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**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
FOR HOME ECONOMICS**







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# International Journal of Home Economics

### Issue 2, 2008

This issue provides the Home Economics professional with a range of current topics of interest to the field. In the peer reviewed section of the journal, there are three articles, each of which has undergone a double-blind peer review process prior to acceptance for publication. These papers share a common thread—all are reporting on research with a focus on Home Economics students, and while each has a very different perspective from which to report, there are some clear messages for the Home Economics profession to note. The first paper by Martha Dallmeyer, Kevin Randall and Nina Collins provides an interesting insight into the development of a late night food service operation, making connections between this initiative and the four dimensions or areas of practice of Home Economics, viz: academic discipline; every day living; curriculum area; and societal arena to influence and develop policy—outlined in the IFHE Position Statement, 2008. The second peer reviewed paper is contributed by Mary Mullaney, Clare Corish and Andrew Loxley. An interesting study is reported, with surprising results. The 4 year longitudinal study investigated the nutrition and lifestyle knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of a group of Irish student Home Economics teachers over their four year study in a Home Economics degree program. Nutrition knowledge test results increased significantly over the study period, however this increase in knowledge was not linked to behavioural change. For example, levels of exercise were lower than those reported by their contemporaries, alcohol consumption was high and a higher percentage of the group smoked than reported by contemporaries. There were no associations evident between nutrition and lifestyle knowledge, and behaviour, making them poor role models. The third peer reviewed paper provides insights into factors affecting subject choice for Senior Cycle in Ireland, where there has been a trend away from the selection of Home Economics. In this paper, Jenny O'Donoghue and Mary Mullaney report on a strong link between students choosing Home Economics and having had exposure to the subject prior to having to make the decision. I could not help but make links between this paper and the previous paper by Mullaney et al—how interconnected are they? Does the less than desirable role model teacher impact on the student choosing Home Economics?

Also featured in this Issue are the first of the keynote and plenary addresses from the IFHE World Congress, held in Lucerne, Switzerland this year. While more than 1000 Home Economists were in attendance, many others in our profession could not be there. All keynote and plenary papers were published as a book for delegates, and these papers will be reprinted progressively over the next Issues of the IJHE, in the order in which they were presented at Congress. This will make the important messages from the presentations more widely available to all home economists internationally. The theme of the Congress, **Home Economics: Reflecting the past; creating the future**, was embedded in the presentations at the Congress. The Congress celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) and looked ahead to the future years of the professional body and the field of study it represents. The title of the conference and the subsequent thematic directions served to focus home economists and allied professionals on the questions of sustainability, advocacy and the active creation of preferred futures for

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Home Economics, relevant disciplinary fields, and the profession itself, while critically reflecting upon and being informed by its historical roots.

There were two key themes for the Congress:

1. Reflecting on the Past—this conference theme was significant given the 100 year celebration of IFHE.
2. Creating the Future—this conference theme provided the opportunity for developing the attributes associated with sustainability, advocacy and the active creation of preferred futures. Applications of key factors impacting on the field, along with disciplinary areas served as the focus for application in the addresses. The overall approach was developmental over the duration of the Congress.

The final section of this issue of IJHE is the review of two books relevant to Home Economics that were recently published. The first is the 100 year history of IFHE, launched at the Congress. Reviewed thoroughly by Sue McGregor, this book is mandatory reading for all professional home economists. The second book review submitted by Suzanne Piscopo provides insights into the first of a series of four books by James McIntosh.

### **IJHE processes**

I remind readers that the aim of IFHE is to achieve the highest quality in this e-journal. To realize that goal, there is a need to continue to refine and develop our processes. The e-journal requires: a prominent international editorial board; high quality submissions; a thorough and comprehensive review process; a high quality finish. This issue retains the high caliber editorial board, comprising the executive members of IFHE prior to Council in July 2008.

### **Editorial board membership**

I invite you to submit an Expression of Interest for Membership of the IJHE Editorial Board. Please provide a brief résumé providing the following information: qualifications; professional employment experience; publications record; editorial board experience; IFHE region membership; Home Economics fields of expertise. Please ensure the Criteria for Board Membership listed below are met prior to submitting your application to avoid disappointment. A maximum of 5 pages is required, submitted to: [Editor@IFHEJournal.org](mailto:Editor@IFHEJournal.org).

### **Criteria for editorial board membership**

- Must be a productive and respected researcher with expertise in one or more research methodologies and one or more Home Economics specialisations.
- Must have a background in research including academic preparation (minimum Masters degree) and have published in refereed journals.
- Must have current membership of IFHE or willingness to join during tenure on the Editorial Board.

The e-journal can only be a high quality enterprise if we make it happen. I look forward to your contributions to this vision.

Donna Pendergast, PhD  
Editor, IJHE

# Home Economics in higher education: Enhancing student learning and promoting responsible student behavior

Martha Dallmeyer, G. Kevin Randall, Nina Collins

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## Abstract

*Numerous challenges exist for Home Economics/Family and Consumer Sciences Departments and their universities. For universities, one challenge is the promotion of responsible social behavior by students, especially in light of the abuse and overconsumption of alcohol so often associated with the new found freedoms on campus. For HE/FCS Departments, high construction costs and maintenance expenses associated with a quantity foods laboratory often result in food service students working at various sites off campus to gain needed experience, leading to lack of consistency in student experience and reduced oversight by faculty. This paper illustrates how HE/FCS food service courses can benefit not only the department and its majors, but also can support and strengthen the university's comprehensive alcohol action plan—ultimately enhancing the educational experience for students university wide.*

## Home Economics in higher education: enhancing student learning and promoting responsible student behavior

Creating opportunities for students to experience learning at various levels within the “real world” is a challenge to higher education units with limited resources. This, we believe, creates an ideal context for Family and Consumer Sciences departments (HE/FCS hereafter). One of the aims of the International Federation for Home Economics is to “Provide opportunities through practice, research and professional sharing that lead to improving the quality of everyday life for individuals, families and households worldwide” ([www.ifhe.org/34.html](http://www.ifhe.org/34.html)). According to Anderson and Nickols (2001),

*...from the very beginning of family and consumer sciences, practitioners and friends of the field have discussed and debated what content should comprise our body of knowledge.... The body of knowledge includes unique concepts that integrate the study of individual, family and community systems throughout the life course in the context of concerns and trends (pp. 14-15).*

Higher education has been called upon to foster critical analysis of social issues within its curriculum (Antonaros, Barnhardt, Holsapple, Moronski, & Vergoth, 2008; Taylor, 2008). For universities, one of the challenges is the promotion of responsible social behavior by students, especially with the opportunities for abuse and overconsumption of alcohol. This abusive behaviour, often begun in high school, could expand rapidly with the new found freedoms for the university student and may lead to tragic results on campus (Schaffer, Jeglic, & Stanley, 2008; Spoth, Randall, Trudeau, Shin, & Redmond, 2008). Planning experiences for university students to see directly how their major can impact the well-being

of their peers is sometimes difficult to achieve. In keeping with Boyer's (1990) call for the integration and application of knowledge, Anderson and Nickols (2001) suggested that units of HE/FCS should enjoy a firm foothold on today's campus because the curriculum's strength is the integration and application of knowledge. This paper illustrates how HE/FCS food service courses can benefit not only the department and its majors, but also can support and strengthen the university's comprehensive alcohol action plan—ultimately enhancing the educational experience for students university wide.

### **A shared mission: The department and university**

First, HE/FCS Department couched its mission and vision within that of Bradley University, a private comprehensive university in the mid-western United States. The University's mission included an emphasis on engaging students in learning through teamwork and leadership opportunities, group projects and collaboration with faculty on research and creative production, and a similar call for collaborative involvement by students and faculty with business, cultural, and other entities that provide benefits to the community. The Department's vision statement is to offer

*... a local and global focus, empowering graduates to respond to diverse and complex family and consumer issues. It is the department of choice for those studying the interaction of family systems, the relationship between individuals and their environment, and the global influence on well-being and the community (www.bradley.edu/academics/ehs/family/vision.shtml).*

It is the Department's aim that graduates will have gained the skills to live out this mission within their chosen careers.

### **The call for responsible student behavior**

Second and tragically, the University suffered two alcohol-related deaths during the 2007-08 academic year. In direct response to these tragedies, as well as other concerns related to alcohol misuse, the President charged a task force to develop a Comprehensive Alcohol Action Plan (Bradley University, 2008). This plan states,

*There are two aspects to changing student behavior with regard to alcohol consumption: building a positive community and empowering student leaders. Building a positive community suggests that the University provide opportunities for students to join communities (or social groups) that have a common factor that attracts and maintains student affiliation (p. 4).*

One specific part of this plan includes the following,

*Late night programming is used, in part, on some campuses as a strategy for changing the campus environment regarding alcohol use and abuse... Late night events are great opportunities for students to interact socially with each other in a safe and alcohol-free atmosphere on campus. The overall goal is to cultivate a more positive campus environment for students (p. 24).*

A multi-faceted approach for preventing and treating campus alcohol concerns has been recommended (DeJong & Langford, 2002; Johannessen, Glider, Collins, Hueston & DeJong, 2001) and involves multiple levels of influence (e.g., individual factors, group processes, institutional and community factors, and public policy). Although a week-end intervention program is not new (Narayan, Steele-Johnson, Delgado & Cole, 2007; Siegal & Cole, 2003), including an academic department in intervention is a new approach to a perennial problem for colleges and universities. As a result of this call for action and the supporting empirical evidence in the literature, the HE/FCS Department found itself ideally prepared to serve the University and its students.

### **Initiating a partnership: The department, the university, and corporate food service**

Students in the HE/FCS Department, with the exception of those majoring in retail merchandising, enroll in food service courses. However, because of construction and maintenance expense, the department does not have a quantity foods laboratory. Unfortunately in the past, students enrolled in food service courses worked in various sites off campus to gain needed food service experience. This resulted in lack of consistency in student experience, and reduced oversight by HE/FCS faculty.

Food services at Bradley are contracted to Eurest Dining Services, a subsidiary of the international Compass Group PLC, headquartered in London. Within this corporation, over 360,000 food service professionals are employed worldwide in more than 90 countries throughout Continental and Eastern Europe, North and South America, South Africa and Asia as well as the United Kingdom. Eurest Dining Services is the corporate dining leader and provides food services to most of the Fortune 500 companies in the United States. Currently, Eurest Dining Services has a 63 year continuous contract for food services at Bradley University. This is the longest continuous education division contract in the food service industry in the United States. During each academic year, a minimum of 5000 people per day are served in the six food service operations on the Bradley University campus.

In order to promote positive, non-alcoholic environments conducive to social interactions for week-end late nights on campus, the University converted a former cafeteria into a coffee house type of setting. The challenge for Eurest was how to have students “buy in” to this situation. The HE/FCS Department was approached by the Director of Eurest Dining Services at Bradley, inviting oversight of this new facility. Clearly, the creation of this new on-campus late night food service operation supported the HE/FCS mission, “providing opportunity through practice, research about student preferences, and professional sharing” (Bradley University Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, 2008) with other departments and units on campus, leading to improved quality of life for students. Collaboration in projects to assist learning is supported by numerous studies (Henry, 2004; Zlotkowski, 1998). Henry suggests that collaborations have several benefits including the opportunity to build beneficial partnerships. Requirements in two courses, Food Service Systems, and Management in Food Service, were added as a result of this initiative, and students were exposed to the process of developing a food service system—an actual operation developed and implemented by students for students. The potential for Eurest Dining Services to see the HE/FCS

Department as an integral part of their operation on Bradley's campus, in addition to the role played by the late night food service operation as part of the campus-wide plan to mitigate alcohol abuse, could provide essential future-proofing for the HE/FCS Department (IFHE, 2008).

### **Implementing a late-night food service operation**

As students learned about food service systems, the planning and development of this late night foodservice in a university residence hall began to evolve. This process began with the identification of inputs and the branding of the facility. Students enrolled in Food Service Systems, began by naming the food service facility to complement the adjacent student lounge. A contest was held to name a facility that would attract students as a fun place to "hang out." Each student submitted possible names for the facility along with a corresponding logo and uniform suggestion. The Eurest Dining Services staff selected the winning name and rewarded the students by providing credit at the university bookstore for each winning student entry. The name selected was *Lydia's Late Night*. Lydia Moss Bradley was the founder of this private university. After the University President approved the name, a picture of the founder was placed in the new food service operation. HE/FCS students developed a logo to coordinate with the name and suggested uniforms consisting of black t-shirts with the logo *Lydia's* with a moon and stars on the front. A glowing *Late Night* and numerous glowing stars were printed on the back of the t-shirts. Staff will wear black baseball caps with *Lydia's* and stars glowing on the front of the cap.

Eurest Dining Services assisted with the menu planning process by providing a basic skeleton menu. HE/FCS students identified food items that would coordinate with the different types of activities occurring in the adjacent student lounge such as tacos, nachos, churros, and other similar food items for a Hispanic culture evening. This assignment was followed by each team of two students developing the specific menu suggestions from the list submitted by the rest of the class. Each team of students learned to cost their menu items and evaluate vendor sources. Next, each team staffed *Lydia's Late Night* for the selected weekend of co-managing with Eurest Dining staff by scheduling their classmates for two hours of laboratory experience. The required laboratory experience for each student varied each week.

Additional needs for staff in this late night food service operation included an orientation and training sessions for staff. HE/FCS students identified training needs for the class; these included sanitation, equipment utilization, procedural training, food production training, service training, and opening and closing of the operation. Students who had not completed a Food Service Managers Sanitation Certification recognized by the State of Illinois Department of Public Health were required to complete the online training and successfully pass the state examination before the first laboratory experience in the food service operation. Very few of the students had experience with using food service equipment. Required laboratory experiences focused on how to use and clean all food service equipment were added. Each student learned Eurest Dining Services facilities' policies, procedures, and food production processes. Food Service Systems Course participated in an orientation to *Lydia's Late Night* food service and subsequent training on serving customers. During the fall semester in the *Lydia's Late Night* food service operation, all students had at least one early laboratory experience—opening a food service operation—and one late laboratory experience—closing a

food service operation. Throughout the fall semester, students compiled a personal evaluation journal, comparing and contrasting the student operation, *Lydia's Late Night*, to textbook information in food service systems.

During the spring semester, students in the Management of Food Service course will continue to utilize the student food service operation, *Lydia's Late Night*, to apply food service system concepts related to management, marketing, financial management, inventory management, service, and system outputs. Throughout this guided, applied experience, students in these courses will collaborate with Eurest Dining Services, University Student Activities, Residential Living staff, Multicultural Student Services staff, peers across campus, and with a variety of University departments and other administrative units.

