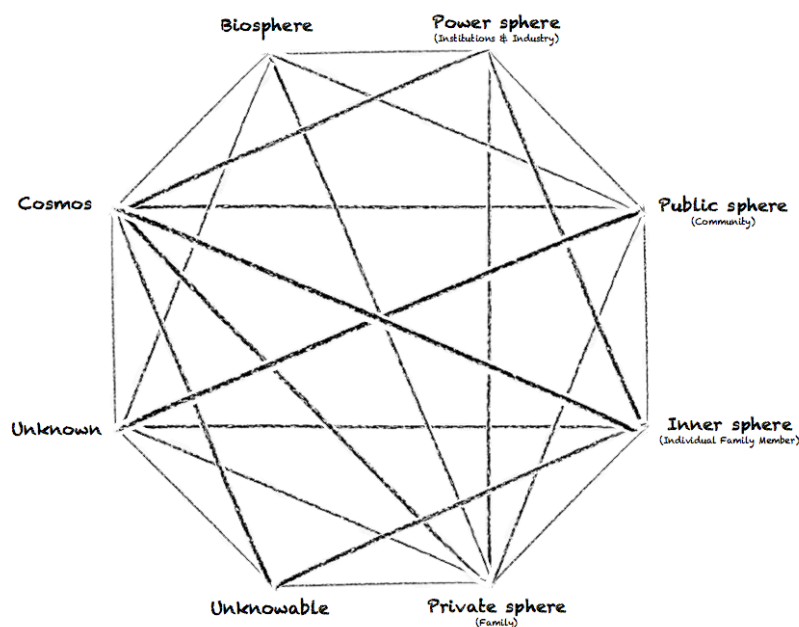


Figure 1 Spheres of Influence Map

Source: Vaines (1996b)

Vaines, drawing on Berry, addressed the disconnections between humans and the physical world in which they are embedded and on which they depend for their food, air, water, clothing, and shelter. At the same time in the mid-nineties, children and youth became a focus for dialogue around this disconnect. Though vocational agriculture and home economics courses and their affiliated extracurricular activities had been present in US schools for decades, by the 1990s, for children younger than those traditionally involved, and in areas of North America where such programs did not have strong footing, concerned community members, parents, and educators began programs aiming to increase student engagement with growing and preparing food. These programs were often in conjunction with providing higher-quality school food for students, as they emerged in the contexts of growing concerns around unhealthy school lunches contributing to widespread childhood obesity (Beery & Joshi, 2007; Lyson, 2016). Around the same time in Canada, concerns began growing around children and food in schools, as emerging data indicated that childhood malnutrition and food insecurity was a widespread problem despite existing Canadian social safety nets which were meant to provide meals for school-aged children through direct payments to families (Powell & Wittman, 2018). In the early 2000s, *food and well being* was identified as a key concept in the national Australian Curriculum, a response to growing concerns in Australia about young people having both the skills and confidence to engage with food and subsequently make healthier choices (Nanayakkara, Margerison, & Worsley, 2017; Ronto, Ball, Pendergast, & Harris, 2017). As part of addressing these concerns in all three countries, programs offering food literacy education in schools have proliferated, taught either directly by classroom teachers or in partnership with community organizations. Educators across a wide range of disciplines teach and invite partners to deliver lessons focused around food, and home economics educators do now often frame their work as food literacy education. While the activities food literacy educators engage students in vary, there is heavy emphasis on gardening and cooking skills, which aligns with trends in the US, Canada, and Australia, where home economics programs in K-12 schools have often approached food by focusing heavily on cooking skills as an individual's capability combined with nutritional knowledge (Renwick, 2016).

Frequently, this positioning has created a myopic perspective where there has been little consideration of wider food systems, including the roles of agribusiness, food processing, policy, and social justice.

Following this growth in educational programming, food literacy has burgeoned into a robust area of both theoretical debate and applied research (Cullen, Hatch, Martin, Higgins, & Sheppard, 2015; Slater, Falkenberg, Rutherford, & Colatruglio, 2018; Truman et al., 2017; Vidgen & Gallegos, 2014). With classroom food literacy activities focused around cooking and gardening now having been widespread for two decades, questions are emerging around how education in these areas may address broader concerns around food systems sustainability (Meek & Tarlau, 2016; Powell & Wittman, 2018; Renwick & Powell, 2019). In this article, we read some of the recent trends in food literacy practice and scholarship through Vaines' work. In particular, her framing of *ecology* provides a potential pathway to reconsidering and potentially reconciling some of the tensions in the field. We consider two examples of food literacy education initiatives in Vancouver, BC, in terms of Vaines' ecological systems approach.

Food literacy as read through Vaines

Defining food literacy has become a complex issue due to the ways in which it is perceived by both scholars and practitioners and in diverse contexts (Colatruglio & Slater, 2014; Pendergast & Dewhurst, 2012; Smith, 2009; Truman et al., 2017; Vidgen & Gallegos, 2014). One of the widely used definitions is Vidgen and Gallegos' (2014) version where they posit that food literacy is "scaffolding that empowers individuals, households, communities or nations to protect diet quality through change and strengthen dietary resilience over time. It is composed of a collection of interrelated knowledge, skills and behaviours required to plan, manage, select, prepare and eat food to meet needs and determine intake. This can simply be interpreted as the tools needed for a healthy lifelong relationship with food." (p. 54). In keeping with this definition, much of the discourse around child and youth food literacy education has focused on how interventions change individual behaviors related to food knowledge and choices (Brooks & Begley, 2014; Vaitkeviciute, Ball, & Harris, 2014), including identifying and selecting healthy foods such as fresh vegetables and fruits. For the general population, there is also emphasis on individual behaviors, with literature focusing on using food knowledge as a health promotion tool (Rothman et al., 2006); to combat a claim for an obesity epidemic (Roberto & Khandpur, 2014; Vidgen & Gallegos, 2011); and to build self-efficacy about food through preparation skills (Benn, 2014). Vidgen and Gallegos' definition and others, which are similar, have been criticized for their focus on individual action, and either an insufficient focus on or an ignoring of food systems, sustainability, and social justice (Kimura, 2011; Renwick & Powell, 2019; Sumner, 2013, 2015).

As described by Truman et al. (2017) in their review article, theoretical work on food literacy has been trending toward definitions and conceptualizations that move beyond the focus on individual action. An example of such a definition is provided by Cullen et al. (2015): "the ability of an individual to understand food in a way that they develop a positive relationship with it, including food skills and practices across the lifespan in order to navigate, engage, and participate within a complex food system. It's the ability to make decisions to support the achievement of personal health and a sustainable food system considering environmental, social, economic, cultural, and political components" (p. 143). Though this definition still centers the individual, it acknowledges that individuals are situated not only in their own bodies, but also in complex food systems, and that individual decisions influence many spheres beyond the health of one's own body. This reflects Vaines' (1999) concern that the individual family member is not isolated from the family and wider world. By being in relation to others we become authentic, by interconnecting within and between families in everyday life there is a space to not only care about ourselves but also others—human and non-human—and the wider world, through interconnected webs.

Vaines addresses the need to situate individual eating in other contexts in her *spheres of influence map*, which demonstrate the complex and multidirectional ways that the *inner sphere* (an individual family member) influences and is influenced by other *spheres* including the private sphere (family life), the public sphere, the power sphere, and the biosphere (Vaines, 1996b). She conceptualizes eating as an act through which we are connected to the food and the environment, and one of the ways that our lived human life is intimately linked to the natural world (Vaines, 1999). Even for the definitions/framings of food literacy, which most directly center the individual, reading them through Vaines' *spheres of influence* and ecology connects the individual competencies and actions they

describe to a larger world, which then links them to the more expansive frameworks of food literacy. In discussing the process of developing their definition, Cullen et al. stated that their working group wanted to show that food literacy “reflects our ability to interact and succeed in society in a healthy way, to be empowered as an individual, a community, and a society” (2015, p. 143), a framing which aligns with Vaines’ interconnecting *spheres of influence*.

While scholarly discussions over defining food literacy continue, attention is also now turning toward creating frameworks for expected learning outcomes and competencies from food literacy education programs. In their framework for food literacy competencies for young adults, Slater et al. (2018) identify what they call *systems competencies* and *relational competencies* in addition to *functional competencies*. These competencies are closely aligned with the three dimensions of food literacies—functional/operational, cultural, and critical identified by Renwick (2013).

Vaines’ *spheres of influence* and *many ways of knowing* help to illustrate how the relational competencies described by Slater et al. function as part of larger food systems. Slater et al. (2018) use the subtitle “Joy & Meaning Through Food” to help describe relational competencies. This competency is further subdivided into categories such as *recognize the importance of preparing and eating food with/for others*, (Slater et al., 2018) which includes *valuing sharing food with others*, *valuing everyday family meals*, *valuing preparing food together*, and *valuing preparing food for others*. (Slater et al., 2018) as well as several others about individual experiences and values.

Through this framing of relational competencies, Slater et al. are emphasizing the importance of everyday food-related experiences, and positioning them as acts that are part of both joy and meaning-making in everyday life. While Slater et al. still focus on the individual health outcomes of food literacy education, they identify that a meaningful relationship with food is an important part of well-being. In 1999, Vaines identified a need for “reenchanting” everyday life, including creating more meaningful relationships with food. She argued that

...reenchanting family life and honoring the sacred nature of food will mean that the interconnections of the private sphere with all the other *spheres of influence* and *many ways of knowing* will need to be utilized to transform daily life so that the ordinary is experienced as extraordinary... Meals are not so much ‘served’ but rather the means whereby family members come together around all the activities related to food. The rules roles and rituals associated with food are chosen, negotiated and honored (Vaines, 1999, p. 22).

By taking time to notice everyday acts not as mundane but meaningful, Vaines argues that we are able to “honour the interconnectedness of all living systems” (2004, p. 135). This requires a different way of seeing the world to the scientific paradigm that segments knowledge into disparate parts. In the case of food, is it a commodity that is to be produced as at the cheapest price; food preparation is seen as unnecessary drudgery and food education is reduced to nutritionism (Scrini, 2013). Vaines, in putting forward her *sphere of influences* and *many ways of knowing*, challenging us to rethink our connection to food as more than a saleable good and bodily fuel and instead to understand how eating food together is both a celebration and a way to honour “each other, the community, the environment.” (1999, p. 22)

The *spheres of influence* have already been introduced in this paper, but Vaines’ *many ways of knowing* needs more explanation. In 1996, Vaines produced a *many ways of knowing map*, which incorporated the idea that scientific ways of knowing, described as “The World is a Machine,” (Vaines, 1996a, p. 150) are on their own incomplete, and need to be incorporated with narrative ways of knowing, described as “The World is Lived Experience,” (Vaines, 1996a, p. 150) and lifeworld ways of knowing, “The World is Our Home” (Vaines, 1996a). Vaines argues that integrating these *ways of knowing* can help us “become people who care deeply for all living systems” and a foundation for “experiencing deep ecology” (Vaines, 1999, p. 17). Though Vaines does not address literacy in her map, her concept of *many ways of knowing* emphasizes capacity to communicate with and be part of communities working together, in other words, literacy skills. While food literacy practice and discourse has tended to focus only on the food and ignore the literacy, incorporating these skills is crucial to realizing the potential of food literacy education to build capacity for food systems transformation (Renwick & Powell, 2019).