HE/FCS students who work in *Lydia's Late Night* will have experienced creating a place that promotes the well-being of their peers through the provision of a non-alcoholic alternative to on and off campus drinking—a fun place. This has provided the department with a quantity foods laboratory that will be maintained and upgraded by a worldwide food service company and will not require departmental resources. Overall, this plan provides a curriculum initiative to support the important foundation, knowledge and skills for the foods, nutrition and dietetics students in food service, and also creates a laboratory for students to promote responsible social behavior on campus. According to Anderson and Nickols (2001), "...school and work create transition points for individuals as they develop" (p. 16). The initiative described in this paper shows how courses within a curriculum can provide students with expected knowledge in every food service course, but also can expose students to the many layers of opportunities within an eco-system consisting of a university's priorities, a department's curriculum requirements, and the intersection of the heart of HE/FCS: the individual's well-being and community vitality (Anderson & Nickols).

## Summary

The new late night food service operation serves all university students nine weekends each semester. HE/FCS students divided into two-student teams to plan a designated three night laboratory experiences with associated menus. Students were involved in the programming, and in developing theme-based foods to reflect the activities planned by Student Activities, Residential Living, or the Multicultural Student Services. These programs included cultural nights, popular student nights with bands, game nights, craft nights, movie nights, live comedian entertainment nights, and special celebrations such as homecoming, parents' weekend, Halloween, and holiday celebration weekends.

This collaboration provides an enhanced academic experience, as well as opportunity for HE/FCS students to impact their campus community and enhance the well-being of individual students on their campus. In addition, students who complete these courses will see the HE/FCS four dimensions or areas of practice (i.e., academic discipline, every day living, curriculum area, and societal arena to influence and develop policy (IFHE, 2008)) promoting university policy, departmental curriculum goals, and student well-being. In sum, the development of this new campus late night food service operation a) supported the FCS mission, and solved a problem of providing a quantity food service laboratory for students—without any departmental expenditure; b) supported the university mission regarding the

multifaceted development of students to enable them to become leaders, innovators, and productive members of society by requiring teamwork and leadership through group projects and collaboration with faculty on research and creative production; and c) created a unique response to the University's comprehensive alcohol action plan.

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## Biographies

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# Findings from a 4-year longitudinal study: *The professional implications of the nutrition and lifestyle knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of student Home Economics teachers*

By Mary Isobelle Mullaney, Clare A. Corish, Andrew Loxley

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this study was to investigate the nutrition and lifestyle knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of a group of Irish student Home Economics teachers over their four year professional Bachelor in Education (Home Economics) degree programme. Nutritional knowledge was measured yearly using an adapted version of the test devised by Parmenter and Wardle (1999). Food, alcohol consumption and exercise were measured using a 7-day reported dietary/exercise diary. Nutrient intake data were determined using (WISP©) dietary analysis. Anthropometric data were collected and body mass index calculated.*

*When starting college, student Home Economics teachers had broadly similar anthropometric, dietary and lifestyle characteristics to those of their contemporaries. The mean body mass index was identical (24.4 (SD 4.3) kg/m<sup>2</sup>) to that reported in the North South Ireland Food Consumption Survey (Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance, 2001) for females aged 18-35 years. Thirty-eight percent were overweight or obese versus 33.6 % in the 2001 survey and 41% in the most recent Survey of Lifestyle, Attitudes and Nutrition (2007). Many students had inadequate intakes of key nutrients, one in three students smoked (16 of 48) and alcohol consumption was high. Only one student was very active. These findings did not vary significantly over the course of the study though the level of activity decreased significantly.*

*While knowledge test results increased significantly from a mean of 55% (SD 8%) to 67% by Year 4, an increase in knowledge was not linked to behavioural change. Students had a positive attitude towards their role as future role models though only 65% of them indicated that they were pursuing the career of their choice.*

## Introduction

*No printed word, nor spoken plea can teach young minds what they should be. Not all the books on all the shelves—but what the teachers are themselves.*

*Rudyard Kipling.*

The nutrition and lifestyle behaviours of future Home Economics teachers is worthy of investigation for two reasons. Firstly, a case is often made that dietary and associated lifestyle behaviour problems could be tackled if pupils were exposed to both the theoretical information and practical skills contained in Home Economics (St. Angela's College, 2006). Food preparation skills (the lack of which are often identified as an obstacle to a healthy diet) are developed during the undergraduate Bachelor of Education (Home Economics) programme. If this hypothesis is correct, those who pursue a career in Home Economics could be expected to have better than average dietary and lifestyle behaviours and those in preparation for that role could be expected to move closer to this ideal. Secondly, as teachers, these students will

model their dietary and lifestyle behaviours for second level pupils and will teach curricular content related to nutrition and lifestyle.

There is often an assumption that providing people with the information necessary to choose healthy foods will ultimately lead to an improvement in diet. Harnack et al., (1997) and Wardle et al., (2000) showed that knowledge was an important factor in explaining variations in food choice. However, several other studies have failed to establish a link between nutrition knowledge and food intake (Axelson et al., 1985; Shepherd & Stockley, 1987; Shepherd & Towler, 1992; Stafleu et al., 1996). It may be argued that specific types of knowledge are more linked to behaviours than others (Worsley, 2002) and that many factors affect both food choice (Shepherd, 2002; Buttriss et al., 2004) and the application of knowledge to everyday life. A similar situation pertains to physical activity and smoking, with many studies failing to establish links between knowledge and participation in physical activity or smoking habits (Jones et al., 1992). This student group shares many similar characteristics and, therefore, variables such as gender, age, educational level and food availability were controlled for, facilitating exploration into the links between nutrition knowledge and dietary behaviour.

However, consideration must also be given to the conflict which could occur between the effect of increasing knowledge and the transition from home to college life. This transition may facilitate the development of poor dietary habits and physical activity patterns leading to weight gain (Hovell et al., 1985; Senekal et al., 1988; Levitsky et al., 2004). This is perhaps due to changed living arrangements (Jones et al., 1992; Brevard et al., 1996), limited budgets, availability of high-fat/high-energy foods, increased alcohol consumption, smoking initiation, lack of cooking skills, weight reducing diets and meal skipping (Braddon et al., 1986; Williamson et al., 1990; Burke & Bild, 1996; Grace, 1997; Roberts, 2001; Gaffney et al., 2002; Beasley et al., 2004; Shankar et al., 2004; American Dietetic Association, 2006).

The expectation that all involved in health promotion should model good practice is controversial (Veach & Cissell, 1999), as on equality grounds an overweight/underweight teacher could be considered to have as much right to the profession as a teacher within a healthy body mass index (BMI) range. He/she may indeed be a better teacher. In spite of this, Benz-Scott & Black (1999a) consider that following a specified healthy lifestyle should form part of a code of ethics for all involved in health education. They are adamant that 'the influence of a message can be significantly diminished when there is a disparity between what the messenger recommends and the professional's own behaviour' (1999b, p. 610). Capwell et al., (2000) discussed this idea in their paper on the *Development of a Unified Code of Ethics for the Health Education Profession*. The idea of the importance of role modelling is based on the work of psychologist Albert Bandura (1977) on social learning theory. We learn through imitation, particularly of those we admire (Blomquist, 1986) with the notion that models are one of the most important pedagogical agents in the history of education (Bucher, 1997) being widely acknowledged. Teacher education manuals advise us that 'when what is said comes in conflict with what is done, pupils are more likely to follow the example' (Cohen et al., 2004, p. 186). This puts a large onus on the teacher and requires discussion as to whether we can ask more of teachers than of others by encouraging them to live by the values they espouse. While we do not think that a healthy BMI should be a prerequisite to teaching, nor an indicator of an effective teacher, it could be argued that health educators have a special responsibility to be positive health role models by fulfilling their health potential and modelling the healthiest behaviours of which they are capable. Indeed, this has been the subject of previous research (Glover, 1978; Nakamura & Lescault, 1983; Brandon & Evans, 1988; Clarke et al., 1988; Whitley et al., 1988; Jenkins & Olsen, 1994; Cardinal, 1995; Benz Scott & Black, 1999b; Davis, 1999; Veach & Cissell, 1999; Dinger et al., 2000; Poulsen et al., 2002). Teachers have been found to

be a powerful influence for promoting exercise to their students (Drummond et al., 2002). The importance of role modelling has been widely accepted concerning nurses and doctors role in health promotion. Recent studies advocate the importance of including self health as part of nursing education in order to improve professional practice (Clément et al., 2002; Stark et al., 2005). 'Nurses need to take more responsibility for practicing positive health behaviours' (Shriver & Scott-Stiles, 2000). Doctors are also encouraged to be more active so that they will pass on this experience to patients (Rogers et al., 2005). The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (1996) in the USA has seen fit to issue guidelines for school health programmes to promote lifelong healthy eating for staff and students. The influence of school is viewed as going beyond the classroom and including normative messages from peers and adults regarding foods and eating patterns. Pupils are more likely to receive a strong, consistent message when healthy eating is promoted through a comprehensive school health programme which includes role models for healthy eating (Young, 2005). The challenge of pursuing a healthier lifestyle is one which, therefore, merits discussion among Home Economics teachers in order to maintain credibility in the light of the dietary problems of society, particularly as the dietary habits of childhood and adolescence have been shown to continue to adulthood (Brown et al., 2000; Hamilton et al., 2000). The problem is to what extent any health professional is prepared to change their lifestyle to more faithfully reflect their professional role (McMahon, 1984).

A number of previous studies have explored the health behaviour of health educators such as Jenkins and Olsen's (1994) national survey in the USA, while Nakamura and Lescault (1983) focused on California. Kubik et al., (2002) examined classroom food practices and eating behaviour of middle school teachers from 16 schools in the Western USA. All these studies found that many educators did not model healthy behaviour. O'Dea and Abraham (2001) investigated the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours related to weight control, eating disorders, and body image in Australian trainee HE and PE teachers. They found participants held misconceptions and would give inaccurate advice to adolescents wanting to lose weight. Female trainee HE teachers were seen to have a poor body image and disordered eating, similar to young women in Western countries in general. While it would appear that HE teachers are ideally placed to provide accurate nutrition information to pupils; act as positive role models; mediate children's food, nutrition and weight concerns (Mooney et al., 2004); promote self-esteem and interpret media messages (O'Dea & Abraham, 2001), little is known about the nutritional behaviour, knowledge and attitudes of these teachers in Ireland. This study also explored prospective HE teachers' attitudes to role modelling.

## Methods

The research was approached from a post positive perspective using an iterative approach and a number of instruments. Students who commenced study in the two colleges offering Home Economics teacher preparation in Ireland in 2004 were surveyed over the four years of their degree courses. Nutrition and lifestyle knowledge and behaviours were measured each year of the study. Attitudes were measured in Year 1 and 4. Food consumption and nutrient intake patterns were explored through a '1 week' food and exercise diary (IUNA, 2001). This method is appropriate for use in highly literate motivated populations (Bingham et al., 1994). Dietary data were analysed using the Weighed Intake Software Package (WISP©) (Tinuviel Software, Warrington, UK), to ascertain mean daily macronutrient, dietary fibre and micronutrient intakes. The activity level of this group was measured using a self-reported diary in which respondents described the activity they participated in daily, the level of intensity and the duration during one week (adapted from the instruments used in national and international surveys (Health Promotion Unit, 2003: Institute of European Food Studies, 1999)). Anthropometric measurements including weight, height and waist circumference were taken

following WHO guidelines (WHO, 1995). A sample of practicing teachers was also measured in order to contextualise the findings from the main study. Demographic information was also collected. Nutritional knowledge was measured using the nutrition knowledge test of Parmenter and Wardle (1999) adapted to students of nutrition within a BEd (HE) programme. This test was piloted with groups of Home Economics undergraduates in years 2, 3 and 4 of the course, a group of primary school student teachers and a group of human nutrition and dietetics students in order to establish its validity and internal consistency. Attitudes were measured using a modified version of *the Pan-EU Survey on consumer attitudes to physical activity, body-weight and health* (IEFS, 1999). A further Professional Image Questionnaire was distributed prior to course completion which investigated students' attitude to HE and to their future role. Questions based on a Likert scale were used to measure attitude to healthy eating and lifestyle, values recorded were coded negative to positive and a total numerical and percentage value arrived at in relation to each topic. A brief interview also took place upon completion of the study to give feedback to the students and ask about the effect, if any, of study participation.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS©) Version 12 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL) was used to input and import data and analyse results. Nutrient intakes and anthropometric data were compared with those recommended by the FSAI (1999) and with the NSIFCS (IUNA, 2001), with particular emphasis on macronutrients and key micronutrients identified as important to females aged 18-35yrs. The nutrition and lifestyle behaviours observed in the student group were compared with NSIFCS (IUNA, 2001), SLAN (HPU, 2003) and CLAN (HPU, 2005) using descriptive statistics. Possible associations between behaviour, knowledge and attitudes were explored using Spearman's Rank Order Correlations.

In order to explore if associations exist between dietary and lifestyle behaviours and students' knowledge and attitudes towards nutrition and healthy lifestyle practices on entry to college, a minimum level of nutrient intake of those nutrients identified as important for Irish females in this age group was identified and students achieving these minimum standards were categorised for the purposes of this study as 'compliant eaters'. The Lower Reference Nutrient Intake value (LRNI) (COMA, 1991) was used to establish the cut off points (Table 1) as these minimum values only cover 2.5% of the population and deficiency is probable below this level of intake. The lower end (12g/d) of the recommended range for dietary fibre was selected (COMA, 1991).

Table 1 Thresholds used to define compliant eaters

Nutrient	Cut off point (min levels)
Total Fat*	< 33% of total energy
Dietary Fibre*	≥ 12g
Calcium**	≥ 430mg
Iron**	≥ 7.5mg
Folate**	≥ 160µg
Vitamin C**	≥ 32mg

\*(COMA, 1991), \*\* (FSAI, 1999)

## Results

Data were collected from 51 (all but one who declined to participate) undergraduate BEd HE students in February 2004 from the two colleges in Ireland offering this course and each subsequent February for the course duration. All who were admitted on the courses through the Central Applications Office (CAO) had achieved a minimum of 420 points in the leaving certificate examination plus satisfied matriculation requirements for the Irish Universities (TCD and NUI) (with the exception of 2 mature students who had met mature entry requirements). All but one student had studied Home Economics at second level. All were female and 96% ( $n=49$ ) were aged 18-22 years. Seventy-nine percent ( $n=38$ ) were from social classes I, II, or III (Central Statistics Office (CSO) census classification, 2007). The numbers varied slightly from year to year due to the number of students in the year group and illness.

### Anthropometric data

Anthropometric data were gathered from 50 students in Year 1. The mean BMI was 24.4 kg/m<sup>2</sup> (SD 4.3), identical to that reported in those of similar age and gender by IUNA (2001). Overweight (BMI 25-29.9 kg/m<sup>2</sup>) or obesity (BMI  $\geq 30$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>) was observed in 38% ( $n=19$ ) of this group. Mean waist measurement was 76cm (SD 8.67); however, 13 of the group had a waist measurement greater than 80cm putting them at greater risk of a number of chronic metabolic disorders. There was no significant change in these findings throughout the study. Table 2 presents the BMI categories as identified in Year 1 and 4.

Table 2 BMI categories of HE teachers, student HE teachers and North South Ireland Food Consumption Survey

BMI	NSIFCS* $n=265$	HE Teachers $n=61$	Students Year 1 $n=50$	Students Year 4 $n=49$
% Underweight	2.3	0	2	4.1
% Normal weight	64.2	50.8	60	59.2
% Over weight	24.5	31.1	28	24.5
% Obese	9.1	18.0	10	12.2

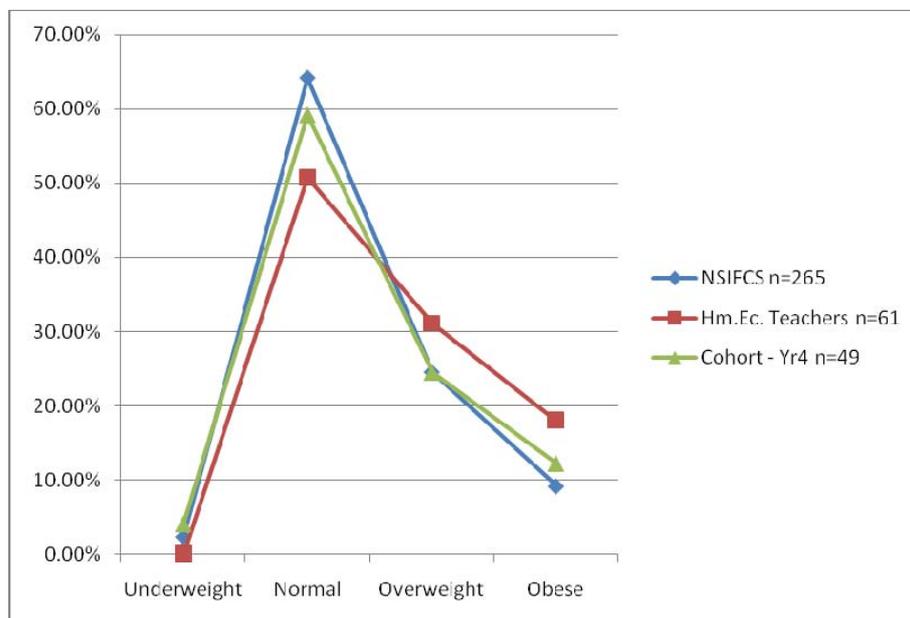
\*NSIFCS, North South Ireland Food Consumption Survey (IUNA, 2001).

$n$ = Number of respondents ( $n$  for student group differed slightly from Yr 1-4 as 3 left course and 3 rejoined)

To investigate if the anthropometric data observed in this study were reflective only of student life, the BMI of a group of practicing HE teachers was also ascertained. Weights and measures were obtained from 61 teachers and the results are presented in Table 2. Of the 75 eligible teachers attending an Association of Teachers of HE branch meeting, almost half were overweight (BMI  $> 25$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>) or obese (BMI  $\geq 30$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>) (49.1%,  $n=30$ ). A higher percentage of the teachers were found to be in the overweight and obese categories than in SLAN (HPU, 2003a) and NSIFCS (IUNA, 2001) (Table 2) but all the teachers were not in the 18-35 year age group. They represent a broader age range (22-65 years) and therefore the HE teachers' BMI data may have been more appropriately compared with the findings of age 36+ from NSIFCS (IUNA, 2001). The teachers' age was not sought as it was thought too personal in addition to weight and height and may have limited participation further. Even accounting for a 1kg variation, 21 (34%) of the teacher group were classified as overweight or obese. This is in line with findings

from NSIFCS (IUNA, 2001) where 33.6% of women aged 18- 35 years were classified as overweight or obese, and indicates that the teacher group behaviour is at best similar to their contemporaries and possibly worse. Figure 1 based on the data in Table 2, displays the comparison of BMI in the student group, the HE teachers and participants in NSIFCS (IUNA, 2001). The results are seen to be broadly similar.

Figure 1 Comparison of teacher and student BMIs with the findings from NSIFCS (IUNA, 2001)



## Dietary intake

Dietary diaries were obtained from 48 students in Year 1. Underreporting of energy intake is a common problem in dietary studies. The Modified Schofield equation (COMA, 1991) was used to identify individuals with an EI/BMR below 1.1 and these were categorised as under reporters and their data excluded from dietary analysis (as described in the NSIFCS [IUNA, 2001]). This left a total of 35, 36, 37, 42 dietary diaries respectively in each year. The percentage underreporting is compatible with other studies (Gregory et al., 1990; Price et al., 1997; Becker et al, 1999; McGowan et al., 2001). Fewer students underreported as the study progressed. Proportionally more participants deemed to have underreported were in the overweight and obese BMI categories as is also an established trend (McKenzie, 2002). Of those deemed to record their diets accurately in Year 1, 71% were in the normal range of BMI compared with only 31% of under reporters.

The mean daily intakes of macronutrients across the four years compared to findings in the NSIFCS (IUNA, 2001) are shown in Table 3. Student Home Economics teachers had significantly higher energy intakes ( $P < 0.5$ ) than those reported in the NSIFCS although there was no significant difference in percentage energy derived from fat or carbohydrate. This is explained by the fact that under-reporters were excluded from this study. The participants in this study had a significantly lower percentage energy ( $P=0.003$ ) derived from protein. The respondents in both studies had a percentage energy intake derived from carbohydrate lower than recommended (FSAI, 1999) with a corresponding higher than recommended percentage energy derived from fat and protein.

Table 3 Macronutrients, energy, sugars and alcohol. Year 1-4 with reference to Recommended Dietary Allowances and North South Ireland Food Consumption Survey for females aged 18-35 years

	RDA	NSIFCS		Year 1 Baseline mean		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		<i>n</i> =27	<i>n</i> =27
		Mean (SD) <i>n</i> =269	Mean (SD) % of total energy	Mean (SD) <i>n</i> =35	Mean (SD) % of total energy	Mean (SD) <i>n</i> =36	Mean (SD) % of total energy	Mean (SD) <i>n</i> =37	Mean (SD) % of total energy	Mean (SD) <i>n</i> =42	Mean (SD) % of total energy	Year 1-4 <i>P</i>	change in % total energy <i>P</i>
Energy (kcal/day)	2150-2300*	1848 (473)		2171 (422)		1987 (311)		2022 (295)		2162 (337)			
Energy (MJ/day)	8.5 with desired body weight and without desired physical activity*	7.7 (2.0)		9.12 (1.77)		8.3 (1.3)		8.5 (1.3)		9.1 (1.4)		0.346♦	
Protein (g)	***50.2g= mean RDA	66.5 (17.5)	14.7 (3.0)	72.7 (16.9)	13.5 (2.27)	67.9 (13.98)	13.8 (2.5)	70.1 (14.4)	13.9 (2.3)	75.7 (12.7)	14.2 (2.4)	0.021♦	0.045
Fat (g)	≤ 33% of total energy**	74.8 (24.2)	36.1 (5.4)	88.2 (26.1)	36.2 (6.4)	79.4 (17.0)	35.9 (4.5)	81.5 (17.6)	36.2 (5.1)	79.3 (17.5)	33.1 (5.6)	0.265	0.005♦
CHO (g)	≥ 47% of total energy**	217.9 (59.9)	44.4 (5.7)	263.8 (44.2)	45.1 (6.89)	242.1 (40.72)	43.9 (4.7)	246.3 (41.6)	43.7 (5.2)	280.2 (57.0)	46.8 (6.6)	0.132	0.263
Sugars (g)		83.9 (33.9)	not incl.	114.7 (27.52)	20.21 (4.95)	97.6 (29.39)	18.5 (4.9)	102.2 (25.48)	19.1 (4.5)	132.8 (43.1)	23.0 (5.9)	0.003♦	0.020
Alcohol (g)				13.3 (18.8)	3.9 (5.8)	11.7 (16.5)	4.4 (5.1)	8.3 (8.1)	3.2 (3)	13.4 (20.6)	4.1 (5.6)	0.468♦	0.222♦
Alcohol <sup>■</sup> / (g) (consumers)				<i>n</i> =32 19.9 (19.9)		<i>n</i> =35 16.1 (17.4)		<i>n</i> =38 10.7 (7.6)		<i>n</i> =35 18.7 (22.3)		0.257♦	

\*RDA, Recommended Dietary Allowance (satisfies 97.5% of the population), (FSAI, 1999).

■= reported consumers including under-reporters.

*n*= Number of respondents.

\*\* (COMA, 1991)

\*\*\*0.75g/kg of body weight; mean body weight = 66.9kg.

CHO, carbohydrate. Sugars are a sub-set of CHO.

♦Friedman Test. Significance = *P*<0.05.

Table 4 Mean daily intakes of micronutrients Year 1-4 comparison with North South Ireland Food Consumption Survey and recommended intakes.

	EAR	RDA	RNI*	<i>NSIFCS</i> Women, 18-35yrs <i>n=269</i>	Baseline data <i>n=35</i>	Year 2 <i>n=36</i>	Year 3 <i>n=37</i>	Year 4 <i>n=42</i>	<i>n=27</i>
Vitamin	COMA (1993)	FSAI (1999)	WHO/FAO (2002)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Sig <i>P</i>
Retinol (µg)		-		475 (528)	326 (152)	357 (231)	329 (148)	378 (275)	0.823♦
Carotene (µg)		-		1971 (1496)	2183 (1220)	2079 (1189)	2148 (1676)	2926 (1855)	0.134♦
Vitamin A (re µg)	400	600	600	804 (608)	690 (245.8)	703 (359.4)	686.6 (331.0)	866 (441.8)	0.305♦
Vitamin D (µg)		0-10	5	2.8 (3.1)	2.2 (1.5)	2.73 (2.3)	2.6 (2.3)	2.4 (1.6)	0.228♦
Vitamin E (mg)		-	7.5	8.9 (17.7)	7.4 (3.2)	8.2 (4.6)	7.97 (4.3)	8.5 (3.6)	0.278♦
Thiamin (µg)		100/MJ	1.1	1.8 (2.9)	1.5 (0.4)	2.3 (5.0)	1.6 (0.9)	1.7 (0.6)	0.297♦
Riboflavin (mg)	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.8 (2.6)	1.6 (0.5)	2.5 (5.2)	2.0 (1.1)	2.0 (0.8)	0.057♦
Niacin (mg)		1.6/MJ	16	20.1 (8.6)	21.3 (6.0)	21.3 (8.8)	21.2 (7.3)	22.7 (7.0)	0.104♦
Vitamin B <sub>6</sub> (mg)		.015/g protein	1.2	2.9 (5.2)	2.2 (0.5)	2.9 (5.2)	2.4 (1.9)	2.4 (0.8)	0.406♦
Vitamin B <sub>12</sub> (µg)		1.4	2.4	3.6 (3.1)	4.2 (1.6)	4.6 (4.5)	4.1 (1.8)	4.5 (1.8)	0.279♦
Folate (µg)	140	300	400	247 (120)	244 (83)	262 (139)	251 (95)	310 (142)	0.626♦
Vitamin C (mg)	30	60	40	99 (191)	103 (48)	95 (63)	99 (57)	179 (152)	0.388♦
Iron (mg)	10	14		14.3 (19.4)	11.3 (4.9)	12.3 (12.6)	11.9 (5.1)	12.4 (4.4)	0.037♦
Calcium (mg)	550	800		714 (312)	839 (243)	795 (255)	912 (388)	950 (277)	0.027♦

RDA= Recommended Dietary Allowance (satisfies 97.5% of the population).

RNI= Reference Nutrient Intake (satisfies 97.5% of the population) therefore mean consumption below these levels do not necessarily indicate deficiency.

EAR= Estimated Average Requirements (satisfies 50% of the population).

re= retinol equivalents.

♦ Friedman Test.

Significance =  $P \leq 0.05$ .

*n*= Number of respondents.

In keeping with the data on 18-35 year old females in NSIFCS (IUNA, 2001), the mean daily intake of dietary fibre (reported as non-starch polysaccharide) was low (12.2g (SD 2.8)) in this study versus 11.8g (SD 4.1) in NSIFCS. Only one student achieved the recommended intake (COMA, 1991) of 18g NSP/day. This increased to three students in year 4 or 50% who achieved the minimum threshold of 12g/day as specified by COMA (1991).

The mean daily intakes of micronutrients across the four years compared to findings in the NSIFCS (IUNA, 2001) are shown in Table 4. Vitamin intakes are of particular concern to young females as they may be at risk of deficiency (IUNA, 2001). Their intake levels did not differ significantly over the course of the study. Folate's role in the prevention of neural tube defects and the recommendation from the FSAI (1999) that anyone capable of becoming pregnant should take a dietary supplement of 400µg/d in addition to dietary folate highlights the importance of this vitamin for this age group. In Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively, 3, 5, 4 and 1 student/s did not reach the EAR of 140 µg for folate. Fifty percent ( $n=21$ ) of the student group (accurate reporters) did not have an intake of 300µg of folate per day in Year 4. As shown, the mean daily intake of folate for three out of the four years, was lower than the RDA of 300µg.

Vitamin C is also of concern because of its role in non-haem iron absorption but intakes were adequate in this group of students. Vitamin D is important for bone health as it improves the utilisation of calcium and phosphorous supplied in food (Briggs & Calloway, 1979; De Luca, 2004). This group consumed significantly less Vitamin D in Year 1 ( $P=0.023$ ) than the NSIFCS sample though this may not be a problem as Vitamin D is synthesised in the body with sufficient exposure to sunlight. However, according to the 'Recommendations for a National Policy on Vitamin D Supplementation for Infants in Ireland' published by the FSAI (2007), Ireland's northerly latitude means that Vitamin D production from sunlight is severely compromised, and there is some evidence that sub-optimal levels of Vitamin D in Ireland are widespread (FSAI, 2007).

The mean daily intake of iron and calcium over the four years are also presented in Table 4. These levels increased significantly throughout the study and while calcium levels appear adequate many; 49% ( $n=17$ ), had intakes which were below the EAR of 10mg/d for iron in Year 1, 64% ( $n=23$ ) in Year 2, 38% ( $n=14$ ) in Year 3 and 31% ( $n=13$ ) in Year 4, indicating that a large number of students did not meet the average iron requirement for their age and gender.

A significantly lower intake of iron was observed in Year 1 in the student group than that observed in the same age group in the NSIFCS ( $P=0.001$ ) with only 23% meeting the RDA for iron. However, the mean daily intake for calcium was significantly higher among the student group than in the NSIFCS ( $P=0.005$ ) although 31% did not achieve the RDA of 800mg.