In the framework developed by Slater et al., systems competencies, subtitled “Equity and sustainability for food systems,” include *Understand social justice issues in the food system*, *understand aspects of environmentally sustainable food systems*, and *understand the emphasis of food corporations and lobbying interests*. (Slater et al., 2018, p. 553) These competencies are still positioned as skills held by individuals, yet they enable individuals to look beyond their individual experiences to their roles in larger ecological systems. Coupling these competencies with Vaines' ways of knowing, and the literacy skills which enable individuals to become embedded in communities, aligns them with the concept of critical food literacy. Critical food literacy has been defined by Yamashita and Robinson (2016) as “the ability to examine one’s assumptions, grapple with multiple perspectives and values that underlie the food system, understand the larger sociopolitical contexts that shape the food system, and take action toward creating just, sustainable food systems” (p. 269). Building capacity to take action to support and create food systems that are sustainable and socially just is now being explored as a potential new outcome of food literacy education, which is supported by but extends beyond cooking and gardening skills.

Current research demonstrates how food literacy education programs focus on the everyday, close-to-home acts of cooking and gardening (Cairns, 2017; Lam, Romes, & Renwick, 2019; Surman & Hamilton, 2019). While these are important operational elements of food literacy, such programs are yet to evolve to include what Vaines has mapped in her *spheres of influence*. Cooking and gardening can be seen as representative of the inner sphere, private sphere, and biosphere; however, there is little to no attention given to the other spheres including power, public, and cosmos. When literacy, including food literacy, is understood as a way to read socio-cultural contexts (Renwick, 2013; Renwick & Powell, 2019), then education programs can be investigated through Vaines' *many ways of knowing maps* (Vaines, 1993, 1996a). The lifeworld of the “reader” is their sum of (food) experience; thus, a food literacy program needs to acknowledge and connect with this lived context. Secondly this body of experience is accessed through narratives of the participants and wider (human and non-human) community. Thirdly, Vaines (1999) argues that the reliance on scientific knowing has generated an incomplete way of understanding the world and its interconnections; for example, knowing food only through how it provides nutrients ignores other facets of food that contribute to wellbeing—human and ecological. Vaines posits that there is a need to balance both the narrative and science ways of knowing and that this is achieved through knowing the immediate and ordinary, that is, the lifeworld (1993, 1999).

Two initiatives in Vancouver, BC, viewed through the Vaines' ecological lens

As recently outlined, literacy education programs have the potential to do far more than just teach students where their food comes from and how to cook (Powell & Wittman, 2018; Renwick & Powell, 2019). In practice, many of these programs also take an ecological approach to student learning, which, in the words of Vaines, includes “the integration of knowing, seeing, being, doing, and caring” (Vaines, 1994, p. 60). Two food literacy education initiatives based at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, BC, have been working towards an ecological approach for many years. When put in conversation with Vaines' work, these programs also open up ideas around family, as they emphasize other community units as sites for joyous and meaningful food engagement, rather than just immediate relatives or those sharing a household. Both of these programs are focused on strengthening ties among individuals, communities, and the environment, thus contributing to building pathways for integrating natural and social environments, as encouraged by Vaines.

Intergenerational Landed Learning Program

The Intergenerational Landed Learning Project (ILLP), is a university-based non-profit organization which collaborates with classroom teachers to connect elementary school students with elders and young adults to explore growing, harvesting, cooking, and eating food together at the campus farm of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. The mission of ILLP is to improve the “well-being of people, communities, and the planet through environmental education and research” (ILLP, 2019). Initially envisioned by two academics in UBC's Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, the ILLP was an ecological project that invited in children, their teachers, and community members to share gardening experiences at the UBC farm (Peterat, Mayer-Smith, Lee, Sinkinson, & Tsepa, 2004). ILLP began in 2002-2003 with an initial class of grade sevens, their teacher, six keen gardeners or retired farmers (called *farm friends*) and graduate research assistants. In the intervening years, the programming became centered around collaborative teams of students in grades three through seven, elders, and young adult volunteers (typically undergraduate and graduate students). In describing

the beginning of the ILLP, Peterat et al. (2004) write of how Vaines' theorizing provided a number of ways to think about the work being undertaken.

Peterat and Mayer in their initial conceptualisation of the ILLP were focused on ecological projects that facilitated intergenerational connections around a garden plot. While not framed in terms of *food literacy* at the time, these projects offer a way of seeing food literacy through Vaines' ecological lens. Food is central to life and our everyday routines. Our practices and specifically our food literacy practices are to be found in the ordinary events of growing, preparing, eating, and consuming food. They are developed through the relationship we have with our family that is in turn influenced by our culture and community. Developing food literacy also requires understanding our connection with and to the natural environment through interrelated webs of life that we ignore or destroy at our own peril (Vaines, 1996a).

The work of ILLP creates family-like relationships surrounding food systems, as students engage activities not only within the social worlds of their classmates, but also across generations with the volunteers and elders. Engaging with *many ways of knowing* requires attention to interactive and reflective practice to "understand what we do, why we do it, and how we do it" (Vaines, 1985, p. 70). Thus, as reflective practitioners, the ILLP staff were careful to listen to the students and farm friends as they expressed their needs and wants within the project. As a result, there was increasing care to build community spirit and trust in subsequent years. Working with their farm friends, the young people were able to engage with the oral tradition of storytelling, its moral perspective, and eco-centric consciousness.

Within the ILLP, it is possible to see the cyclical experience of how young people and their farm friends were engaged in a local food system. From preparing and sharing meals using foods they have grown and harvested in their gardens, to transforming waste into nutrient-rich compost, their efforts contributed "to an ethic of care for the land and our planet" (Peterat et al., 2004, p. 37). The embodied experiences also offered a way to read the world through food literacy. In this work, young people are supported and encouraged to understand food systems and their role within it, while also developing confidence and capacity, and nurturing a positive relationship with food in the ways encompassed in the Cullen et al. (2015) definition of food literacy, the Slater et al. (2018) competency area of joy and meaning through food, and Vaines' (1999) idea of creating more meaningful relationships with food as part of reenchanting everyday life.

Think&EatGreen@School

Since its inception in 2009 under the direction of Dr Alejandro Rojas of UBC's Faculty of Land and Food Systems, Think&EatGreen@School (TEGS) has served as a hub for food literacy education work in K-12 schools in Vancouver, through supporting professional development opportunities for educators, including workshops and three-day summer institutes, and through small grants to Vancouver schools and community groups (Rojas, Black, Orrego, Chapman, & Valley, 2017). While most of the grant-supported projects implemented by school teams have focused on starting and maintaining school gardens and implementing curriculum around them, schools have also engaged in many other types of activities, including building classroom cooking tub programs, planning and holding community harvest celebration meals, collaborating with Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers, and developing opportunities for students to engage in small-scale food entrepreneurship. TEGS has also maintained an action research program; in its early years (2010-2015), much of this research focused on observing and evaluating school food environments in Vancouver schools (Rojas et al., 2017). More recently, TEGS-affiliated research has focused on why and how educators engage in the types of food literacy education work they do, and using this to understand how this work can contribute to building capacity among both teachers and students for participating in efforts to create and support sustainable and socially just food systems.

In the early years of TEGS, work on sustainable school food systems and food literacy was in its infancy in British Columbia. Through its network-building activities, TEGS helped to develop a community and sense of home for those who were engaging or seeking to engage in food literacy work at their schools. Considered through Vaines' *spheres of influence*, this represented a novel overlapping of the private and public spheres, as TEGS brought teachers together to share and collaborate on practices around food and pedagogy, which the Canadian government had long codified to be the domain of the nuclear family. This was part of a major change in Canadian thinking around children, schools, and food, which is just now starting to be practically realized as Canadian

and provincial governments begin work to create state-led school feeding programs that build on the work long-done by teachers in helping students to understand food systems (CHSF, 2018).

Conclusion

Viewing food literacy education within Vaines' framing of ecology, *spheres of influence*, and *many ways of knowing* provides a conceptual pathway from building on individual cooking and gardening skills around food to building capacity for collective action in the family, community, and larger world which could lead to more sustainable and socially just food systems. Nevertheless, it is the work being done on the ground, in the pedagogical practices of home economics teachers and other food literacy educators, which will determine how this pathway plays out among students and communities. Ultimately we hope to see students equipped to act not only in their own and their family's best interest, but also in the interest of a broader global community, and in careful and informed collaboration with others. As food literacy theory shifts and begins to infiltrate food literacy practices, there is an increased potential that we reach a place where the home becomes the world and the world becomes the home.

Biographies

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The impact of poverty on children’s educational potential

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Abstract

Twenty-first century home economics continues to evolve. Eleanore Vaines’ metaphor “the world is our home” and her encouragement of home economics professionals to engage in reflective, transformative practice is a primary reason for both the evolution and transformation of the discipline in the recent decades. Her eco-centric philosophy demonstrates that we are global citizens who should be seeking global harmony, peace, and justice. The purpose of Vaines’ reflective, transformative practice is to change the individual or social order by building a just society for all people. Vaines further stresses the need for home economics professionals to work for the “common good”, which includes a focus on the vulnerable, marginalized, and disenfranchised individuals, families, and communities, both in our local neighbourhoods and in the world as our global neighbourhood. This includes working for the “common good” of students living in poverty.

Children’s educational potential is negatively impacted by poverty. Food, health, poor school readiness, impaired growth and development, psychosocial concerns, inadequate funds, and housing are the consequences of poverty and have specific implications in the classroom. This paper considers the specific educational action that teachers and school administrators can take to counteract the effects of poverty while enhancing children’s educational potential, such as building social connections with families, building positive connections with students, addressing learning gaps, making education meaningful and relevant, building on the strengths of students at risk for dropping out, and providing for student needs, specifically using home economics to support students.