Based on having achieved the minimum level of intake of those nutrients identified in Table 1, only 20% ( $n=7$ ) were defined as compliant eaters in Year 1; this figure dropped to 8% ( $n=3$ ) in Year 2, but increased and remained at 19% ( $n=7$  &  $n=8$ ) in Years 3 and 4 respectively. It is acknowledged that this does not define optimal eating but rather a low level threshold. Few students ( $n=2$ ) could be regarded as 'compliant eaters' throughout the study, even though the levels of the nutrients specified were set at minimum recommendations (LNRI), not at the RDA or even at the level of EAR which would meet the average needs of 50% of the population.

Table 5 Mean percentage correct answers on the Nutrition knowledge test

		Baseline <i>n</i> =51	Year 2 <i>n</i> =48	Year 3 <i>n</i> =49	Year 4 <i>n</i> =49	
Category	no. of Qs	Mean % (SD)	Mean % (SD)	Mean % (SD)	Mean % (SD)	Significance ( <i>P</i> )***
Correct	220	54 (8)	60 (7)	63 (8)	67 (6)	<u>0.000*</u>
'Don't know' or unsure	220	24 (10)	18 (9)	18 (10)	13 (6)	
CDA	52	62 (8)	66 (9)	70 (8)	75 (8)	<u>0.000*</u>
UOT	29	31 (9)	37 (11)	39 (11)	44 (9)	<u>0.000*</u>
FGC	79	63 (11)	68 (9)	69 (11)	73 (8)	<u>&lt;.05**</u>
Lifestyle	9	40 (13)	51 (17)	51 (14)	56 (14)	<u>0.000*</u>
N&H	32	47 (11)	57 (11)	60 (11)	64 (10)	<u>&lt;0.05**</u>
CF	19	53 (14)	60 (14)	61 (14)	69 (12)	<u>0.000*</u>
Iron	8	51.7 (14.7)	58.8 (14.4)	58.7 (15.8)	63.0 (15.6)	<u>0.008*</u>
Fat	43	59.7 (12.5)	65.6 (11.1)	67.7 (13.4)	72.8 (9.9)	<u>&lt;0.05**</u>
Folate	2	87.3 (26.2)	89.6 (23.0)	87.8 (21.7)	88.8 (21.1)	<u>0.820*</u>
Vitamins	8	61.8 (17.4)	64.3 (14.5)	69.4 (14.9)	73.2 (12.9)	<u>0.000*</u>
Vitamin D	2	44.1 (19.1)	47.9 (20.5)	50.0 (17.7)	50.0 (28.9)	<u>0.540</u>
Vitamin C	3	30.5 (19.9)	31.8 (20.7)	38.7 (19.8)	34.5 (16.7)	<u>0.063*</u>
Calcium & BoneHealth	9	43.5 (17.4)	53.5 (16.7)	51.1 (19.5)	63.9 (14.4)	<u>0.000*</u>
Salt & Sodium	10	62.9 (20.5)	68.8 (13.8)	75.3 (12.9)	82.9 (11.7)	<u>0.000*</u>
Dietary Fibre	21	61.9 (13.6)	66.5 (11.6)	67.2 (12.0)	73.5 (9.5)	<u>0.000*</u>
Cholesterol	7	20.7 (18.4)	27.1 (17.3)	30.4 (19.1)	39.1 (26.8)	<u>0.000*</u>
Energy	15	42.9 (11.9)	42.6 (13.6)	45.1 (13.2)	49.6 (10.2)	<u>0.007*</u>
Sugar	13	66.3 (14.8)	68.8 (13.1)	71.5 (13.2)	74.2 (12.6)	<u>0.011*</u>
CHO	12	67.1 (13.8)	72.2 (11.5)	72.8 (10.4)	74.8 (12.0)	<u>0.006*</u>
Protein	9	66.4 (19.8)	73.4 (17.2)	71.8 (21.4)	78.9 (13.7)	<u>0.000*</u>

\*Friedman Test.

\*\* One way repeated measures ANOVA Wilks' Lambda.

\*\*\*Significance= $P \leq 0.05$ .

CDA= Current dietary advice.

UOT=Understanding of terms.

FGC=Food groups &amp; constituents.

N&amp;H= Nutrition &amp; health.

CF=Choosing foods.

*n*= Number of respondents

No associations were observed between total nutritional knowledge or any individual component of nutritional knowledge as defined within the knowledge test i.e. ‘food choice’, ‘food groups and constituents’, ‘nutritional terms’, ‘knowledge of specific nutrients’ as reported in Table 5 and intakes of energy, fat, dietary fibre, calcium, iron, or folate. Furthermore, no relationship was observed between overall score on the knowledge test and being a ‘compliant eater’ or being in a healthy BMI range.

## Lifestyle practices

Lifestyle practices such as exercise levels, alcohol consumption and smoking were also investigated as they have an effect on nutritional status and health. Respondents were judged active, moderately active or sedentary based on their reported level of activity as shown in Table 6. As this group is composed of college students participating in a course which involves very little physical work, their college day was considered sedentary. Activity was thus reported in terms of leisure time activity. Only one student could be described as very active in year 1, 2 & 4. These findings compare unfavourably with the CLAN survey (HPU, 2005) which reported that 10% of female students were very physically active, 54% were fairly active, 29% were not very active and only 7% were not at all active. Home Economics student teachers spent on average 0.5 hours/week in vigorous activity, significantly less ( $P=0.000$ ) than their contemporaries (1.4 hours/week reported in NSIFCS). The students’ knowledge about the benefits of exercise based on the results of the knowledge test was not associated with their levels of exercise. Their levels of exercise decreased significantly throughout the course of the study.

Table 6 Reported exercise levels Years 1-4.

Definition	Year 1 <i>n</i> =48 <i>n</i> (%)	Year 2 <i>n</i> =48 <i>n</i> (%)	Year 3 <i>n</i> =49 <i>n</i> (%)	Year 4 <i>n</i> =49 <i>n</i> (%)
<b>not very active*</b>				
< 3x30 minutes of strenuous activity per week or < 5x20 minutes mildly strenuous activities per week	18 (37.5)	28 (58.3)	32 (65.3)	31 (63.3)
<b>moderately active*</b>				
3x30 minutes of strenuous activity per week or 5x20 minutes mildly strenuous activities per week	29 (60.4)	19 (39.6)	12 (24.5)	17 (34.7)
<b>very active*</b>				
>3x30 minutes of strenuous activity per week or >5x20 minutes mildly strenuous activities per week	1 (2.1)	1 (2.1)	5 (10.2)	1 (2)

SLÁN (HPU, 2003a). \*Level of leisure time activity. *n*= Number of respondents

As shown in Table 7, alcohol consumption remained high throughout the study. In Year 1, although the mean daily intake of alcohol (13.2g/d (SD 21.1)) appears higher in the student group than the mean daily intake of alcohol reported by the NSIFCS (12.9g/d (SD 15.2)), this

difference is not significant ( $P=0.92$ ). Interestingly, despite underreporting, the mean alcohol consumption for under reporters ( $n=13$ ) was 13.5g/d, slightly higher than the 13.2g/d among those defined as valid reporters. This represents more than one and a half units of alcohol per day on average and 21g/day (SD 23.4) among consumers of alcohol deemed to have accurate diaries ( $n=22$ ). As most students do not consume alcohol daily, it would appear that many consume excessively, intermittently. No association was observed between knowledge about alcohol and consumption of alcohol.

Table 7 Mean daily intake of alcohol and smoking behaviour

Mean daily intake of Alcohol (g). Mean (SD)				
Diaries	Baseline	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Accurate reporters	$n=35$ 13.2 (21.1)	$n=36$ 12.9 (16.2)	$n=37$ 9.1 (8.3)	$n=42$ 13.3 (21.6)
Under-reporters	$n=13$ 13.5 (11.1)	$n=12$ 8.3 (17.6)	$n=12$ 6.0 (7.1)	$n=7$ 14 (14.2)
Consumers: accurate reporters	$n=22$ 21.0 (23.4)	$n=28$ 16.5 (16.6)	$n=31$ 10.8 (8.0)	$n=30$ 18.6 (23.7)
Student smoking rates. % ( $n$ )				
Diaries	Baseline	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	$n=48$			$n=49$
Non smokers	67 (32)	$n/a$	$n/a$	71 (35)
< 10 per day	13 (6)	$n/a$	$n/a$	10 (5)
≥10 per day	21 (10)	$n/a$	$n/a$	18 (9)

$n$ = Number of respondents

Tobacco smoking behaviour is of interest because of the recent increase in young females smoking (HPU, 2006). Investigation of smoking practices showed that the majority (67%,  $n=32$ ) do not smoke as shown in Table 7. However, 1 in 3 smokes as opposed to 1 in 4 in the CLAN (HPU, 2005) study. Cigarette consumption was also higher with average consumption of 12 (SD 6.8) cigarettes/day in those who smoke as opposed to 7/day in CLAN (HPU, 2005) and 9.9/day in females aged 18-34 at 3rd level in SLÁN (HPU, 2003). A bias towards a higher incidence of smoking was observed in the rural college (14 in the rural versus 2 in the urban college). None

of this changed significantly over the course of the study. No associations were observed between knowledge about smoking and smoking behaviour.

### **Nutrition and related lifestyle knowledge**

A total of 51 Home Economics students completed the knowledge test under examination conditions in February 2004 (Year 1). The average percentage of correct answers from the 220 item test was 54% as shown in Table 5. The correct responses significantly increased to 67% by Year 4.

Specific knowledge was the most problematic for this group with the lowest mean score achieved for the 29 questions regarding 'understanding of terminology' (31.4% (SD 8.6)). The highest mean scores related to 'food groups and constituents' and 'current dietary advice' with a mean of 63% and 62% respectively. Although these could be considered to be the more practical applied areas of knowledge and all but one respondent had studied Home Economics at second level, the test results indicate relatively low levels of nutritional knowledge in this group initially but this did improve significantly while not achieving what may be considered desirable for future teachers.

The level of detailed knowledge about obesity was low. While 63% ( $n=32$ ) of respondents knew obesity was the most common nutritional disorder in the world, 90% did not know that obesity is represented by a BMI  $\geq 30\text{kg}/\text{m}^2$ . Similarly in relation to dietary fat, only 12% correctly identified that polyunsaturated margarine does not contain less fat than butter and only 20% of respondents knew that oil does not have fewer calories than butter.

Although 88% of students knew that when drunk in excess, alcohol has a destructive effect on all organs, detailed knowledge relating to alcohol was low with over 80% unable to identify the amount of ethanol (8-10g) in 1 unit of alcohol and over 88% unable to recognise the upper legal blood alcohol level limit for driving in Ireland. In Ireland, about 6000 people die each year from smoking-related diseases according to the Health Promotion Unit (2006). The average knowledge score in relation to smoking was 63%. Knowledge in all areas increased significantly over the study period.

### **Attitudes to Home Economics and their future role**

All students agreed that they knew more about nutrition and health as a consequence of studying their college HE course. However the students were less well informed than they consider themselves to be about all the areas of nutrition that were explored. However, there was not as much agreement when it came to this knowledge having a perceived impact on health or behaviour. Only 24% ( $n=12$ ) of this student group thought that people of their age who had not studied HE or other nutrition-related courses are more at risk of diet-related illness than those who have (45% disagreed). The vision this student group present of HE would indicate a belief that educating students about healthy eating is core to the subject of HE. Ninety-two percent of the group agreed that one of the aims of HE is to help students improve their food choices. Forty-one percent ( $n=20$ ) thought that the HE curriculum at second level is sufficiently focused on healthy eating and lifestyle. Their responses regarding the role of the teacher further support this view. Only 10% agree that the teacher's main

purpose is to get pupils through examinations. The most important role for the HE teacher, as perceived by these students (92%,  $n=45$ ) was 'promoting a healthy diet and lifestyle'. The student group appeared to set a high value on their role as models for pupils in the future, as this came up frequently in the Interview, with comments such as 'I believe HE teachers are seen as role models to a lot of students, therefore, it is important that they should follow their own advice' (Student 219, 2007). Eighty-four percent of respondents agreed that HE teachers are important role models for pupils with a mean agreement level of 65%, and no one disagreed with this sentiment. Most students (61%,  $n=30$ ) also recognised that a variety of factors affect their teaching of healthy eating, as well as the influence of an over/underweight teacher. Only 20% ( $n=10$ ) believed that their lifestyle is their own business and has nothing to do with their pupils' learning. Some (39%,  $n=19$ ) thought that post-primary school pupils are more influenced by TV than by their HE teachers when it comes to food and related lifestyle choices. However, 35% ( $n=17$ ) thought pupils, in general, do not have the ability to separate the message from the messenger. It was clear that the student group agreed with the importance of the health-promoting role of the HE teacher and this student group considers role modelling an important component of being a HE teacher.

*I believe Home Economics teachers are seen as role models to a lot of students; therefore it is important that they should follow their own advice (Student 219, 2007).*

*... with my present dietary habits as well as my present body type, I could be seen as a hypocrite for endorsing ideas I clearly don't put into practice (Student 216, 2007).*

However, the students current behaviour does not support the contention that they will all make particularly good role models for pupils regarding nutrition and associated lifestyle behaviours. The student group were consistent in believing they and other HE teachers would be more effective in delivering a healthy eating message if they were a healthy weight themselves ( $P<0.05$ ). However, these beliefs were not correlated with BMI, Nutrition knowledge test scores or being a compliant eater ( $P>0.05$ ).

## Discussion

This study demonstrates that a group of student teachers completing their four-year undergraduate degree in Home Economics in 2007 did not implement current dietary and lifestyle advice during their course of study. Anthropometric measurements show 38% of the group were either overweight or obese, associated with increased risk to health and quality of life and that one was underweight, associated with reduced long term bone health. The anthropometric data collected from practicing HE teachers do not support the theory that the college years are different or worse than the rest of life, rather that it is part of a continuum.

The dietary behaviour of this group of BEd HE undergraduates on starting college was very similar to others in Ireland of the same age and gender. Their general level of knowledge about nutrition was better than their detailed knowledge. There would appear to be a high degree of confusion about many topics such as fat. While nutrition knowledge improved during the four years of the course, this was not associated with an improvement in dietary and lifestyle practices. As only two respondents could be described as 'compliant eaters'

throughout the four years of the study (using the LRNI as previously described in Table 1), their ability to act as role models for pupils would be questionable.

The students' young age, their experiences of being away from parental control and their level of risk perception perhaps have an effect that outweighs their knowledge and attitudes. To quote some students "I smoke too much but I am too young to care right now...I think when I get older this will improve" (Student, 222, 2004). Perhaps another determining factor is habit, with these students blaming lack of time and pressure of college work for the mismatch between what they know they should do and what actually occurs. "As a Home Economics student I am very aware of the changes I should make to my lifestyle, but unfortunately being a Home Economics student also leaves you with little time to actually implement these changes" (Student, 216, 2004). "It's easier said than done basically" (Student, 219, 2004). It may also be that cultural traditions have a profound influence on the food choices made by these students (Patterson et al., 1995; Gore, 1999; Siewe, 1999; Shankar et al., 2004) which knowledge alone cannot correct. Like any complex human behaviour, food choice is influenced by many interrelating factors and there are many barriers to change (Shepherd and Raats, 2006).

## **Conclusion**

Despite increase in knowledge over the four year period, nutritional behaviour was poor with few students being identified as 'compliant eaters'. Levels of exercise were lower than those reported by their contemporaries, alcohol consumption was high and a higher percentage of the group smoked than reported by contemporaries. There were no associations evident between nutrition and lifestyle knowledge, and behaviour in this group. Despite a high degree of awareness regarding the importance of a HE teacher role modelling good nutritional and lifestyle behaviour, many of these students' behaviours would not set future pupils a good example. Consideration needs to be paid by teacher educators to the provision of self health modules as part of undergraduate education programmes as on several US health and nutrition courses and as suggested by O'Dea & Abraham (2001). Additional research is required into the impact of role modelling on pupil behaviour. The value of knowledge in a subject like HE must be questioned if it is not associated with any change in behaviour as perceived in this case. Furthermore, the credibility of the case for universal access to the subject would be more compelling if objective proof existed that it had an impact on behaviour. Further discussion needs to take place among the profession on a code of ethics which would address the issues discussed here.

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# Investigating subject selection of Home Economics in Ireland

Jenny O'Donoghue, Mary Isobelle Mullaney

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## Abstract

*Since 2001 there has been a decline in the number of students studying Home Economics at Senior Cycle in Ireland (State Examinations Commission, 2007). This non-compulsory period of education taken by students between the age of fifteen and eighteen aims to prepare students for the challenges of higher education and the world of work. This paper reports on findings from a survey administered to students (n=153) in three schools investigating factors influencing their selection of Home Economics and the reasons behind their decision. A strong link was found between students choosing Home Economics and having had exposure to the subject, such as having previously studied the subject; having an older sibling who had studied the subject; having received a talk on it; or having investigated what the subject was about.*

*It can be predicted that the trend towards a decline in the selection of Home Economics could have future repercussions for the teaching profession. Even more far reaching however is the well being of students as individuals and as members of families and society, who by not being exposed to Home Economics may be missing out on a subject that 'does not teach a skill for the sake of that skill, it teaches for application, it teaches informed decision-making in endless scenarios, it teaches evaluative and critical thinking skills, it empowers individuals—no matter what their context' (Pendergast, 2001a, p. 8). Efforts need to be made to increase the level of exposure to Home Economics that each student receives, with significant efforts made at critical points in students' progression through the education system.*

## Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors influencing the selection of Home Economics (HE) at Senior Cycle (SC) level in Ireland. HE is a subject which promotes 'the improvement of living conditions in the home, the institutional household, and the community' (Stage & Vincenti, 1997, p. 17). In Ireland, it has undergone much change in recent years, with the introduction of a revised SC syllabus in 2002.

The context of declining student selection since 2001 could lead to a reduction in the number of HE teaching positions available, and prevent students from developing the 'knowledge, understanding, skills, competence and attitudes necessary to contribute to a personal and family environment conducive to human development, health, leisure, security, and happiness' (Department of Education and Science [DES], 2001, p. 2); which are the aims of the course.

## Context

### Curriculum in Ireland

In Ireland, education has always been highly valued. Throughout history, Irish people have continually shown a desire to attain an education, by availing of it where it has been offered (DES, 2004a). Further, the Irish Government regards education as a 'central plank in the economic, social, and cultural development of Irish society' (DES, 2004a, p. 5). According to the DES, the European Union (EU) is continuing to recognise that valuable education and training must be provided in order to create a proficient, knowledgeable, and innovative economy, and, an all-inclusive society where everyone has the 'opportunity and the incentive to participate fully in the social and economic life of the country' (DES, 2004a, p. 7).

In Ireland, education is compulsory between the ages of six and sixteen. At approximately age 12 students begin second level education. This consists of a three year Junior Cycle (JC), an optional one year Transition Year (TY) programme which aims 'to promote the personal, social, educational and vocational development of pupils and to prepare them for their role as autonomous, participative and responsible members of society' (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment [NCCA] 2008, p. 1), and a two year SC.

### Senior Cycle Education in Ireland

At SC level, students take a minimum of five subjects; most students take six or seven. Three are compulsory: Irish, English and Mathematics. Admission to third level is based on the results of a student's best six subjects. A modern European Language is also required by many universities. There are written summative external examinations in every subject at the end of a two-year cycle administered by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) and a number of subjects are further assessed including coursework assessment in HE, History, and Geography (DES, 2004b). The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is responsible for reviewing the subject content and relevance of the 34 SC syllabi currently offered. Since 1999, a number of syllabi have been revised, and some new subjects have been introduced (DES, 2004b).

### Position of Home Economics within the curriculum

When the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) was founded in 1908, some of its goals were: the improvement of the quality of everyday life for individuals, families and households through the management of their resources; the promotion of the concept of families and households as operating within a larger social, economic and physical environment; and to express the home economics concerns for individuals, families, and households at the United Nations and among other international non-governmental (Stage & Vincenti, 1997). Leaders at the time did not confine HE to the home. One century later, there is a perception, perhaps reinforced by the name, that HE is practiced only within the home. Brown and Paolucci (1979, p. 23) describe the discipline's fundamental rationale as:

*Enabling families to build and maintain systems of action leading to individual self-formation and to enlightened, co-operative participation in the critique and formation of social goals and means of accomplishing them.*

HE is concerned with facilitating and empowering people to achieve a better quality of life. Barry (1991) argues that if home economists fight to make the subject vibrant and influential, it can earn its rightful place within the national curriculum.

### A revised syllabus in Senior Cycle Home Economics

Society is continuously changing, so for HE curriculum to be relevant, on-going review should be carried out. Until 2002, there had been no review of SC HE since 1975. This suggests a failure to fulfil the purposes of curriculum. A HE Course Committee (SC) was established in 1987 by the NCCA to carry out the review. A revised syllabus was approved in April 1997, but was only introduced in September 2002 and first examined in June 2004. The delay in implementing the syllabus was due to assessment issues. The Association of Teachers of Home Economics in Ireland (ATHE) indicated that teachers were not in favour of a practical cookery examination at SC, and so, a Food Studies Practical Coursework Journal was developed by the HE Course Committee as the mode of assessment for practical cookery. Initially, students were required to complete six assignments with two practical applications per assignment. In September 2005, the number of assignments was subsequently reduced to five, with one practical application of each. The practical work itself is not assessed, however, it is a requirement, thereby placing considerable pressure on teachers and students, and posing difficulties for schools without appropriate facilities (Rohan, 2007). The revised syllabus promotes active teaching methodologies, linking and integrating content, and enables teachers to creatively support the diverse learning styles of students. An outline of content is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Revised SC Home Economics Syllabus Content

Area		% of course
Core	Food Studies	45
	Resource management and consumer studies	25
	Social studies	10
Elective 1	Home design and management	
Elective 2	Textiles, fashion and design	20
Elective 3	Social studies	
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

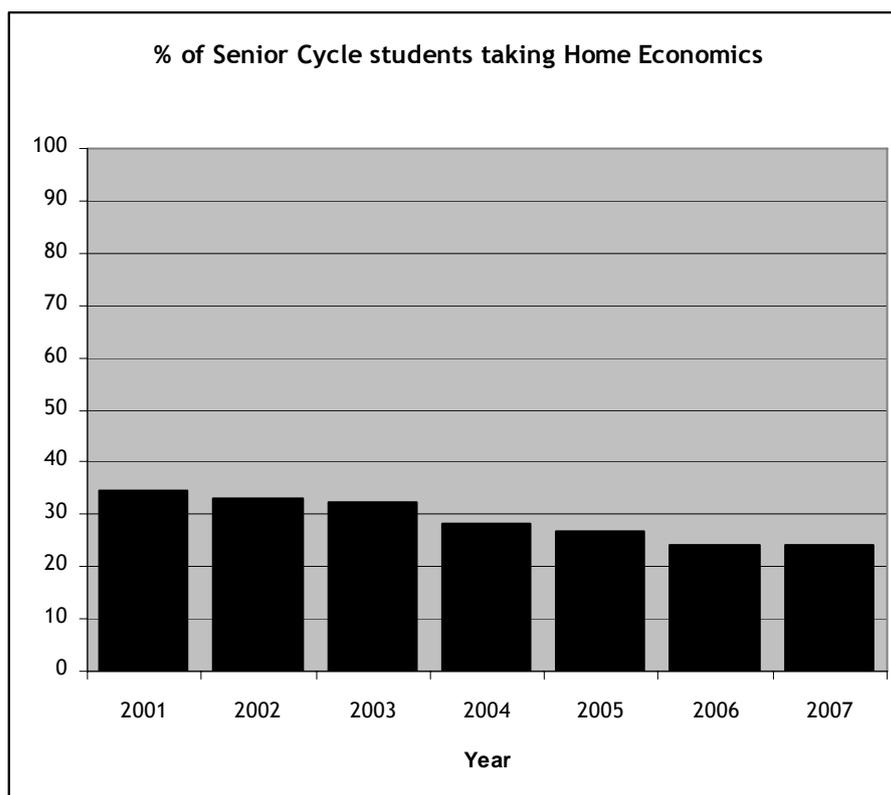
(DES, 2001)

### Selection of Senior Cycle Home Economics

SEC statistics indicate that the overall numbers taking the SC have fallen in recent years, possibly due to a decrease in birth rates between 1980 and 1990. Accordingly, the number taking SC HE would be expected also to reduce. However, analysing the percentage of SC students taking HE, gives a more meaningful interpretation of the take-up (see Figure 1).

Between 2001 and 2003, the take-up of HE reduced by about 1% each year. However, when the new syllabus was examined for the first time in 2004, the take-up decreased by more than 4% by comparison to the previous year. An overall decrease of 10.3% was recorded between 2001 and 2007. There appears to be a relationship between the introduction of the revised syllabus and the take-up of SC HE, with an 8.1% decrease in take-up since 2003.

Figure 1 Percentage of Senior Cycle students taking Home Economics (Adapted from SEC, 2007)



Indeed, in 2006 a school inspection report concluded that the decline in numbers was 'due in the main to the recent introduction of the revised Social and Scientific Home Economics syllabus' (DES, 2006, p. 1). While the reduction in national take-up of HE and the introduction of the revised syllabus occurred simultaneously, there is no evidence to suggest that the new syllabus is the main reason for the decline in numbers. Rather than focussing only on this as the sole factor, it is worth exploring the full range of considerations that may be contributing to the decline in numbers.

### Challenges faced by Home Economics

A number of issues are typically identified as challenges of the HE profession, including: low status; gender bias; positioning as a non-compulsory subject; student achievement levels. Each of these will be briefly explored.

### The Status of Home Economics

Lawson (1993, p. 8) explains that the field of HE appears to have an 'elusive professional status'. Being formally established in the early 1900s, the subject has a relatively short history by comparison to other professions, and has no renowned 'intellectual leaders' or Nobel prize winners. He explains how few outside the field of HE would have heard of Ellen Richards, Beatrice Paolucci or Marjorie Brown. Coppack (1996, p. 15) describes HE as a 'discipline which ties together the most important elements of human living. It could be argued that few disciplines have such a noble and worthwhile mission as does home economics'. If it has such a worthwhile mission, then it is reasonable to question why home economists not taking a 'public stance on critical issues that impinge directly on the family/household' (Lawson, 1993, p. 8). It appears to be the celebrity chefs who are campaigning against issues such as childhood obesity, and television presenters who are giving advice on money management. As Lawson (1993, p. 8) argues, 'Home Economists are seldom represented on consumer panels, statutory boards, media columns, and talk-back radio'. Attar (1990, p. 78) explores the possible reason why home economists have not been more vocal about their field, saying that they, 'seem to have been forever caught between two fears: the fear of marginalisation if they remain as they are, complete with low status and a feminine identity, and the fear of annihilation if they dare to change too much'. Creekmore's comments on the subject of HE, while they may not be written about the present day situation of the subject, are nonetheless relevant today:

*Home economics today is in turmoil. There seems to be among us in the field a frantic search for identity and status, a general confusion about what we are doing and what we ought to be doing, and embarrassing sense of guilt about our "image", and, among the dedicated professionals, a deep questioning of the meaning of home economics and its reason for being in today's world (Creekmore [1968] cited in Pendergast 2001b, p. 33).*

The field of HE lacks an exclusive body of knowledge. Coppack (1996) highlights the well-known saying, 'knowledge is power', and explores the associated notion of status and respect. HE lacks the respect and status it deserves, because it is 'perceived as consisting of facts taken from other disciplines' (Coppack 1996, p. 15). This, combined with the non academic elements of HE, influence the public's poor perception of the discipline. 'The public does not accord status to praxis that reflects the joy and challenges of daily life yet shuns the arcane character of traditional professions' (Lawson 1993, p. 8). In an Australian survey, documented by Pendergast (1991, cited in Pendergast, 2001b), students felt that more time should be given to practical skills, and less time to theory. This would however, lower the status of HE even further in the eyes of many, reinforcing "stereotypical images of the subject as 'cooking and sewing', which in the context of the feminisation of the subject [reinforce] its negative image" (Pendergast, 2001b, p. 47). HE has never achieved the academic status which its practitioners hoped for (Attar, 1990) and with the recent closure of one of Ireland's HE teacher education colleges, the visible presence of HE at third level in Ireland is further diminished.

### **Gender balance within Home Economics**

In 2007, 90% of SC HE candidates were female. It is very difficult to separate HE from a long history of gender stereotyping, as Lawson (1993, p. 8) notes 'From its inception, home economics has been regarded as women's work and despite the family focus of the founders, the field has been populated largely by women and has directed its message to a female audience.' Madden McLoughlin (1993) draws attention to the underlying suggestion in textbooks of marital failure being attributed to the home not functioning in a manner that is pleasing to the husband. 'A subject then which reinforces female subjugation naturally loses popularity with the more enlightened female (and indeed male) of the 1990s. This may in part explain the falling numbers of students studying Home Economics' (Madden McLoughlin, 1993, p. 4). As part of this research, Dublin schools were contacted to determine if SC HE is offered, and if so, how accessible is it to students, that is, in how many subject groupings is it offered. Seven boys' schools responded, two of which offer SC HE. While the sample was not nationally representative, this lack of provision could be a wider occurrence. However, Madden McLoughlin (1993, p. 5) suggests that 'sex differences in the pupils' own choices' has a greater effect on SC HE take-up than provision of the subject.