KEYWORDS: CHILDREN, EDUCATION, ACADEMIC POTENTIAL, POVERTY, HOME ECONOMICS

Eleanore Vaines is known for the metaphor *the world is our home* and encouraging home economics professionals to engage in reflective, transformative practice in ecology and everyday life (1988, 1990). Vaines’ eco-centric philosophy means we are global citizens who seek global harmony, peace, and justice (1988). The purpose of a reflective, transformative practice is to change the individual or social order by building a just society for all (Vaines & Wilson, 1986; Wilson & Vaines, 1985). Vaines stresses the need for home economics professionals to work for the “common good”, which includes a focus on the vulnerable, marginalized, and disenfranchised individuals, families, and communities, both in our local neighbourhoods and in the world as our global neighbourhood (Vaines, 1999). This includes working for the common good of students living in poverty.

This paper focuses on poverty and its impact on a child’s education as it is experienced in Canada. However, similar statistics and experiences are evident globally including the USA (Williams, Greenleaf, Barnes, & Scott, 2018), Portugal (Flores & Ferreira, 2016), New Zealand (Exeter, Zhao, Crengle, Lee, & Browne, 2017), Australia (Martinez & Perales, 2017), Germany (Schmiedeberg & Schumann, 2019) and South Africa (Spaull, 2015).

Poverty in Canada

“Poverty is a violation of human rights, yet it is present in every community across Canada” (Canada Without Poverty, 2018b). According to the Credit Suisse Research Institute (2017), using Statistics Canada data, Canada is the eighth richest country in the world concerning total national wealth and

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the ninth concerning median personal wealth per adult. With this level of societal wealth, there is no excuse for poverty, especially as the consequences are comprehensive, affecting more than the number of people with an inadequate income (Dignity for All: The Campaign for a Poverty-Free Canada, n.d.). Poverty in Canada, a developed nation, exists. The purpose of this literature review is to address the existence of poverty in Canada; how it impacts children's educational potential; and some actions teachers, administrators, and communities can take to help alleviate poverty.

The definition of household poverty and its cause in Canada appear to be the same: the lack of money and resources for a family to live a full life (Echenberg, 2012). Canadians with the greatest risk of poverty include people with work limitations (e.g., physical or mental disability), people with less than a high school education, unattached individuals, lone-parent families (especially if the parent is female), and visible minorities who have immigrated to Canada in the past ten years (Lammam & MacIntyre, 2016). Having one of these top five at-risk characteristics increases a family's risk of persistent poverty, as most Canadians experience poverty as a temporary situation (Government of Canada, 2017; Lammam & MacIntyre, 2016). Unfortunately, the more at-risk characteristics a family has, the greater the risk of persistent poverty (Lammam & MacIntyre, 2016).

According to Statistics Canada (2017b), poverty is a serious problem in Canada. Almost 1.2 million Canadian children under the age of 18 lived in poverty in 2015 (Statistics Canada, 2017b). At that time, 17.0% of Canada's total population were children, but nearly one child in four lived in poverty (Canada Without Poverty, 2018a; Statistics Canada, 2017b). This means about 25% of Canadian children lived in poverty, which was 3.4% of the total population (Canada Without Poverty, 2018a; Statistics Canada, 2017a, 2017b). A few years have passed since the 2015 census, but given the trend over the past quarter-century, the poverty statistics will probably have increased (Campaign 2000, 2014).

Nearly 25% of Canadian children live in poverty, and off-reserve Aboriginal children, immigrant children, and children from visible minority backgrounds are at increased risk (The Canadian Press, 2017). As national population studies do not include First Nations reservations, the full picture regarding poverty and Aboriginal peoples is incomplete (Proof, 2018). Children from single-parent families experience poverty more than four times the rate of children from two-parent families (The Canadian Press, 2017; Mark, Lambert, O'Loughlin, & Gray-Donald, 2012). Children from single-parent families headed by women have the highest rate of poverty among all families (McIntyre, Connor, & Warren, 2000). This because it is more common for women to work permanent part-time and temporary jobs, instead of full-time and permanent employment, due to parenting responsibilities (Government of Canada, 2016). Women are paid about 20% less than men, making them among some of the poorest people, which negatively affects their children (Government of Canada, 2016; Slaughter, 2017). Children living in poverty come from families making a minimum of \$1,000 per month less than the median family incomes (The Canadian Press, 2017). Families on social assistance usually have one or both parents with a disability or other health condition, as families suffering from poverty have a significantly higher prevalence of the primary caregiver having a chronic health condition (The Canadian Press, 2017; McIntyre et al., 2000).

Statistics Canada (2017b) states the provincial poverty rates range from 12.8% in Alberta to 22.2% in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Quebec is the only province where children are less likely to live in poverty than adults. The poverty rate varies, depending on the province, territory, city, rural area, and reservation (Canada Without Poverty, 2018a; Statistics Canada, 2017b). Because nearly 25% of children live in poverty, unless a school caters only to the wealthy, all Canadian schools have students suffering from poverty (Statistics Canada, 2017b). However, if teachers have never experienced poverty themselves, when they are informed one of their students is poor, what do they understand about the implications? As an experienced educational assistant explained, poverty affects everything, including how a student thinks in school if they are hungry, cold, or worried; it influences judgement, decision making, behaviour, memory, focus, and learning (F. Soares, personal communication, December 11, 2017).

Poverty and education

The world praises Canada's public education system for providing equal opportunity for achievement for all youth at the elementary and secondary levels (Open Canada, 2018). However, many students dealing with poverty begin kindergarten with poor school readiness and with parents unable to assist them with their education (McIntyre et al., 2000). As students progress through the grades, the

educational gap widens as wealthier students can afford extra-curricular activities, field trips, courses requiring extra supplies and fees, and private tutoring (Open Canada, 2018). Poor students get the basic course of studies with none of the extras, as they cannot afford them. Schools with academic streaming separate “good” students from the “weak,” but often it is a separation of wealthy students from the poor (Open Canada, 2018).

This leads to the important question: how does poverty impact children’s educational potential? And once this impact is understood, what educational action is necessary to move society towards eradication poverty? What educational strategies can teachers and school administrators implement to improve the lives of families struggling with poverty? What strategies can be used within the school and local communities to work towards eradicating poverty? Children from families struggling with poverty can succeed academically as well as those from wealthier families; however, poor children must clear many more hurdles than their more affluent peers while doing the same coursework. Unfortunately, students who experience poverty and its impacts often do not achieve as well as their better-resourced peers (Cady, 2016). Poverty is more than a lack of money as it encompasses a child’s entire human experience—physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual—while erecting barriers to their academic achievement (Cady, 2016; The Canadian Press, 2017).

How poverty impacts children’s educational potential

Poverty impacts children growing up in these harsh circumstances. One problem leads to the next, each making getting an education increasingly difficult.

Food

All students should begin their school day with a nutritious breakfast. However, if their family is food insecure, they may need to depend upon school feeding programs, the local food bank, or other social programs available in their community (Tarasuk, 2005). Those dependent upon school breakfast and lunch programs may suffer from holiday hunger on weekends and school breaks (Long et al., 2018). As Canada does not have a national school feeding program, not all schools offer a breakfast club and lunch program. If a school has a feeding program, this may be the primary reason food insecure children attend school.

Health

Food insecure families suffer from poor health due to nutritional insufficiency (Gates, Hanning, Gates, McCarthy, & Tsuji, 2013; Kirkpatrick & Tarasuk, 2008; Mark et al., 2012; Tarasuk, 2005; Whitney & Rolfes, 2008; WHO, 2018). Individuals suffering from malnutrition are prone to a variety of medical problems (Whitney & Rolfes, 2008; WHO, 2018) consequently some students may have impaired immunity and become too ill to attend school regularly (Whitney & Rolfes, 2008).

Students may need dental work, but a family without dental plan means that expensive is a luxury, instead of a necessity. Students may need eyeglasses, but without them are not able to see the board or follow the lesson. Students in these situations are compromised and unable to learn.

Poor school readiness

Children from families struggling with poverty are often not ready for school (McIntyre et al., 2000). School readiness is an indicator of how well children succeed academically and socially at school (Ferguson, Bovaird, & Mueller, 2007) and requires good health with optimal growth and development (WHO, 2018). Children ready to start school have age-appropriate motor development, social knowledge and competence, language skills, age-appropriate knowledge, and cognitive skills (Ferguson et al., 2007). Many programs promoting school readiness, include pre-school swimming lessons, dance, and community sports. While borrowing books and attending story-time at the public library is free; it is difficult for a family to participate if they must walk there in poor weather.

Impaired growth and development

Food insecure children often have limited energy, so they are restricted in their activities (Tarasuk, 2005). Malnutrition causes learning problems due to impaired cognitive function, poor short-term memory, reduced work performance, irritability, confusion, apathy, and eye problems (Whitney &

Rolfes, 2008; WHO, 2018). With compromised growth and development children do not meet their physical and intellectual potentials (WHO, 2018).

Psychosocial concerns

Children suffering from poverty often struggle with psychosocial concerns, such as internalizing behaviours that include anxiety, depression, and withdrawal, and externalizing behaviours that encompass self-regulation, including aggression, hyperactivity, and noncompliance (McIntyre et al., 2000). The experience of poverty is stressful and prolonged experience of being poor can change the children's brain architecture resulting in increased risk for stress-linked disease (Campbell, 2016). School experiences add to this when children suffer the humiliation of being teased due to the stigma and shame of being poor (Cady, 2016).

Inadequate funds

In Canada public schooling is free; however, when a family has insufficient funds then what children can access at school is limited. Living a distance from school and taking the school bus rather than public transport with its costs, means that they are unable to stay after school for extra help or extracurricular activities. When the family has no money for discretionary spending, students are unlikely to have school supplies, gym strip, and cooking aprons. Their family may rely on charitable sources for clothing, but this may not cover all circumstances such as an appropriate jacket to go outside for recess, lunch, and outdoor classes (The Canadian Press, 2017). The lack of discretionary money also means no access to technology, a disadvantage when other classmates, can BYOT (Bring Your Own Technology) for doing research and an inability to take advantage of the supplemental opportunities and are thereby limited to basic programs.

Housing

A family struggling with poverty faces housing difficulties. Unless subsidized housing is available, often a family is forced to live in a small home with insufficient room or share with another family (BC Housing, 2018). Such children do not enjoy their own bedroom with a desk at which to do their homework, but live in cramped, noisy, and often substandard quarters. Such living situations mean that it is difficult for a student to do their homework and study at home. In addition, some high school students work to support their families, which results in less time for homework and studying, but often requires them to miss classes, along with others who miss classes to babysit younger siblings because daycare is too expensive (British Columbia Teachers' Federation [BCTF], n.d.; Sen, Rybczynski, & Van De Waal, 2011). Students from families living in a homeless shelter are at an even greater disadvantage.