### **Position of Home Economics in schools**

HE is not a compulsory subject in Ireland; students choose whether or not they wish to study it. A number of new subjects, for example, Religious Education, have been introduced to Senior Cycle curriculum recently and this could be one of the reasons for a decrease in take-up of HE. Also, the range and number of subjects offered in schools is affected by local resources available such as: the size of the school; specialist study facilities; and the number, expertise, and availability of teachers.

With ever-increasing demand for places at third level, it is worth examining levels of achievement in SC HE. In Ireland the scores of an applicant's six best subjects are added together to get the total number of 'points'. Each third level course has a minimum points entry requirement, determined by: the number of places available on the course; the number of applicants; and the points they achieve. Based on supply and demand, the points increase when the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available on the course. Students must apply through a Central Applications Office (CAO) which administers access to third level, and each student may be offered one course which they can either accept or reject.

A number of weaknesses in the points system have been highlighted by the DES (1999). These include: students selecting subjects in order to maximise their points, rather than choosing subjects that might enhance their personal and social development; a tendency to teach subjects to achieve highly in the examinations rather than meeting the aims of the curriculum; and a negative affect on students' personal development, placing them under high levels of stress.

### **Levels of achievement in Senior Cycle Home Economics compared with other subjects**

At Higher Level, the rate of failure for SC HE is low by comparison to other subjects, which is encouraging. However, the number of 'A' grades is low when compared with other subjects.

Table 2 shows achievement rates in SC HE in 2008, alongside a selection of other popular optional SC subjects, as well as the recently introduced subject, 'Religious Education'.

Table 2 Percentage of 2008 cohort who achieved an 'A' grade or failed a selection of SC subjects (Higher Level)

Subject	'A' grade %	Fail %
Home Economics	8.5	3.4
Religious Education	13.0	5.6
Business Studies	11.2	6.3
Biology	16.6	7.9
Geography	8.0	2.9

(SEC, 2008)

Of the five subjects shown, HE has one of the lowest percentage of 'A' grades. Why then, with so many students competing to get a place in third level, would anyone choose a subject where it seems they have less possibility of achieving a high grade than in other subjects? By contrast, HE has one of the lowest failure rates of the subjects highlighted, with the exception of Geography. This could encourage a proportionally larger number of 'low achievers' to take SC HE which in turn has an averaging effect.

While SC HE is accepted for matriculation at third level there is no course which specifically requests that a student have SC HE. Even the college of HE education does not require SC HE as a prerequisite for entry. Subject choice restrictions are often placed on students by the requirements of their chosen third level course. Many courses do not accept Irish as a modern language, and so students are obliged to take an extra language and many courses require a science subject, leaving the student with only one or two choices.

Given the familiar along with the unique challenges in the Irish context, this study sought to investigate the factors influencing the selection of Home Economics in Senior Cycle. Details of the research design now follow.

## Research methodology

### Objectives of the research

1. To investigate what influences students' choice of SC HE.
2. To investigate if students have studied HE at a previous level and if this influences their choice of HE at SC level.
3. To find out if students are prevented from choosing HE due to timetabling or other school organisation factors.

4. To examine students' perception of HE and identify to what extent, if any, this influences their decision.
5. To ascertain which areas of HE students find most interesting.
6. To find out which approaches students prefer, for example, theory, practical cookery etc.

### **Research approach**

A quantitative approach was employed for this study, with a group administered survey the research instrument. This allowed information to be gathered from a large number of respondents and the conditions in which the survey was administered ensured a 100% response rate.

### **Respondents**

A convenience sample of SC students in three co-educational schools in South Dublin was surveyed: a Community School; a Comprehensive School; and a Private Secondary School. It was anticipated that the sample would yield data from students of both genders within a range of varied facilities and opportunities. The design called for approximately one hundred and fifty students, this being fifty from each school, and this sample was comprised of students who had not chosen to study SC HE (referred to for ease as non-HE students) and students who had (HE students).

### **Research design**

The survey instrument was comprised of mostly closed questions, although provision was made for respondents to add comments. Some questions were dichotomous, requiring that one box be ticked, while others were multiple-choice, requiring that one or more boxes be ticked.

Respondents were asked to specify which HE courses they had studied previously and to record their level of agreement or disagreement with statements concerning their choice or rejection of HE with regard to perceived:

- ease or difficulty
- gender issues
- importance of HE
- subject status/popularity
- general interest in HE
- parental pressure to take/not take HE
- conflict/connections with other subjects

To avoid a long survey where students skipped non-applicable questions, two different surveys were designed for non-HE students and HE students. The two surveys were printed on different colour paper to make the process less complicated for both respondents and researcher.

## Research analysis

SPSS (version 12) was used to analyse survey data. Descriptive statistics were used to develop the profile of the sample. Cross-tabulation identified if there were links between the factors mentioned in the research objectives and the students' selection of SC HE. Respondents' level of agreement or disagreement with a number of statements was calculated to give an overall picture of attitude toward HE and each group's level of 'positivity' was presented.

Participation in this study was voluntary, and consent was sought from school principals *in loco parentis*. Respondents were guaranteed anonymity from the outset, and specific schools were not identified. Data were handled and reported anonymously. The findings are limited due to the sample size but despite the restricted time-frame and resources available, an important researchable question was posed and an insight gleaned into its answer.

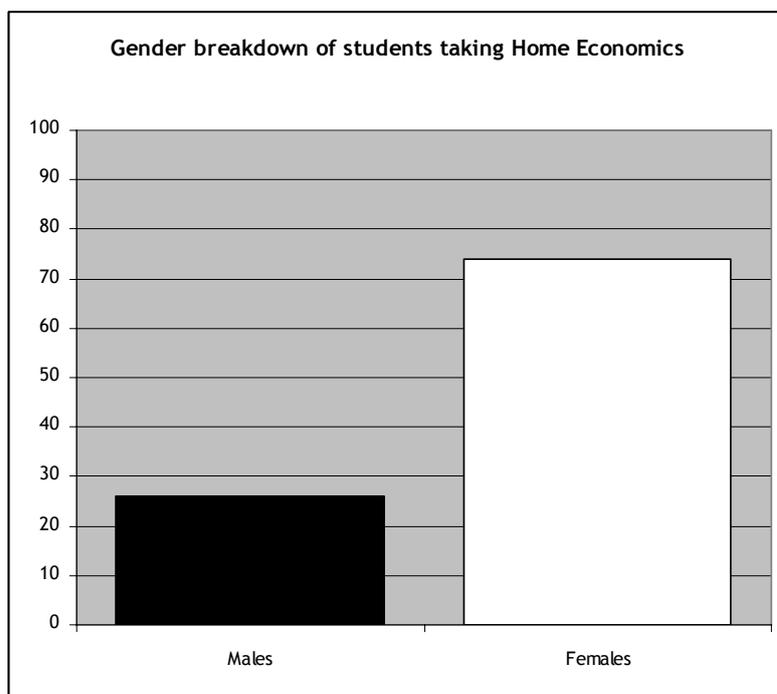
## Research findings

### Survey population

The total number of respondents was 153 comprising: 56 from a comprehensive school; 44 from a secondary private school; and 53 from a community school. The questionnaire was administered during class time and achieved a 100% response rate. Of the total respondents, 52.3% ( $n=80$ ) were non-HE students (not studying SC HE), and 47.7% ( $n=73$ ) were HE students (studying SC HE). The sample comprised 50% males ( $n=77$ ) and 50% females ( $n=76$ ).

The breakdown of male and female respondents studying SC HE is shown in Figure 2. The percentage of respondents studying SC HE who were male was 26% ( $n=19$ ) and female was 74% ( $n=54$ ).

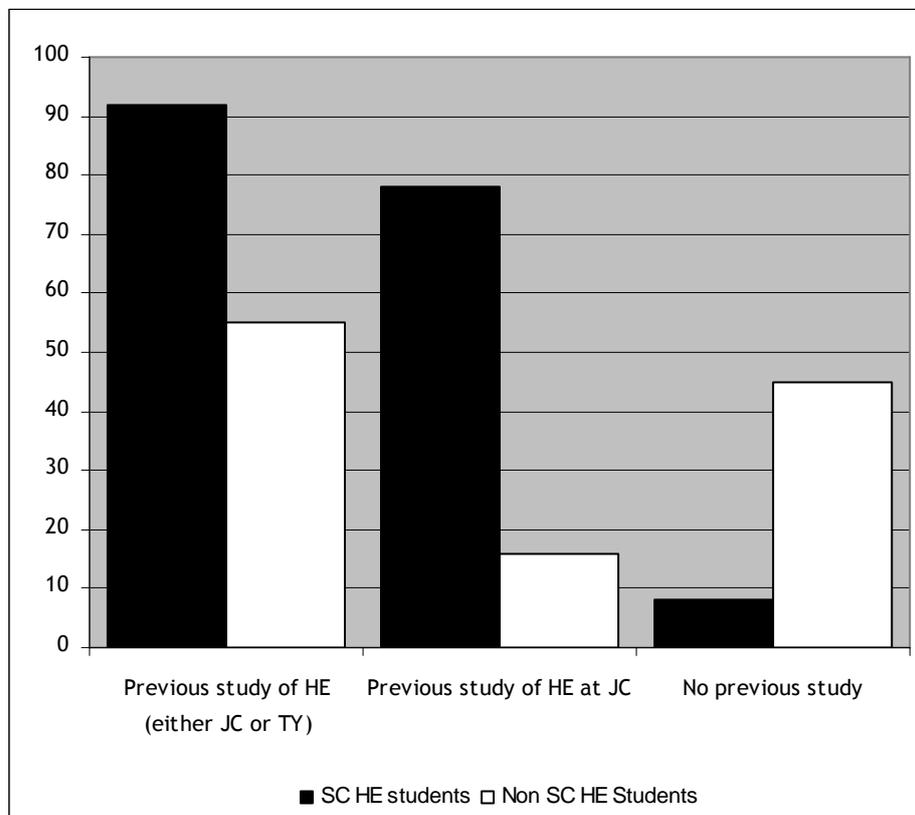
Figure 2 Gender breakdown of respondents studying SC HE



### Previous exposure to Home Economics

Respondents were asked if they had previously studied HE at school. The take-up of SC HE was higher among respondents who had (Figure 3), with 92% ( $n=58$ ) previously studying HE for either Transition Year (TY) or Junior Certificate (JC). 78% ( $n=49$ ) had studied it at JC, and 8% ( $n=5$ ) had not studied it previously. By contrast, 55% ( $n=37$ ) of non SC HE respondents had previously studied HE for either TY or JC, 16% ( $n=11$ ) had studied it at JC, and 45% ( $n=30$ ) had not studied it previously. A one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference at the  $p < .05$  level. Of the 153 respondents, 113 (73%) had studied HE previously; 90 had liked it, 15 had disliked it and 8 were unsure.

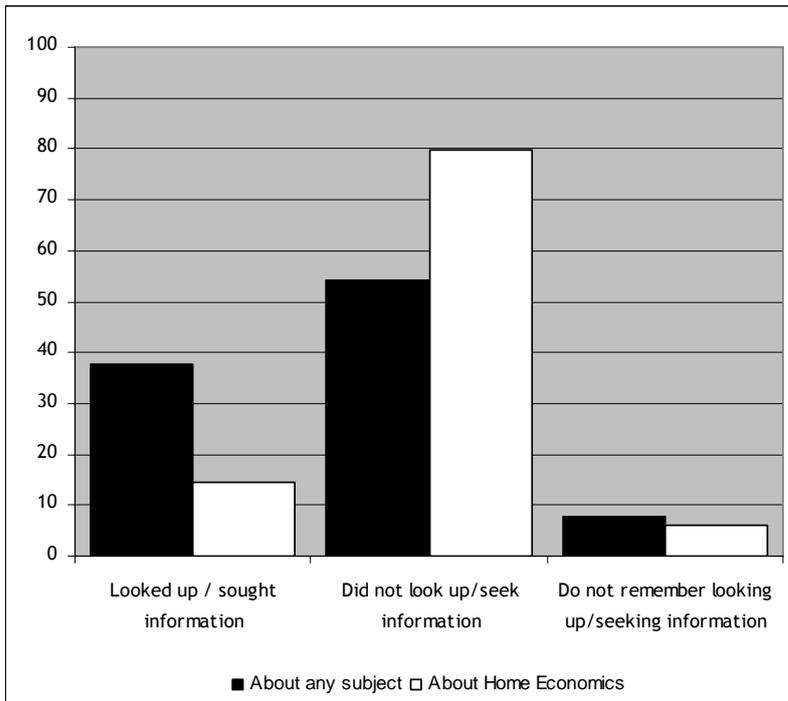
Figure 3 Affect of previous study of HE on take-up of SC HE



The majority of respondents (74.7%,  $n=112$ ) did not have an older sibling who had studied SC HE. However, when the HE and non HE groups were compared; 16% of students studying HE at SC had an older sibling who had studied it before them, while 9% of students not studying HE at SC had an older sibling who had studied it before them.

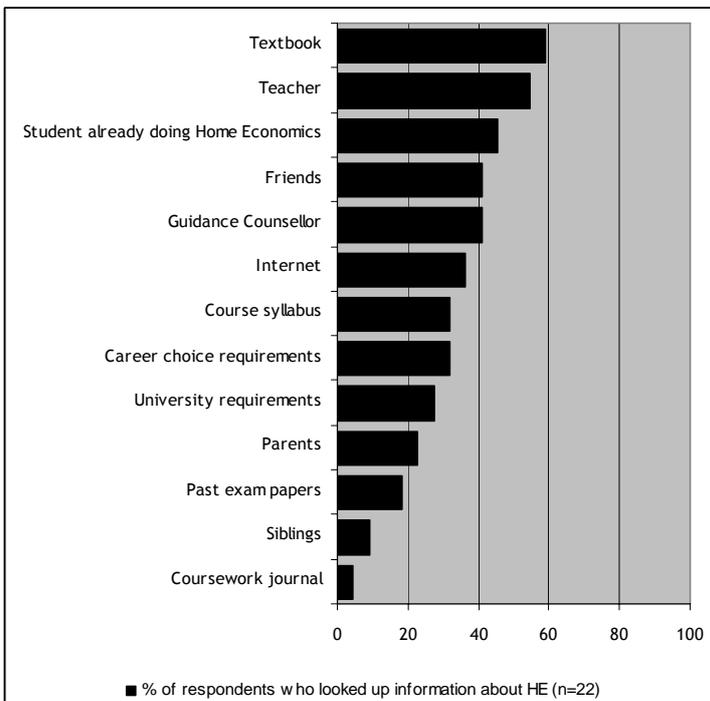
Respondents were asked if they investigated or sought information prior to choosing their SC subjects, with just 38% ( $n=57$ ) responding in the affirmative. Even less (14.4%,  $n=22$ ) looked up or sought information specifically about HE.

Figure 4 Percentage of respondents who looked up information prior to choosing SC subjects



The majority of respondents who had sought information specifically in relation to HE (Figure 5) obtained information or advice from the textbook and people, whether that was a teacher, guidance counsellor or a friend.

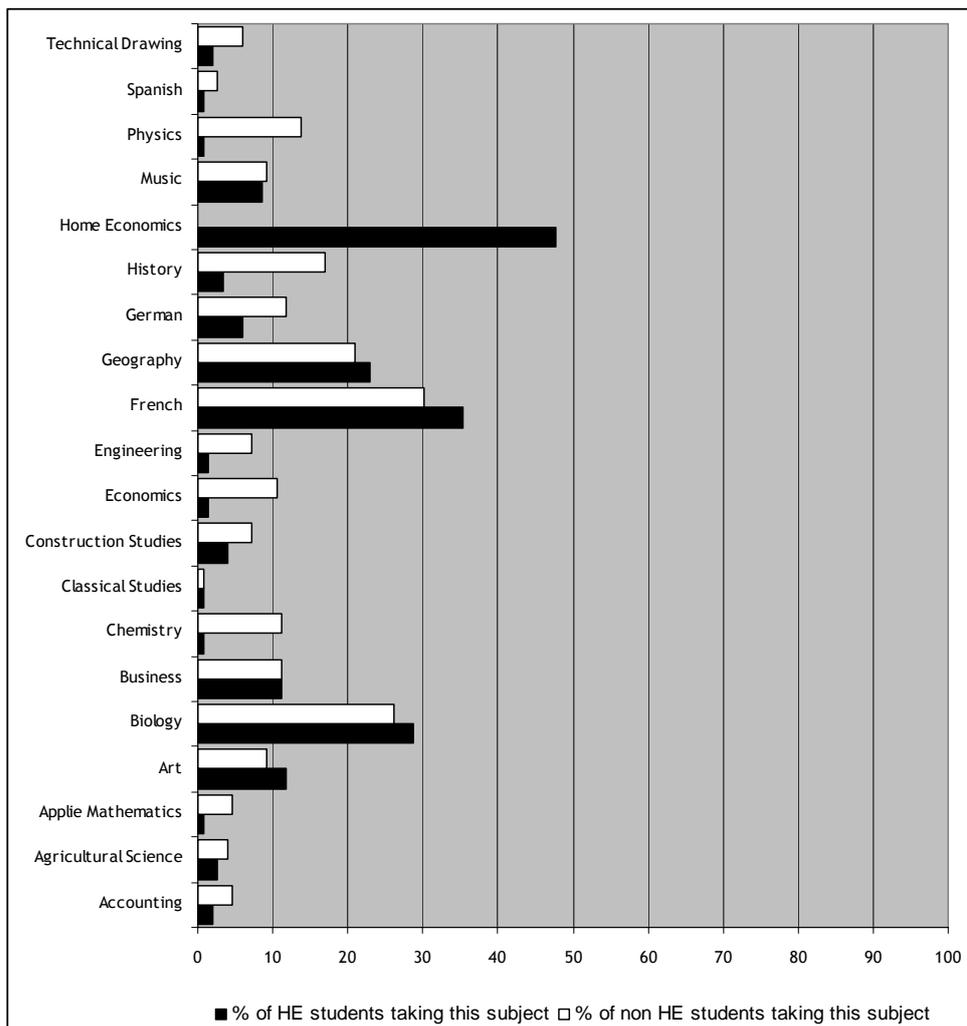
Figure 5 Sources of information about HE used by respondents



The questionnaire asked respondents to state their level of agreement with statements in relation to why they chose or rejected SC HE. Fifty two percent of HE students had heard good reports about the subject before choosing it, 27% of non-HE students had heard bad reports about the subject before choosing it. Six non-HE students specifically stated that they did not choose SC HE because they heard there was a lot of work involved.

### Competition with other Senior Cycle subjects

Figure 6 shows which subjects respondents chose to study at SC.



The most popular other subjects studied by HE students in this study were French (35.3%,  $n=26$ ), Biology (28.8%,  $n=21$ ) and Geography (22.9%,  $n=17$ ). This appears to be the most popular subject combination for this cohort. The most popular subjects for non-HE students were French (30.1%,  $n=24$ ), Biology (26.1%,  $n=21$ ), Geography (20.9%,  $n=17$ ), and History (17.0%,  $n=14$ ). Even though the majority of non-HE students are males and the majority of HE students are females (Figure 2), similar subjects were popular among both groups.

Of the non-HE students, 13 specifically stated that they decided not to study SC HE because they preferred other subjects and 16 said they did not choose SC HE because it was not as useful or relevant for their chosen career or college course, as other subjects. These students did not specify which career paths they had chosen. By contrast, 9 HE respondents specifically stated that they chose SC HE because it would be useful in their chosen career or college course, giving examples such as, HE teaching, nursing, nutrition and dietetics, early childhood education, special needs assistant work, Montessori teaching, and interior design.

Many HE students (64%,  $n=47$ ) thought there was a reasonable overlap of content between HE and other subjects while non-HE students (46%,  $n=37$ ) were unsure about content overlap.

### Respondents' levels of positivity towards Home Economics

As part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to state their level of agreement with a number of statements in relation to why they chose or rejected SC HE. The statements were posed positively for HE students and negatively for non-HE students. To achieve a score for positivity, non-HE students, scores were transposed. A sum of scores for each statement was found, and thus, a 'positivity' level acquired. Some neutral statements were phrased identically on both questionnaires, and were dealt with separately.

For non-HE students, a high level of *disagreement* with a *negative* statement indicated a 'positive' attitude towards HE, shown in green, in Table 3. The highest *disagreement* level was 71.9% for, 'My parents did not want me to do it'. This indicates that parents of non-HE students generally did not discourage their children from taking SC HE. The lowest *disagreement* (34.1%) was for; 'it is not easy to do well' indicating that many non-HE students think it is difficult to do well in HE. A 40.6% *disagreement* level was found for, 'If I work hard, it would still be difficult to get an A'.

To compute the 'positivity' level for HE students, the same procedure was carried out; a high level of *agreement* with a *positive* statement indicated a 'positive' attitude towards HE (shown in blue in Table 4).

For HE students, the highest level of *agreement* recorded was 75.7% for 'I liked it better than the other subjects offered'. A 62.3% *agreement* level was recorded for the statement 'If I work hard, I could get an A'. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare the scores of non-HE students (40.6% 'positivity' level) and HE students (62.3% 'positivity' level) for this statement. A statistically significant difference ( $p<.05$ ) was found, indicating that HE students were more confident that they could get an 'A' than non-HE students.

Table 3 Negative attitudes towards HE from non-HE students

Non HE students' level of disagreement	
My parents did not want me to do it	71.9%
The term 'Home Economics' put me off	66.3%
I did it for Junior Cert or Transition Year but disliked it as a subject	62.5%
I would not like the practical element of the subject	61.9%
It sounds harder than other subjects	61.3%
It is not a useful subject	58.8%
I heard bad reports about the subject	57.2%
Very few of my friends were doing it	55.3%
You learn life skills which are not useful beyond school	55.3%
I disliked the fact that a new course was introduced recently	53.4%
I do not think that it is an important subject in today's society	52.2%
I have little interest in cooking, textiles, nutrition etc.	50.9%
It does not deal with practical problems of every day life	49.7%
I do not think it is a popular subject	47.2%
I think the subject has a poor image	46.9%
There is a coursework journal to do so I would have to work hard throughout the year	45.0%
It was timetabled at the same time as another subject I wanted to do	40.9%
If I work hard, it would still be difficult to get an A	40.6%
It will not get me the points I need to get into college	38.8%
I do not like it as much as the other subjects that were offered	36.6%
There is not enough overlap of content with other subjects	35.6%
It is not easy to do well	34.1%

Table 4 Positive attitudes towards HE from HE students

HE students' level of agreement	
You learn valuable life skills which are useful beyond school	75.7%
It is a useful subject	74.3%
I have an interest in cooking, textiles, nutrition etc	71.9%
I would like the practical element of the subject	71.9%
I did it for Junior Cert or Transition year and liked it as a subject	69.9%
I think it is an important subject in today's society	67.8%
It deals with practical problems of every day life	65.8%
There is a coursework journal so my grade is not dependant on the final exam	64.0%
If I work hard, I could get an A	62.3%
There is good overlap of content with other subjects	56.5%
I liked it better than the other subjects offered	54.1%
A lot of my friends were doing it	51.0%
I think it is a popular subject	50.0%
I heard good reports about the subject	47.3%
It did not clash with other subjects I wanted to do	45.9%
It sounds easier than other subjects	39.7%
I think the subject has a good image	39.7%
It is easy to do well	39.4%
It will get me the points I need to get into college	37.0%
My parents wanted me to do it	36.3%
I like the sound of the term 'Home Economics'	35.3%
I liked the fact that a new course was introduced recently	33.6%

As discussed already, a 34.1% *disagreement* level was recorded for non-HE students for the statement 'it is not easy to do well'. For HE students a 39.4% agreement level was recorded for the opposite statement, 'It is easy to do well'. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare these scores and there was not a statistically significant difference at the  $p < .05$  level, suggesting that neither group think it is easy to do well in SC HE, but HE students think it is possible to get an 'A' if hard work is put in. The mean 'positivity' level of each group was found, along with the standard deviation, and these are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Comparison of 'positivity' of non-HE students and HE students

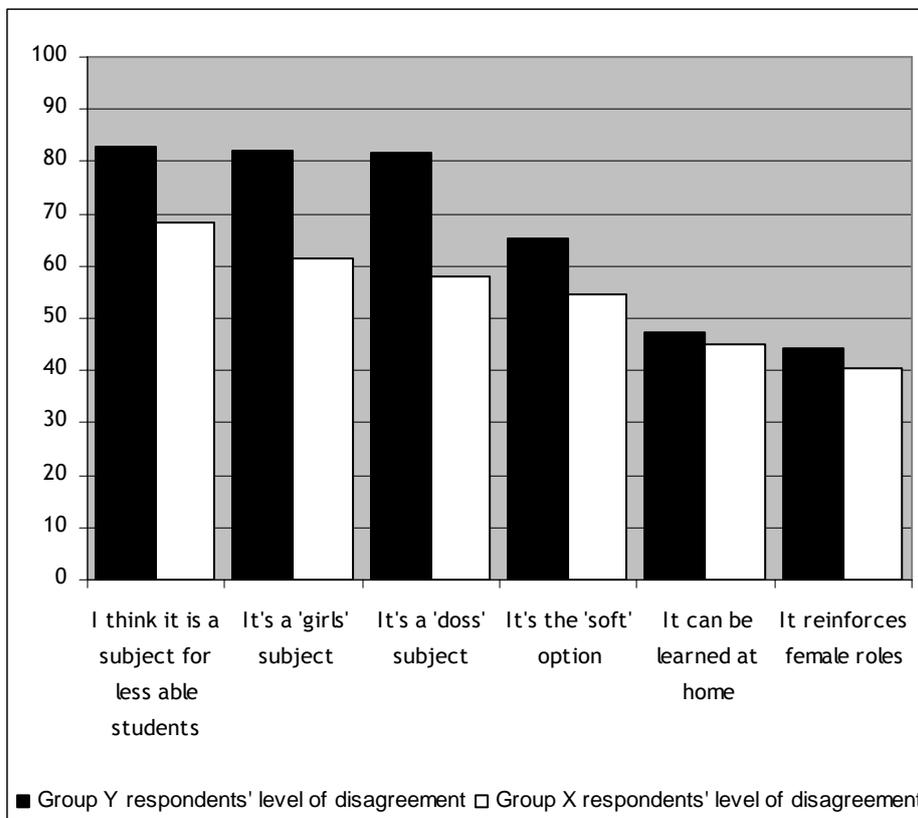
	Non-HE students	HE students
Mean	51.0	54.1
Standard Deviation	10.5	14.5
Minimum	34.1	33.6
Maximum	71.9	75.7

While HE students were more positive towards HE than non-HE students (3.1% more) this is not statistically significant ( $p \geq .05$ ).

**Analysis of neutral statements**

The neutral statements were dealt with separately to the positive and negative statements. Both groups' level of disagreement was explored (Figure 7). Each of the statements could be viewed as either positive or negative.

Figure 7 Students' level of disagreement with neutral statements



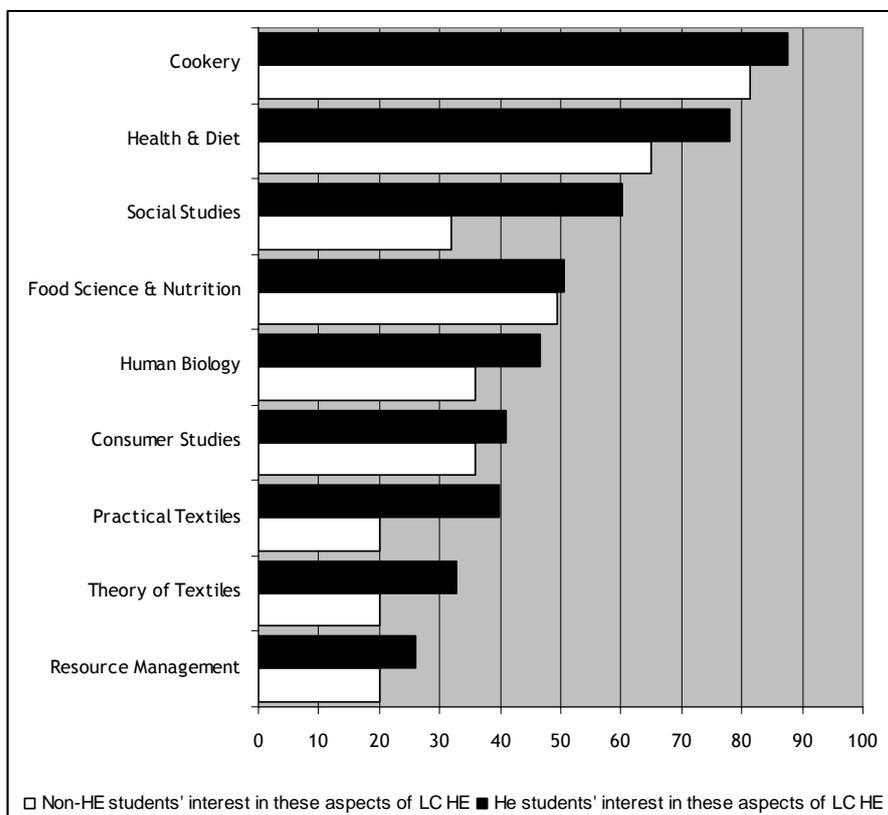
HE students showed a very high level of disagreement with most of the statements. There was an 82.9% *disagreement* level with the statement, 'I think it is a subject for less able students'. This would validate this group's low level (33.6%) of agreement with the statement 'It is easy to do well' as reported earlier. For the statement, 'I think it is a subject for less able students', non-HE students' disagreement level was lower than HE students' (68.4%). For 'It is a 'girls' subject', an 82.2% *disagreement* level was recorded from HE students, 61.6% from non-HE students. However, there was only a 44.2% (HE students) and 40.6% (non-HE students) disagreement with 'It reinforces female roles'. The largest divergence between the two groups was for the statement, 'It is a doss subject' (difference of 23.4%). The word 'doss' is a slang term used to label certain subjects as worthless or irrelevant.