Educational action

According to Vaines (1988), home economics teachers are global citizens who seek global harmony, peace, and justice, but one can teach other subjects and subscribe to this eco-centric philosophy. Because the world is our home, teachers working for the common good work to eradicate poverty in their classrooms, schools, communities, and the world as our global neighbourhood (Vaines, 1999). But how does a teacher begin to take educational action against poverty?

A multi-jurisdictional approach is needed to deal with poverty, especially concerning the education system (Campbell, 2016). It is crucial the intervention begins as early as possible (McIntyre et al., 2000). Education can be the key for students getting out of poverty as their lives are more likely to improve if they graduate high school, especially if they enroll in post-secondary education (Cady, 2016). The children's educational success may pull the entire family out of poverty. This costs money, but for every dollar invested in education, a country's economy grows \$10 to \$15 (Global Education Monitoring Report, 2017). This social and financial investment is needed for teachers to implement strategies such as the following (BCTF, 2016).

Build social connections with students' families

Kindergarten teachers need to make home visits before the school year starts so to begin a long-lasting connection between the school and the family (Johnson, 2013). Maintaining this positive connection throughout the student's time in school includes the parents in their child's learning

(Henderson & Milstein, 1996). Phone calls home should be supportive and reporting successes, rather than the student's shortcomings (Johnson, 2013).

Build positive connections with students

This starts with learning the student's name and calling them by it (Johnson, 2013). Building a caring, empathetic relationship shows the teacher genuinely cares (Harvey, 2007; Henderson, 2013). The classroom should be safe and open, so the students want to connect with the teacher (Henderson & Milstein, 1996). Connecting with students makes it easier to find out about the student's interests, successes, and life, without being judgmental (Johnson, 2013). This places the teacher in a stronger position to know what is happening in the student's life that might cause them to cause act out (Thompson, 2018). Teachers enable the student to take charge of their education in age-appropriate ways, such as joining the school homework club and using the school library in their free time (BCTF, 2016; Harvey, 2007).

Addressing learning gaps

Addressing learning gaps as early as possible is better for the student's educational progress. This includes key point of transition—from pre-school to Kindergarten and elementary to secondary school (BCTF, 2016). This also involves keeping on top of attendance and tardiness issues positively, so the student does not miss school unnecessarily (Harvey, 2007; Johnson, 2013; Slade, 2016); and settling the class down to learn and responding to issues as they arise (Thompson, 2018). Making expectations clear and the standards high, offering choice within structured learning, and building self-confidence are essential (Henderson, 2013; Johnson, 2013). When learning gaps are discovered, working with the student one-on-one or in small groups to assist, engage, and develop the missing skills and build new ones is essential (BCTF, 2016).

Making education meaningful and relevant

When the classroom and the school have an inclusive environment, and the learning is relevant to their strengths and interests the student will want to attend (Harvey, 2007; Henderson & Milstein, 1996). Providing a homework club or time after school ensures the student can get extra help and build on the success of completing their assignments (Thompson, 2018). Providing opportunities for the class to meet community support persons and discover available resources encourages the student to use these contacts (Thompson, 2018). Building an environment of *when you go to post-secondary education* instead of *if*, by providing information, modelling, and sharing experiences encourages the student to see future possibilities (Henderson & Milstein, 1996; Thompson, 2018).

Build on the strengths of students at risk for dropping out

When school is not going well students can become discouraged so they quietly drop out (Sen et al., 2011). These students need to have someone working one-on-one with them (BCTF, 2016) finding out their strengths and interests, as well as the barriers they are facing and why they are considering dropping out (Johnson, 2013). There is also a need to identify and work towards achieving their goals and being supported in that process (Henderson, 2013).

Providing for student needs

Students living in poverty will often come to school needing a variety of things their families cannot provide (Slade, 2016). The provision of free food is essential for food-insecure students, including a Breakfast Club that is open to all, apples for breaks, a lunch program, and snacks at homework club (Cady, 2016; Gates et al., 2013; Harvey, 2007; Thompson, 2018). Having school supplies available is a requirement, including pens, pencils, and paper that the students can help themselves to in the classroom and extra binders, dividers, and calculators in the supply cupboard that staff members can select from to get the students started with their school work (BCTF, 2016). Establishing a fund for course and field trip fees allows students to broaden their education (Thompson, 2018). The main office needs to stock free bus passes for students who miss the school bus to get help after school. A stash of personal hygiene supplies, such as deodorant, sanitary supplies, shampoo, body wash, toothbrushes, and toothpaste is needed. Opportunities for students to launder and repair their clothing are necessary, as well as getting much-needed clothing (Thompson, 2018). It is crucial to attend to these needs in such a way that a student's dignity is honoured (Henderson, 2013). Covering these basics allows the student to begin to focus on their schoolwork.

Using home economics to support students

The discipline of home economics is taught in many schools, although the name may differ (e.g., family and consumer science, family studies, home ecology) (Canadian Symposium, 2018). Home economics is usually comprised of food studies, textiles, and family studies (Province of British Columbia, 2018). These courses reinforce and build upon necessary skills and values learned at home, but also introduces and teaches them to students who yet to have the opportunity to begin this learning journey. Home economics provides students with life skills such as sewing, cooking, and child care, but also builds soft skills, including attitude, communication, and problem-solving, necessary for family life and sought after by employers (Province of British Columbia, 2018). Home economics provides the opportunity for teachers to introduce facets of the complex topic of poverty to an entire class, regardless of the socioeconomic status of the individual students. Not only does this allow students to learn about this critical topic in a safe environment that reduces prejudice and stereotyping, but it also enables them to participate in projects where they can actively work for the common good towards eradicating poverty in their school and local community, which hopefully producing transformative learning (Vaines, 1999). Projects can include food security and justice, textiles upcycling and repurposing, and anti-poverty initiatives (Province of British Columbia, 2018).

Community action

As teachers assist their students with projects for the common good within their community, this is an opportunity for the students to assist the vulnerable, marginalized and disenfranchised (Vaines, 1999). It is important for students to be involved in work to eradicate poverty, but is this not the responsibility of the various levels of government? Unfortunately, the federal and provincial governments, regardless of the party in power, are working to provide improvements for Canadian families with poverty, but the wheels of governments work exceedingly slowly. Merely waiting for governments to rectify poverty is not an option, so what can be done? Each school has its own community, which includes the students, their families, and the staff, but it is also placed in a larger community, which includes its neighborhoods and its village, town, or city. Community strategies can be used to address poverty from a grassroots community level. Community action ranges from Band-Aid solutions to working toward structural change and is organized into three broad strategies: short-term relief, individual and community capacity building, and system change (Food Thoughtful, 2005).

Short-term relief strategies

These strategies deal with emergency situations and are considered Band-Aid solutions as they cover up the problem for the moment, but do not address the underlying cause (Food Thoughtful, 2005). The cause of poverty is lack of money and resources for a family to live a full life (Echenberg, 2012). Short-term relief strategies assist a family by supplying some of their momentary needs; but until the cause is rectified, these strategies only provide temporary relief as the needs continue to return. Examples of short-term relief strategies include food banks, soup kitchens, food hampers, school feeding programs, free after-school and holiday recreation programs, free tutoring, schools recycling unused school supplies, charity clothing programs, dentists providing free care, women's transition houses, and shelters (Bartlett, 2018; Food Thoughtful, 2005; Tarasuk, 2005).

Individual and community capacity building strategies

The purpose of individual and community capacity building strategies is to build the skill sets of individuals and bring people within a community together to work for change (Food Thoughtful, 2005). Opportunities for individual skill building are part of a community's effort to build capacity. Individual skill building is connected to capacity building because the individuals use their new skills to contribute to the community's effort to bring change (Food Thoughtful, 2005).

Skill building for individuals

Secondary schools, besides offering the courses required for graduation, also offer courses in agriculture, family studies, food studies, and textiles. Students can grow their own food; develop skills necessary for healthy family life; learn to budget, shop, cook, and preserve food; and acquire sewing and laundry skills. These skills build on those acquired at home. Skill building capacity opportunities allow individuals to continue obtaining skills.

However, Huisken, Orr, and Tarasuk (2016) discovered that Canadian adults' food preparation skills and cooking abilities do not significantly differ between various socioeconomic groups. Food insecure adults are more likely to shop with a budget and adjust a recipe to reduce the fat content while making it more nutritious (Proof, 2018). Food insecure adults are less likely to garden, but this could be due to lack of access to a gardening plot and gardening usually being the hobby of those who are better off, and not due to food insecurity (Huisken et al., 2016).

It is essential that the courses offered to provide skills individuals need, instead of assuming family members dealing with poverty are bereft of all skills. Skill building opportunities include community kitchens and gardens, where participation assists families building social support networks (Food Thoughtful, 2005).

Capacity building for communities

Just as individual skill building opportunities may be part of a community's capacity building program, capacity building often results from individual skill building strategies (Food Thoughtful, 2005). When individuals and communities come together, they can identify, define, and determine how to address their concerns (Devon Dodd & Hébert Boyd, 2000). Well-planned long-term projects involving many people have the highest level of success (Food Thoughtful, 2005). Examples include developing a community garden; building a park close to a crowded subsidized housing complex; establishing a free swap shop for clothing and household items; starting a farmers' market that includes crafts, home baking, and preserves; and publishing and selling a community cookbook to fund a needed community resource.

The purpose of community capacity building is to strengthen the abilities of individuals, community groups, and systems to plan, develop, implement, and maintain policies and systems necessary to support the community's health and wellness (Devon Dodd & Hébert Boyd, 2000). Community capacity is built over time, using both a good plan, and an evaluation of that plan (Hawe, Noort, King, & Jordens, 1997). It requires people with the needed skills, knowledge, and abilities who want to be involved, support from the local businesses and institutions, leaders, and finances (Food Thoughtful, 2005). This is an excellent opportunity for families struggling with poverty to get involved as they can identify necessary changes as community capacity building strategies can focus on system change.

System change strategies

The purpose of system change strategies is to make improvements to policies involving poverty at the grassroots level so to influence the local, provincial, federal, and corporate levels (Food Thoughtful, 2005). In Canada, there is a need to improve in the social safety net so to positively change the lives of families living in poverty (Stevenson, 2017). As the various levels of government move slowly, communities working on system change strategies can put a capacity building strategy to work so the appropriate government body sees how it works and gets involved (Devon Dodd & Hébert Boyd, 2000).

Canada Without Poverty (2018a) estimates that due to the socioeconomic disparities in the health care system, 20% of all healthcare spending is needed to care for individuals suffering from poverty. They also estimate that one dollar invested in a child during their early years may save up to nine dollars in future health care system expenditures. What additional savings in other areas, such as education, will result from this investment (Canada Without Poverty, 2018a)?

Poverty negatively affects those who endure it, as well as community wellness (Cady, 2016). As families living in poverty know the solution to their problem better than those who do not struggle with poverty, including them in system change strategy is essential so their voice and opinions lead the way to an accurate understanding of poverty and what can be done at the grassroots level to begin to eradicate it (Canada Without Poverty, 2018a).

Conclusion

Despite being one of the world's richest countries, about 25% of Canadian children, 3.4% of the total population, live in poverty, as determined by the 2015 Canada census (Campaign 2000, 2014; Canada Without Poverty, 2018a; Credit Suisse, 2017; Statistics Canada, 2017a, 2017b). The poverty rate varies, depending on the province, territory, city, rural area, and reservation, but unless a school

caters only to the wealthy, all Canadian schools have students suffering from poverty (Canada Without Poverty, 2018a; Statistics Canada, 2017b).

Children's education is impacted by poverty. Food, health, poor school readiness, impaired growth and development, psychosocial concerns, inadequate funds, and housing are the consequences of poverty and have specific implications in the classroom. Teachers and school administrators can take specific educational action to counteract the effects of poverty while enhancing children's educational potential. If each teacher and school administrator adopts Vaines' philosophy of reflective, transformative practice, they will naturally determine to fight poverty in their school as this will be working towards the common good of all their students (Vaines, 1999; Vaines & Wilson, 1986; Wilson & Vaines, 1985).

Each school has its own community, but is also part of a larger community. As government action is not moving quickly enough to solve the poverty problem, community action is a necessity. This action has specific sets of strategies that can assist families in poverty while building capacity and moving towards system change. These strategies require dedicated, hard-working people who are determined to make a permanent difference for the common good (Vaines, 1999). A school can use these strategies within their school communities, but also choose to be part of their larger community's action. When students can use what they have learned in school to fight poverty within their community, hopefully transformative learning will take place. Their resulting positive actions would work to reduce the negative impact of poverty on their academic potential; and thereby, build a more just society and improve the world as our home (Vaines, 1988, 1990; Vaines & Wilson, 1986; Wilson & Vaines, 1985).

Author's note

This paper is based on a portion of the author's graduating paper for the Master of Education (HEEL) at The University of British Columbia (Vancouver).

Biography

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Virtual professional development: Transformation to tech-savvy teachers in class?

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Abstract

This paper emerges from a study carried out to explore ways of how professional development can be conducted to help Home Economics (HE) teachers introduce technology effectively as a pedagogy. This research attempts to build a bridge between educational technology and Home Economics (HE) teachers. It will show how one can support teachers in integrating educational technologies effectively and give appropriate examples of how classroom practice can be improved for the 21st-century learner. An online community was used with teachers of HE in order to diffuse this innovation and offer ongoing support.

Rogers' (2010) model provided a structure for this dissemination process. A questionnaire was used to achieve the overall interpretation of the impact of the CoP on the knowledge of teachers' use of technology for HE and to identify how effective the Community of Practice (CoP) was. The discussion fora were analysed to bring out the teachers' reactions. Interviews were then used to ensure validity and depth of interpretation.

The main findings show that the CoP was effective in making the teachers aware of innovative pedagogies, and how to use technology effectively. They also developed favourable attitudes towards technology. However, the interaction was poor as the virtual activity progressed which shows that the participants preferred to receive information rather than share it, that time might be a barrier worth addressing and that the transformation to a tech-savvy teacher might not take place unless there is ongoing support.

KEYWORDS: EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY, DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION, COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE, ONLINE COMMUNITIES, CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH IN HOME ECONOMICS

Introduction

This paper emerges from a study carried out to explore ways of how professional development can be conducted to help Home Economics (HE) teachers improve pedagogies and how to challenge teachers to take on new ways of teaching. Schools have been investing heavily in educational technology, and classroom resources. Teachers' skills were evolving at a much slower pace (Murchu & Freeman, 2003).

The Information Age challenges teachers to embrace change. Computer literacy is an essential skill requirement for students in the modern world and teachers must accept and welcome this. (Murchu & Freeman, 2003, p. 1)

Technology is not a simple innovation and can be daunting for teachers. Learning with technology presents challenges (Dawes, 2001). Many teachers have had to gain skills and confidence to include technology in class. Ertmer (2005) states, teachers feel ill-prepared to do this. It may be that teachers need more exposure to simple and appropriate technology for HE in ways that would enhance

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learning. Without the necessary support and appropriate training, teachers may easily reject technology as an effective tool for learning.

Technology and a constructivist learning approach

Educational technology can create opportunities for a constructivist approach to learning, shifting the importance from teaching to learning, where learning involves thought processes and active methodologies. Fosnot (2005) states that constructivism is about how one *comes to know* and states that this is a psychological theory where learning is seen as an “interpretive, recursive, nonlinear building process by active learners interacting with their surround—the physical and social world” (p. 34). In a constructivist theory approach, the learner’s cognitive abilities and the way he/she constructs meanings are the focus. Fosnot, (2005) states that:

a constructivist view of learning suggests an approach to teaching that gives learners the opportunity for concrete, contextually meaningful experience through which they can search for patterns; raise questions; and model, interpret, and defend their strategies and ideas (p. ix).

Technology has to be used effectively for learners to construct their own meanings of the different perspectives of knowledge, otherwise learning is not necessarily improved (Chan, 2006). Some examples can be seen below in Table 1.

Table 1 Roles for Technology in Learning

Role of Technology	Examples
To support knowledge construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representing learners’ ideas, understandings and beliefs • producing organised, multimedia knowledge bases by learners
To explore knowledge to support learning through construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessing needed information • comparing perspectives, beliefs and global views
To support learning by doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representing meaningful real-world contexts • representing beliefs, views and perspectives of others • providing space and time for student thinking
To support learning by conversing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaboration with others • discussing, arguing and building a consensus among members of a community • support discourse among knowledge-building communities
As an intellectual partner to learn through reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to give learners opportunity to represent what they know through articulation and reflect how they have acquired it • to support learners’ meaning-making and the personal representations of meaning • to support mindful thinking
To help learners solve problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by helping learners access information, model problems and make decisions.

(adapted from Jonassen, Howland, Moore, & Marra, 2003, p. 12)

This study took place in Malta, and attempts to build a bridge between educational technology and Home Economics (HE) teachers. The research will attempt to show how one can support teachers in integrating educational technologies effectively and give appropriate examples of how classroom practice can be improved for the 21st-century learner. An online community was used with teachers of HE in order to diffuse this innovation and offer ongoing support. McCloat, (2008) suggests that, “ICT facilitates learners to actively construct their own knowledge and promotes autonomy and critical reflection.” (p. 11).

Technology-enhanced learning can be challenging and requires a lot of preparation in order to be used effectively. Cuban (2000) argues it is very challenging for teachers to incorporate technology as a regular part of their instructional practice. Prensky (2005) states that schools have been dabbling with technology and teachers mostly continue to do things with technology in ways that fit in with

their traditional practices. He states that children are adopting technology in new ways, often inventing innovations and adopting them as their preferred method of behaviour, but this practice is not as pervasive in schools. When we tell teachers to integrate technology for the benefit of student learning, we need to ensure they can do this effectively.

Burnett, Merchant, and Myers (2007), show that the relationship between a specific subject and ICT is complex and raises issues for training institutions. Close collaboration with colleagues, they indicate, may be an effective way to overcome this. In line with Burnett et al.'s (2007) thinking, this online community of practice aimed to: 1) create collaboration amongst same subject teachers, 2) promote the sharing of ideas and good practice and 3) reduce isolation of teachers coming from different sectors of the education system.

The community of practice and the use of educational technology

This study made use of the online medium for the community of practice, (CoP). I was influenced by research on collective support and constructivist classrooms by Becker and Riel (2000), which shows that teachers who regularly participate in professional interactions and activities with other peers will teach in different ways to those who are isolated. The study also indicates that the more extensive the professional interaction, the more compatible teachers' practice will be with a constructivist learning theory. Clustering teachers of HE together to collaborate and share ideas on technology integration into their teaching and learning is a positive step.

Kirschner and Lai, (2007) claim that there is a growing recognition of the importance of using online communities of practice as a model for professional development of teachers. Barab, MaKinster and Scheckler, (2004) state that an ideal community of practice is "a persistent sustained social network of individuals, who share and develop overlapping knowledge base, set of beliefs, values, history and experiences focused on common practice and/or mutual enterprises" (p. 55). Kirschner and Lai, (2007) interpret a community of practice as a process in which social learning occurs because the participants have a common interest and are willing to collaborate over an extended period of time. They would be building a repository of new knowledge and expertise (Kirschner & Lai, 2007). The aim was to support teachers to enhance their teaching with effective ways of using ICT as a pedagogic practice, build favourable attitudes and get accustomed to the technologies which suit the HE methodologies.

Theoretical underpinnings for the integration of technology in teachers' practice—diffusion of innovation

Introducing an innovation is never easy most of all when teachers are being asked to consider alternative practice. Rogers (2010) describes a conceptual paradigm of how organisations can diffuse innovation and this framework was used in this CoP to structure technology integration and bridge the gap between technology integration and classroom realities in HE.

Rogers' (2010) diffusion of innovation model is a five-stage process and conceptualises it as the innovation-decision process shown in Figure 1 below.

According to Rogers (2010), knowledge is gained when an individual acquires *awareness knowledge*, learns about the innovation and gains understanding on how it functions. The online CoP was created to generate awareness towards technology in teaching and learning. Persuasion takes place when the individual forms favourable attitudes towards the innovation. However, one can also form unfavourable attitudes. Favourable attitudes alone are not enough. It is in the decision phase when an individual decides to accept or reject the innovation. The CoP is meant to give the participants opportunities to experience as many of the stages of Rogers' model as possible to then be able to adopt ICT in class.

Following the awareness-raising period, the teachers were given concrete ideas to experience and then trial in class. During the persuasion stage, Rogers (2010) identifies attributes, which may influence this process and the rate of adoption or rejection of the innovation. There are also attributes, which influence the decision: *relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability*. Observation and trialling gives the participants opportunities to experience the relative advantage and compatibility of the innovative pedagogy with the subject content and juxtapose with their past practices. Through these examples some uncertainty could decrease whilst

establishing the innovation's advantages and disadvantages for his/her own situation. Decisions are then taken by the individual to either make full use of the innovation or to reject or discontinue usage. Reasons for rejections included dissatisfaction with the innovation, lack of competence despite the acquisition of the *how-to* knowledge and lack of time. The innovation-decision process requires a period of time (the innovation-decision period) for individuals to feel comfortable to adopt the innovation. The fourth stage is implementation, which takes place when the individual puts the innovation to use with the possibility of re-invention. The final stage is confirmation of the innovation. During this stage though there could also be a reversal of the previous decision especially if conflicting messages about the innovation are experienced. Below I will describe how the theoretical framework contributed to the development of the CoP content.

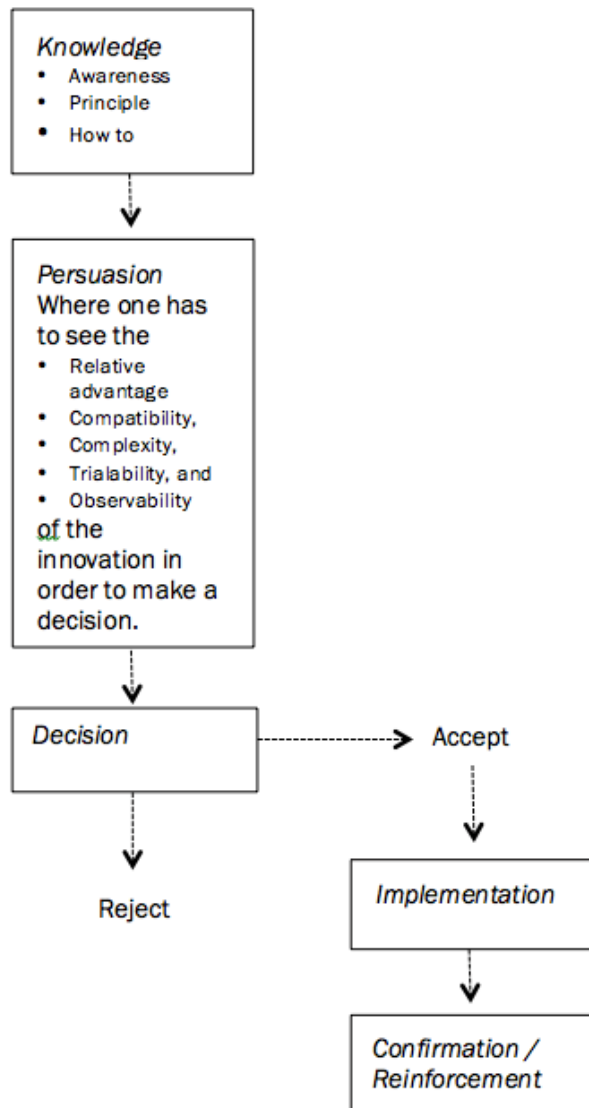


Figure 1 The Five-Stage Process of Rogers' diffusion of innovation model

Methodology

The online medium was a means for constant communication with the participants. There were three research elements in this project: the case study of the online CoP which was set up on a Moodle

platform, the questionnaire and the interviews which were used to collect data from the participants as will be seen below.

The aims of this online project were to:

1. create a platform for the professional development of teachers in order to help them experience effective ways of integrating ICT in the HE curriculum;
2. encourage teachers to reflect on their values and beliefs towards innovative pedagogies, particularly in the light of those used in class;
3. encourage teachers to share and expose good practice and collaborate on such innovations with colleagues;
4. establish a number of fora which will promote interaction to give insights into classroom practice from those more experienced, and to inject fresh and innovative ideas;
5. investigate appropriate technological tools for use in the teaching of nutrition in HE;
6. promote the use of a variety of activities using ICT and constructivist approaches

Framing the research

The main research question in this study was to explore how online interaction and collaboration can provide professional development by helping teachers become more aware of the potential of technology as a tool to enhance learning and to share any good practice. The following questions guided the methodology:

1. How effective is an online CoP in developing teachers' and student-teachers' knowledge about ICT in the curriculum?
2. How effective do teachers and student-teachers feel an online CoP has been in improving their classroom practice?
3. How effective was the medium itself (the CoP) in contributing to professional development in ICT?

The study was divided into three main stages: the initial stage which involved the recruitment of teachers and the design, planning and implementation of an online learning platform developed as a CoP; the middle/project stage in which the set period of six months were utilised for technology integration. There was a final stage whereby data was analysed through three different tools: a) the questionnaire to all the participants; b) the analysis of all the discussions linked to ICT which emerged on the CoP and c) interviews with a small number of teachers and student teachers to analyse the CoP and technology integration in a qualitative manner.

The research design

Rogers' (2010) model provided a structure for the dissemination process, thus guiding the integration of ICT as an effective learning pedagogy. A questionnaire was used to achieve an overall interpretation of the impact of the CoP on the knowledge of teachers' use of technology for HE and to identify how effective the CoP was. The discussion could give a lot of information, which would, however, not necessarily be exhaustive. Furthermore, to ensure validity and depth of interpretation, I wanted to allow the emerging data to lead me to examine the teachers' experience of the CoP in different ways. This process and the data collected from the discussions and the questionnaires then guided me to develop the interviews.

Engaging the participants

Participants from the HE team of teachers and student-teachers were needed for this study. A face-to-face presentation was conducted and served as an introduction to the CoP during a professional development workshop. Teachers were shown the benefits of ICT use in class and in curricula. They were exposed to the latest research findings on technology in education and the purpose of the CoP was stated. 93 teachers were eligible to participate. The same type of meeting was held for the

student-teachers. The student-teachers eligible to participate were those from the second year of the initial teacher education programme to the fourth year. This involved a cohort of 29 students.

The sample

The CoP acquired fifty-one participants with a coincidental equal representation of student-teachers and teachers. There were twenty-four (25.8% of teacher cohort) teachers and twenty-four (82.7% of student cohort) student-teachers participating. Three lecturers of HE from the University of Malta also accepted the invitation to participate. I would have preferred to engage more teachers and ideally, the sample would be a representation of all the schools where one teacher from each school could act as a *champion* for technology in schools.

The diffusion of innovation process for professional development

The first step in Rogers' theoretical framework is that of giving knowledge. Hence, a discussion on ICT knowledge was launched in order to create an awareness of technology-enhanced learning and the benefits of the use of such technology in the learning process. The *knowledge* stage went on for around 4 weeks through online discussion fora such as:

- Discussion 1—What are my feelings about ICT?
- Discussion 2—What ICT equipment is available in my school?'
- ICT survey 1—Where do I belong?

This was a survey about ICT confidence and competence level. As host and researcher, my role was to design, implement, observe, reflect, re-plan, implement, observe again and move onto the next step.

The second step in the first stage was an ICT survey which was an attempt to access teachers' attitudes towards technology, their level of confidence and their competence in the use of technology for learning. Responses flowed in, such as:

I would love to use a computer to deliver my lessons... it enables to pass on the message in such a way that enhances learning and students comprehend better.

Or

I think most educators are in unison re the use of ICT in lessons! I am totally in favour myself. I feel that ICT is crucial to education, it is the learning tool of the 21st century.

In line with Rogers' (2010) knowledge stage, one could observe the participants contributing to or gaining awareness knowledge through the CoP. As was evident from the discussions, they had favourable attitudes towards ICT in education. This was confirmed in the questionnaires and interviews. However, the contributions also indicated that the teachers still had a limited view of how technology can be used effectively in class. This could change through the sharing of ideas, collegiality, teamwork, collaboration and co-operation.

Rogers' (2010) suggests that an innovation-decision process requires more than a passive role of just implementing a template or a new idea. In this case, there were quite a few ideas that were uploaded on the CoP. The teachers would initially observe and trial low tech and less complex technologies as an innovative pedagogy and experience the relative advantage and compatibility with their past practices. Once the participants had time to trial the idea out by integrating it into their teaching and then give feedback, this would be evaluated. I would try to establish whether the participants had time to integrate, how this was done, whether there were barriers that were either of a logistical nature or whether there were other issues, such as competence. I would then decide whether to allow for more time or introduce another, whether the participants would need more *how-to* knowledge or would need to experience more of the attributes from Rogers' model. At times participants needed more time, at other times they needed encouragement to overcome barriers in the school.

The figure below shows what the online interface looked like in the initial stages.

The screenshot displays a Moodle course page for 'Home Economics Teachers Community of Practice'. The browser's address bar shows the URL: <https://vle.um.edu.mt/vle/course/view.php?id=56&edit=0&sesskey=JKei006BAP>. The user is logged in as 'KAREN MUGLIETT'. The page layout includes a left-hand navigation menu with sections: 'People' (Participants), 'Activities' (Assignments, Chats, Forums, Glossaries, Resources, Wikis), 'Search Forums' (Advanced search), and 'Administration' (Turn editing on, Settings). The main content area is titled 'Weekly outline' and is divided into two weekly sections. The first section, '8 January - 14 January', includes 'WEEK 1' with activities: 'INTRODUCTORY POINTS', 'Enrolment', and 'NEW/USEFUL BOOK LIST'. The second section, '15 January - 21 January', includes 'WEEK 2 - Some news and some activities', 'NUTRITION CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY FORUM', 'NUTRITION CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY GLOSSARY', and 'DISCUSSION 1 - WHAT ARE MY FEELINGS ABOUT ICT IN THE CLASSROOM?'. A 'Latest News' sidebar on the right shows recent posts by Karen Mugliett, including '21 May, 10:09 KAREN MUGLIETT TWO PUBLIC LECTURES/SEMINARS - 26th May and 29th May more...' and '28 Mar, 21:19 KAREN MUGLIETT 8 PCs in 8 Home Economics rooms more...'. There are also buttons for 'Turn editing on' and 'Turn student view on' at the top right of the page content.

Figure 2 The CoP site on Moodle in the initial days

In order to try to establish the perceived attribute of technology-enhanced learning and then show the relative advantage of it, a discussion forum was held. Following this, the rest of the steps would address ICT activities and how these could be integrated effectively to teach a nutrition topic. They were introduced slowly, week after week, allowing for time to trial, for discussion, feedback and sharing of experiences. Simple ideas of how technology can be used effectively were used, for example for homework. This was followed by how the internet can be used effectively to teach the concept of portion size. Some of the other activities that followed were: an activity on food labelling and how this can be taught in a fun and interactive way using the internet, how to use websites effectively to construct knowledge on vitamins and minerals, how to use social media and blogs for student-centred discussions, how to use quizzes and game-based learning platforms like Kahoot! and Mentimeter.

The CoP platform introduced apps to show teachers how these can be used effectively, for example, a virtual cafeteria app where students could construct meals virtually and reflect on this. Videos and the flipped classroom concept (Cook, 2014) can also improve learning, hence here shown how the production of a documentary or video clip can be used as a project-based approach to learning. Throughout these activities, the participants were expected to trial and share their experiences. Then one could assess the outcome and evaluate the technology before moving on to the next step and activity. With every ICT activity introduced constructivist and student-centred approaches were shared, such as how to make a MS PowerPoint presentation more interactive, how online communities can be used for good discussions, posts, and reflections.

Teachers needed to gain an understanding of the underlying philosophy of using technology effectively to know how to assimilate new technologies into their curriculum and progress to higher-order usage of technology. As suggested by Sandholtz, Ringstaff, & Dwyer (1997), integration would have developed from the entry-level, through the adoption, adaptation and appropriation levels to reach the final invention stage where teachers would be experimenting with new ways of using technology with their students.

The *how-to* knowledge stage

From *awareness knowledge* and *principle knowledge* this stage proceeds to the *how-to knowledge*. From the feedback and discussions in the first weeks, it was evident that the teacher needed a substantial amount of the *how-to knowledge*. This would include an activity involving technology that would at times be backed by research on the pedagogic use of the respective technology. This would be followed by examples of how to use the technology, hence a practical example of effective use in a typical nutrition lesson. Each week an activity was posted, time was allotted for discussion and trial in class and then discussion once again with feedback on practice. The technological competence of the participants varied and this was accessed through a questionnaire in the initial stages. This was taken into consideration in the design of the activities. As Ertmer, (2005) states, it is important to examine teachers' pedagogical beliefs and technology practices as they can have an influence on teachers' adoption and use of technology. This also served as a basis for correct planning for the next step.

During the discussions, teachers complained of logistical problems or a lack of resources. Participants were told that initially, usage could be low-tech. Once these have been adopted and teachers have understood the full potential of ICT, the level of ICT in class could be improved. Teachers were shown how to use the technology constructively and in a student-centred way.

One can conclude that use of ICT in class is limited because of three factors, which may fluctuate in extent from teacher to teacher:

- lack of technological skills in teachers impeding their ICT confidence;
- lack of resources in schools where these are insufficient or logistically difficult to access; and
- lack of *how-to*/pedagogic knowledge of technology in one's own subject.

This study demonstrates that teachers need to be given support and time to trial out, discuss, collaborate and rehearse with technology. Until technology integration is owned by the administration and recognition for extra hours of preparation is also reflected in the workload, technology integration may take very long to materialise effectively. The teachers on the CoP showed they needed this.

Results

The research method employed was primarily qualitative involving an in-depth analysis of the discussions on the CoP and interviews. The quantitative element in this project was a questionnaire that was sent out through the online medium. The use of qualitative methodology was seen as the most appropriate in this study since a major part of the analysis depended upon the interactions on the discussions on the CoP. This methodology was seen to be more likely to tap into the teachers' attitudes, beliefs and experiences towards ICT and classroom practice. Through the analysis of the discussions and interviews, one was able to establish the constructs and re-constructs of teachers' beliefs and practices with respect to ICT in the HE curriculum.

Effectiveness of the CoP for professional development and integration of technology

Many of the findings here confirm other studies on technology integration or communities of practice and professional development. In line with Lebec and Luft's study (2007), this research shows that there are a myriad of reactions to online forms of learning which reflect diverse inclinations and preferences towards different forms of learning such as self-directed learning with flexible arrangements. The CoP provided a medium where participants could pose queries and benefit from the interchange of informed opinions. The findings in this research indicate that the CoP was successful in that:

- It had a significant influence on knowledge and persuasion towards ICT in education on the participants and therefore strengthens the growing recognition of the importance of using online communities of practice for professional development as indicated by Kirschner and Lai, (2007);
- Teachers moved through stages of adoption in ICT integration as stated by Sandholtz et al., (1997) and UNESCO (2002). Following this study the participants felt they had reached the implementation phase in Rogers' (2010) framework and were also confirming that they would

use ICT more in the future, however, felt the need for more knowledge. In fact they stated they had increased their use of technology even if this is still tied to the computer or internet only;

- The CoP helped the participants to reflect and progress through the stages of Rogers' (2010) framework, and progress was recorded even by the participants, thus challenging some of the existing practice as indicated in the UNESCO guide (2002).
- As with the study by Demetriadis et al., (2003), teachers showed a great interest in learning how to use technology in class but needed constant support and training in order to integrate ICT effectively. As Cuban (2001) states, teachers are still using ICT as a tool;
- Teachers' perceptions in the questionnaire and the interviews showed that there were changes in classroom practice, increasing the ICT usage in class, even if this was not used as a cognitive learning tool (Chan, 2006). Thus not necessarily embracing it as a new pedagogy in line with constructivist elements as stated also by Jonassen et al. (2003). This confirms Ertmer's (2005) findings that high-level technology usage is still in the minority and Cuban's (2001) who found that not even enthusiasts use the computer well in class. This strengthens the claim for a shift in teacher training, in isomorphic approaches and concrete examples embedded in the subject curricula;
- Following some classroom practice with ICT, all the participants indicated that ICT improved the classroom experience. They had positive comments about the CoP improving ICT use in class as they specifically stated students found it motivating and fun ;
- The CoP raised motivation levels and built a familiarity with ICT through substantial awareness and *how-to* knowledge. It removed some fears associated with the use of ICT in class as it raised confidence levels and gave suggestions for effective integration in the HE curriculum;
- Participants were keen to use ICT in the future and to use the activities shared on the CoP as examples for future ICT adaptations;
- Participants found the CoP convenient and flexible; and
- CoP was successful in introducing the participants to online communities as a tool for professional development.

As one teacher stated:

We've seen that as teachers we should use new pedagogies to pass on our messages and not just use charts and things like that. We've seen more effective use of PowerPoint. For me even using Moodle was a first. It's a new online application for me. I feel more equipped now to teach with ICT. I feel more technical and have a feel of how to organise myself now in schools. The CoP helped me become more aware of ICT and gain ideas.

The barriers

Despite all these positive findings, the nature of the interactions on the CoP and the participant's roles towards an online community for professional development moved at a much slower pace. The teachers were keen on learning more but not so keen on giving online feedback. Time or a rigid scheme of work for their curriculum could have been two barriers. In an interview, one teacher said, "There were lots of fresh ideas. I didn't use them there and then. I will keep them saved and then when I need them will try them." From the data gathered it was clear that the CoP was a useful tool in disseminating knowledge, sharing concrete ideas and encouraging teachers to use ICT. The CoP worked very well as a virtual staffroom where teachers interacted socially and discussed their agenda on HE related issues rather than innovative pedagogies.

Teachers are always struggling with time for the set curriculum. Since professional engagement and interaction was lacking, the CoP may not have been that successful in the following:

- Obtaining wide feedback through the discussion fora

- Supporting the participants to reach stages which involve more effective integration of technology, hence not reaching Sandholtz and colleagues' (1997) appropriation or invention stage and Rogers' (2010) confirmation stage
- Having a better plan in which to provide forums which can motivate participants to be more active and
- Decreasing the discomfort or lack of trust participants might have had in online interactions for professional development. This might have led to a depriorisation (Lebec & Luft, 2007) of the online course.

The main difficulty faced when conducting this research was the need to establish the phase the different participants were at before proceeding to the next phase. A substantial number of participants were "lurkers" or silent. I had to assume that the diverse participants were at different phases and so persevered with emphasising the *knowledge* and *persuasion* stages of Rogers' (2010) model, whilst also sharing numerous ideas. In this case, though knowledge construction was not taking place through active interaction, focus was on *how-to* knowledge building and persuasion to adopt ICT.

Conclusion and recommendations

Communities of practice have great potential for disengaging teachers from their isolation. They can be a means of creating a new culture for collaborative and co-operative professional development. There could be ongoing opportunities for new learning experiences through the professional engagement of the key implementers of technology integration in the classroom. Unless we observe or share good practice little do we know of the teaching and learning that goes on inside the classroom walls where hardly anyone enters but the teacher and the students. It is high time that the walls are broken through dialogue and collaboration in order to improve the learning that takes place. One must focus the attention on the students and the learning rather than the teachers and or the topic. Learning communities, teacher networks or collaborative experiences provide organised social spaces for collegial dialogue and teachers' professional talk about classroom practice (Prestridge, 2002).

If a teacher is transformed to a tech-savvy professional, then teacher training needs to offer 1) application of ICT to content knowledge which can then lead to ICT constructivist approaches, 2) pedagogical knowledge showing also the paradigm shift in the philosophy behind effective ICT use and 3) knowledge of educational technology where teachers can become aware of what kind of technology is available for educational purposes and how this could be used if appropriate for the respective subject areas. Isomorphic approaches where teacher trainers themselves would adopt ICT in their own classroom practice would further strengthen the compatibility of individual teachers. Incompatibility with a preceding idea can retard the rate of adoption of the new idea. Teachers will be dealing with a new idea with the mental tools of an "old idea", thus having a standard by which to interpret or value the innovation (Rogers, 2010).

It may also be a good idea if communities of practice involve a diverse set of members. This would enrich the online setting and provide different forms of expertise as with IT specialists, and different types of practitioners. The 21st-century classroom requires easy access to ICT which could offer the curriculum a balance of different technologies and experiences as with active methodologies student-centred approaches. Hence one has to emphasise the need for ongoing professional development with a focus on the *how-to* knowledge and ongoing support.

Biography

Dr Karen Mugliett is a Nutrition, Family and Consumer Studies specialist and lecturer within the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta. She has taught and lectured in a variety of schools and courses. Dr Mugliett has carried out projects and research in policy sociology, nutrition and health education, in eLearning and online communities and in the use of technology and innovative pedagogies targeting different learner groups. She has been involved in curriculum planning and review, professional development for teachers, in media production and participation. She holds a doctorate from the University of Sheffield, UK, in the use of educational technologies and constructivist pedagogies to teach nutrition. She is a frequent guest speaker on nutrition, family and consumer-related topics within different schools, community organisations and the media. She

has contributed extensively through the production and presentation of various radio and television programmes, magazine and newspaper articles. At present she is a weekly guest speaker on the breakfast show on the national television channel, where she discusses consumer issues. She has various publications including a book *Seasonal and Sustainable—Cooking for healthy living*.

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PROVOCATION RESPONSE

Blind spots of the self-glorification in Home Economics

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Abstract

This paper addresses the prior discussion prompt of Professor Sue L. T. McGregor titled Home Economics Contributions to National Development. The main points of McGregor are summarized, and an interpretation hereof is presented which deduces the content as being a self-glorification of home economics as a profession, which is blind to the many challenges facing the field. The main argument is that home economics should not fall into such a blind narrative about the wonders of the profession, but rather face the challenges, and in a nuanced perspective discuss how to strengthen the impact on national development.

KEYWORDS: NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, HOME ECONOMICS, SELF-GLORIFICATION, COMPLEXITY, IMPACT

Introduction

In the previous issue of the *International Journal of Home Economics*, an excellent initiative was started with the publication of a so-called discussion/provocation paper by Professor Sue L. T. McGregor titled “Home Economics Contributions to National Development”. Here McGregor advocates that home economics has a unique role to play in national development, and she asserts, that home economists with deeper knowledge and richer insights into their nation’s development plans better can ensure that their work contributes to national development as well as familial wellbeing and security. One of the main arguments is that home economists have to be cognizant of the national macro-political arena so they can work more effectively in the local micro-familial arena which will make the two reciprocally beneficial (McGregor, 2019).

I find the paper to be an interesting contribution full of essential points about many positive potentials of home economics regarding the relationship between individuals’ everyday lives and national development. However, I was a little provoked (which presumably also is the purpose of such a paper) by the almost exclusively one-sided and uncritical perspective. In my interpretation, this approach is best described as a self-glorification of home economics as a profession, which is blind to the many challenges facing the field. Hence, this contribution shall be regarded as a counter-paper where I will elaborate on my above interpretation.

Where is the evidence?

When I read through the reference list that McGregor had used to support her arguments, I first got the impression that the discussion paper drew upon a very limited amount of scientific knowledge, which led me to question the reliability and generalizability of the main points. Therefore, I decided to analyze the references more deeply by categorizing which types of literature they related to. I read all and categorized them into: peer-reviewed publications, scientific conference papers, theoretical publications, opinion papers and policy documents. The result can be seen in Figure 1.

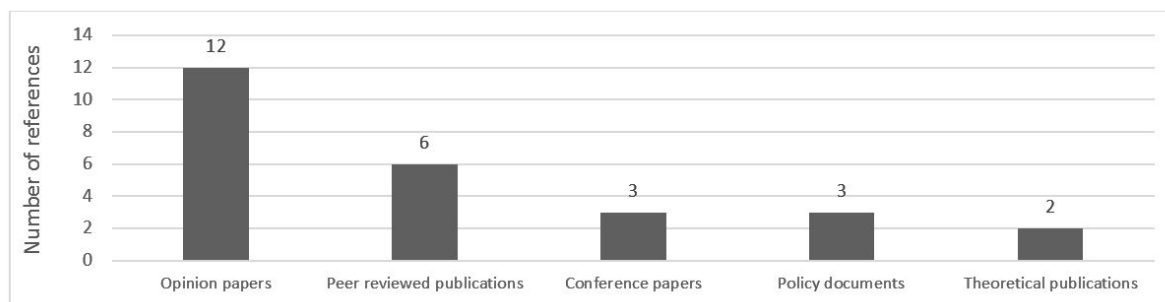


Figure 1: Types of literature used to support the arguments of Sue L.T. McGregor in the discussion paper titled *Home Economics Contributions to National Development* (McGregor, 2019)

There are twenty-six references in total. Most prominent is the opinion papers which come from a variety of home economists. These papers (by genre) present very one-sided perspectives and draws upon little or no evidence. However, two common denominators were: 1) the agreement that home economics has a huge potential with regard to national development, and 2) having very few critical perspectives on this matter. Therefore, I expected to find the critical perspectives in the scientific anchored references, and I chose to explore these deeper. From this investigation, I can derive that only six of the total twenty-six references are scientific peer-reviewed publications. Of these six publications two are based upon survey studies with very small sample sizes of respectively $n = 34$ (Nkungula, 1990), and $n = 150$ (Funmilayo & Larai, 2015). Furthermore, there is one conceptual article modelling the concept of national development and home economics (Gabriel, 1998), a desk literature review based on web research investigating the role of home economics education in alleviating poverty in Nigeria (Gamawa, 2015). A book chapter that discusses challenges emanating from professional home economics practice (Mberengwa & Mthombeni, 2012), and a combined biographical and historical article on the influence of Ellen Swallow Richards (Dyball & Carlsson, 2017). There is a majority of strictly African studies and thereby the geographical generalizability can be questioned. Two of the six journal articles are more than twenty years old, and the three conference papers are more than thirty years old. Hence, the contemporary reliability can also be questioned. Furthermore, I assessed the theoretical publications and policy documents as being relevant, however, they do not provide much scientific knowledge.

On the above overall empirical basis, McGregor concludes: “there seems to be agreement that home economists can be strong contributors to national development initiatives and strategies” (McGregor, 2019, p. 6). McGregor is fully right in this matter—there is *agreement*. However, I do not find it surprising that most/all home economists can agree that their professionalism is important and does have positive potential at both societal micro- and macro level. However, from my perspective it is a severe problem that the paper does not discuss the degree to which home economists in a more general perspective actually are and can be strong contributors to national development in current society. McGregor mainly presents ideographic examples of this phenomenon that only demonstrates positive potential. But this leads to questions such as whether the positive potential is generalizable in a global perspective? Are all home economists at all levels of this profession equally well equipped to engage with national development plans, like McGregor encourages them to do? And should they? Furthermore, I find it to be a severe problem that the discussion paper, to a high degree, chooses to ignore challenges facing the field of home economics. Especially because, as I will argue, the challenges emerging on both micro and macro societal level makes home economists’ influence on national development more difficult and complex than the manner in which McGregor presents it, which I will elaborate below. It must be emphasized that I am not saying that home economists cannot contribute to national development. My point is that McGregor argues for the huge potential of home economists to influence national development in a one-sided universal generalized manner on an empirical basis where the evidence is very sparse (mildly speaking), and without addressing the many inevitable challenges.

A profession that’s under pressure from the surrounding world

The above point about lack of evidence could be regarded as a minor problem since McGregor’s paper is meant as a discussion prompt rather than scientific work. Or perhaps the paper should mainly be regarded as an encouragement for home economists to engage themselves more in national development rather than only focusing on development within the individual, family, home and

community, which historically has characterized the profession (Pickle, 2013). But I will argue that there still persists a problem because of the extent to which McGregor ignores the challenges of home economics as a profession. Whether this is a deliberate choice or a blind spot, only McGregor can tell. However, the fact that the profession is facing challenges from the surrounding world is evident. Just to give a few examples of my point, I will emphasize that the profession historically has been criticized for being a predominantly women's field, for failing to be at the forefront of the civil rights movement, and for not proactively adopting change (Benn, 2012; Nickols et al., 2009). Non-home economists can tend to have a fixed understanding of the profession, which is based on their own primary school education from which they can be ignorant about the evolution and broadness of the subject/profession (Höijer, Hjalmskog, & Fjellström, 2011). Home economics in general, and the consumer education sections in particular, have been criticized for over-focusing on transferring norms and values of conservative elites to the masses (Håkansson, 2016), an approach that easily can be perceived paternalistic and judgmental, which often is counter-productive in terms of the goals in question (Christensen, 2019). Regarding home economics education there is risk that political and economic issues prompt program changes more than professional concerns for the subject (Mberengwa & Johnson, 2004). For instance a preoccupied focus on academic skills that does not see much value in the subject of home economics (Cunningham-Sabo & Simons, 2012). Furthermore, there is vast evidence of home economics education getting down prioritized in schools, and that teachers are dealing with low budgets and cut downs (Farah & Ridge, 2009; Gisslevik, Wernersson, & Larsson, 2017; Nanayakkara, Burton, Margerison, & Worsley, 2018; Smith & de Zwart, 2017). Additionally, many schools choose to use non-qualified teachers to teach home economics (Håkansson, 2016; Nanayakkara et al., 2018; Shadreck, 2012), which also can be interpreted as an indicator of low professional acknowledgement.

The list of challenges could go on, and I do not claim it to be exhaustive. To uncover all challenges facing the profession would be too huge a work for the scope of this paper. The list actually supports the main points of McGregor, because it shows that indeed there is reason to work on all levels to strengthen the profession. However, the list also illustrates a profession that is under pressure from the surrounding world, and a profession faced with relatively low recognition. It further indicates that setting up a positive reciprocal relationship (as McGregor advocates) can be very challenging because different stakeholders have agendas that can differ greatly from the typical ideals and values related to home economics. This cannot be overlooked if the profession is to be successful in engaging with arenas beyond the individual, family, home and community.

The simplistic and naïve character of the self-glorification

Regarding national development, it can be argued that within macro politics and the arena of national development plans there is a dominant focus on securing market activities and enhancing nations' economic development. Hence, non-market phenomena such as everyday lives of individuals risks being deprioritized (Holton, 2013; LeBaron, 2010). This risk persists even though there are strong dependencies between individuals' everyday life and national economy/political interests. For instance, when it comes to sustainability and the threats of climate change, it is evident that consumption and individuals' everyday lives are vital in solving the problems (Lorek & Wahlen, 2012). So from a home economics perspective, it is obvious that this profession can play an essential role in trying to solve this huge societal problem, by contributing with such as education or consultancy related to sustainability. Yet throughout the G20 summits, we have seen reluctance from world leaders to commit to binding obligations that lead to national sustainability policy, because of national political and economic interests (Berger et al., 2018; Knaack & Katada, 2013). This is a well-known challenge inevitable to societal development, which German sociologist Jürgen Habermas has defined in his colonization thesis as a social pathology that arises when the infrastructure of the lifeworld is colonized by money and power (Habermas, 1984). So even though home economics presumably has the potential to challenge dominant and non-sustainable capitalist thinking (Dupuis, 2017), it cannot be ignored that different stakeholders and non-home economists have very varied opinions about the potentials in the field of home economics, and it cannot be ignored that some perceive home economics as having a fracturing identity and low societal relevance (Harden, Hall, & Pucciarelli, 2018). Therefore, I also find it reasonable to question what impact can be reached simply by home economists expanding their scope and being cognizant of national development like McGregor advocates (McGregor, 2019). It is a simplistic and naïve way of dealing with the complexity of influencing national development plans, and it does not help the case to be blind to the challenges facing the profession.

Conclusion

McGregor asserts that home economics has a unique role to play in national development, and that home economists can be effective change agents acting as a catalyst between individuals and governments. In my view, she presents an ideal of promoting IFHE and the profession. I also find it plausible that all home economists are able to agree upon their professionalism being of importance at both societal micro- and macro level: individuals' everyday life and national development. However, national development is a complex matter, which is not easily affected because of the variety of stakeholders who do not always share the positive view on home economics as McGregor presents it in a one-sided manner. Therefore, there is reason to question the level of impact home economists can have just by giving more credence to national development. My argument is that as a profession, home economics should not fall into an exclusively one-sided and blindly self-glorifying narrative about the wonders of the profession, but rather face the challenges at both micro- and macro level along with the challenges of affecting national development plans, and discuss how to strengthen the impact from a more nuanced perspective.

Biography

Jacob Højgaard Christensen (PhD, Assistant Professor, Aarhus University, Denmark, and board member of European Association of Home Economics) is an educational sociologist with expertise in the field of school research, where he has been concentrated on health pedagogy, food education, performance culture and wellbeing in primary to upper-secondary schools. He has mainly researched the effectiveness of teaching plans and didactic programs with a view to developing and improving learning environments and teaching practices.

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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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