For all statements, HE students showed a higher level of disagreement than non-HE students. The mean level of disagreement for all of the neutral statements was 12.6% higher for HE students than it was for non-HE students. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the two means and there was a statistically significant difference at the  $p < .05$  level.

#### Respondents interest in aspects of Senior Cycle Home Economics

Respondents were asked to identify areas of interest to them regardless of whether they were presently studying HE or not (Figure 8).

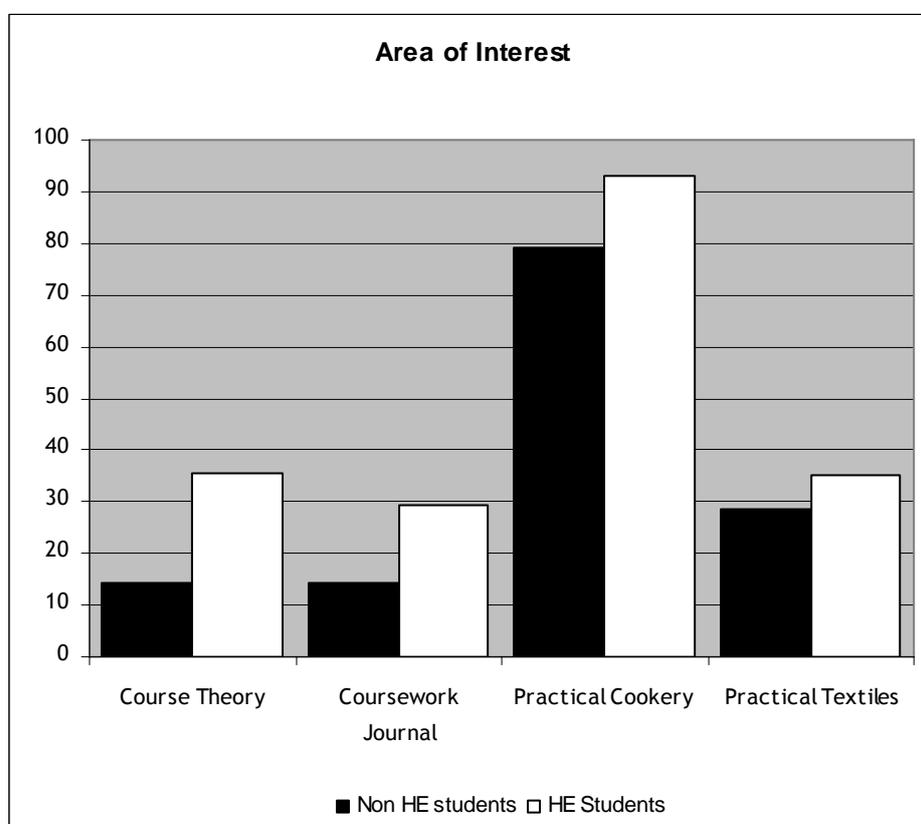
Figure 8 Percentage of respondents who identified areas of interest within HE



Both groups showed the most interest in 'cooking', identified by 87.7% ( $n=64$ ) of HE students and 81.3% ( $n=65$ ) of non-HE students. The lowest area of interest was 'resource management' (26%,  $n=9$ ) of HE students and 20% ( $n=16$ ) of non-HE students. For most areas, HE students showed slightly more interest than non-HE students. HE students showed a much higher interest than non-HE students in the areas of 'social studies' and 'practical textiles'.

Students were asked to specify their level of interest in the following teaching approaches of the revised SC HE course; course theory; coursework journal; practical cooking; and practical textiles (Figure 9).

Figure 9 Percentage of respondents who identified interest approaches of the HE course.



All respondents showed great interest in 'practical cooking'; 79.2% of non-HE students ( $n=63$ ), and 93.2% of HE students ( $n=68$ ). The areas of least interest to non-HE students were 'course theory' and 'coursework journal' (14.3%,  $n=11$ ). HE students showed least interest in 'coursework journal' (29.2%,  $n=21$ ). Two HE students specifically stated they 'did not like' the 'coursework journal'.

For non-HE students there was a 45% *disagreement* level (Table 4) with the statement 'There is a coursework journal so I would have to work hard throughout the year', suggesting that just over half of these respondents may have been deterred by the notion of continuous assessment. For HE students, there was a 64% *agreement* level (Table 5) with the opposite

statement, 'There is a coursework journal so my grade is not dependent on the final exam', suggesting that more than half of the respondents appeared to be 'positive' about continuous assessment.

When given an opportunity to add extra comments, seven HE students specifically stated that they liked cookery, and 6 felt that more time and emphasis should be given to it. Four HE students stated that they liked textiles. Ten HE students found HE to be an enjoyable subject, and said that is why they had chosen it. Ten HE students stated that they had chosen SC HE because it was a useful and important subject.

However, when non-HE students were given an opportunity to add extra comments, 13 of them said they had not picked HE because they had no interest in it or did not like it. One student said they had "No interest whatsoever. I know about hygiene, cooking etc. Why should I waste my time learning it in school?!"

Three non-HE students did not pick HE because they felt that they were not good at the 'practical elements' of the subject. Five non-HE students (three of whom were male) said they did not choose SC HE because they think it reinforces female roles or is a subject for girls. One student said that "The aprons are too female and degrading."

## **Discussion and conclusion**

### **Possible reasons for the decline in take-up of Senior Cycle Home Economics**

Each of the schools surveyed had experienced a decrease in SC HE take-up. At the time of the survey, the Comprehensive school had only 10 students from a year group of 150 studying SC HE. So why are increasing numbers of students choosing not to study HE?

Respondents chose SC HE because they placed high value on its content, agreeing that it is an important subject in today's society, which teaches crucial life skills useful beyond the classroom (Table 5). They showed great interest in the area of 'practical food studies'. One student commented that "It's a useful subject in today's society and there's a lot more to it and behind it than a 'girls' subject. It helps all people!"

By contrast, non SC HE respondents do not consider it relevant to their chosen career path, and they feel it would not get them sufficient points to proceed to college (Table 4). One student stated that HE "Has no real relevance to what I want to do in college or later in life"

Only 27% ( $n=41$ ) of respondents were aware that a new SC HE syllabus had been introduced, and so it can be deduced this was not the main factor affecting the take-up of SC HE among these respondents.

### **Coursework journals**

When asked about coursework journals, many students not studying SC HE were not in favour of continuous assessment, while more than half of the students studying SC HE were. When asked to specify their level of interest in areas of the course, the 'coursework journal' was

the least popular with both groups. The coursework journal was chosen by the HE Course Committee (SC) to examine practical cookery. Interestingly, both groups showed great interest in 'practical cookery'. Many students indicated that they enjoy the practical elements of the assignments, but dislike writing them up. This raises questions about the suitability of the Coursework journals as an assessment technique.

### **Grade achievements in Senior Cycle Home Economics**

In comparison to other subjects, SC HE has a lower percentage of 'A' grades and a higher pass rate, suggesting that many 'lower ability' students are taking HE. Many respondents felt that HE would be a difficult subject to do well in.

Many SC HE respondents were unhappy with their choice to study HE and found it much harder than anticipated. Eight respondents specifically said they were not happy studying SC HE and could see that they had made the wrong choice. This could indicate, for example, that respondents were misinformed about what would be required of them; that they were not prepared for the increased level of work required by SC as opposed to JC; that the SC HE course is too demanding for students; or that these respondents are 'less able' students. A number of respondents considered the scope of the course to be too wide.

### **Status of Senior Cycle Home Economics**

The status of HE is influenced by people's opinions of it and what they perceive it to be. The perception of the name 'Home Economics' may influence the subject's status, however, many non SC HE respondents disagreed that the name dissuaded them from choosing the subject. Many respondents who chose SC HE said that the name did not influence their decision.

Gender balance within HE was examined, with more females sitting the SC HE examination than males in 2006. A high number of SC HE respondents said they disagreed that it is a girls' subject, while fewer non SC HE students disagreed. However, many respondents agreed that HE 'reinforces female roles'. While the majority of each group see HE as a subject for both sexes, there is an underlying factor which 'reinforces female subjugation' Madden McLoughlin (1993). One respondent stated that HE is 'a redundant subject that is basically training girls to be housewives, especially with regards to sewing and looking after babies'; an interesting comment, considering that the 'Textiles, fashion and design' elective is not taught in this respondent's school and that childcare does not feature on the revised syllabus. Coppack (1996) states that power and status are attributed to knowledge, however most respondents indicated a dislike for 'course theory' in HE but liked and valued 'practical cookery'. An increase in the amount and recognition of practical work may improve students' enjoyment of HE. However, the status would most likely decrease, and 'stereotypical images of [HE] as 'cooking and sewing', which in the context of the feminisation of the subject reinforce *its* negative image' (Pendergast, 2001b, p. 47), and may therefore cause less students to choose it at SC.

### **Clashes with other subjects**

New subjects, such as Religious Education, may be influencing the take-up of SC HE, however, Religious Education is not taught at SC in the three schools surveyed, so no clash was

experienced with it. The Comprehensive and Secondary Private schools give students four groups of SC subjects, and they must choose one from each group. This is the method used in many schools, some of whom offer HE in more than one subject grouping, while others only offer it in one group, thus creating competition between HE and other subjects. In one of the schools surveyed, students are asked to list subjects in order of preference and the school aims to accommodate every student. Many non-HE, respondents stated that HE was timetabled at the same time as another subject they wanted to do. It would be interesting to carry out a nationwide study of students to discover if take-up of SC HE is higher in schools where students have an unrestricted choice of subjects.

A high number of SC HE respondents found there to be a good overlap of content between SC HE and other subjects. This is encouraging, considering the reduced amount of physiology on the revised SC HE syllabus. The previous HE syllabus would have been highly compatible with SC Biology.

### **Exposure to Senior Cycle Home Economics**

This study reveals that many of the SC HE students had more exposure to HE in various forms than the non SC HE students had.

It was reported that most SC HE respondents had studied it previously, for JC or TY. It seems that previous study of HE is almost a prerequisite to students choosing SC HE. SC HE respondents who had previously studied HE said they had a positive experience, and this may have influenced them to choose SC HE. Nearly half of the non SC HE respondents had not studied it for JC, and many said that this was why they did not consider SC HE as an option. This then poses a serious question; why did the students not chose it for JC? In order to promote the subject, efforts could be made during first year and TY to expose students to HE. Many schools provide short modules where students can get a feel for what HE is all about. Ultimately, each student's choice of SC subjects is their own decision. However, if students are given exposure to HE at various stages prior to choosing their subjects SC, then at least they would be in a position to make an informed decision.

A higher occurrence of older siblings who had studied SC HE was reported among respondents who were studying the subject themselves, than among those who were not studying it. Respondents may be unaware of the possibility that real exposure to HE, even indirectly through a sibling, does not turn them off the subject, as they may become aware of what to expect of SC HE

It was reported that many respondents did not look up information or seek advice prior to choosing subjects for SC. Further research could consider if their decision is based solely on subject talks received in TY, or are they just choosing subjects they did for JC, and not even considering alternatives for SC?

Most respondents received talks prior to choosing SC subjects. The talks are time-consuming, but critical in informing students about subject options, as more than half of the respondents said they did not look up information or seek advice prior to choosing their subjects. This issue is a concern for all subjects, not just HE

## Recommendations

Schools can promote Home Economics by: providing well resourced HE facilities; timetabling HE in as many subject groupings as possible; and by ensuring adequate time for the subject, including one double class period per week. Teachers can promote Home Economics by: keeping up to date with developments in the subject; planning work to ensure integration of theory and practical aspects of the subject; using active teaching methodologies in delivery of content; providing practical activities and by availing of the continuous support given by the HE Support Service and ATHE.

Efforts can be made to increase the level of exposure to HE that each student receives, especially at critical points in students' progression through the education system; in 6th class before JC subjects are chosen, and in TY when HE 'taster' modules are taught. Students should be empowered to make informed decisions regarding their subject choices.

## Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate possible reasons for the recent decrease in the take-up of SC HE, and to explore factors influencing students' decision to choose or reject the subject for SC. If the decline in take-up of HE continues, it could have repercussions for the future availability of HE teaching positions, but, more seriously deny students who would benefit from the subject, the opportunity to acquire and develop knowledge, understanding, skills, competence and attitudes important for both personal and family well being, and development, health, leisure, security, and happiness' (DES, 2001); which are the aims of the SC HE course.

If a similar study was carried out in the future, it would be beneficial to increase the sample size and look at the national situation, or to survey students at different stages in their education, for example, in sixth class, and again at the end of TY after students have chosen their SC subjects, but before they begin to study them.

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## Biographies

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## IFHE Congress Keynote and Plenary Papers

## **Families need more earthworms: On the utility of living together—a plea**

Thomas Gröbly

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### **Abstract**

*'Families need more earthworms - on the utility of living together—a plea'. My thoughts evolved from that title. Earthworms are wonderful animals. Their contribution to nature is of tremendous value. Without them we would not have much to eat. They are a foundation for the variety of fauna and flora we depend on existentially. However the title also needs to be understood the other way round. 'Earthworms need more families'. The family is an important place. It is a breeding ground for values such as respect for nature, sustainability, frugality, meaning of life, quality of life, the ability to maintain a relationship or the development of global awareness. Humankind is confronted with major tasks: the handling of nature in a sustainable manner, the fight against poverty, misery, violence as well as the remodeling of the economic system based on profit into a system based on life. A further challenge is demographics: a decreasing number of young people have to look after an increasing number of old people. Women are asked to have more children. However it is not that simple as free women and free men refuse to be objectified. The family's status in society needs to be improved in order to increase the birth rate and to strengthen the family as a breeding ground for values. People with a great sense of responsibility, empathy and global awareness do not appear out of nowhere. They only develop their skills within the frame of an unconditional, loving and emotionally committed relationship. Society's ideational and financial appreciation is essential for families to fulfill these tasks. The concept of an unconditional basic income is one approach. However with regard to home economics, people are also challenged to act self-reliantly and to uphold the value of unconditional relationships.*

### **Introduction and thesis**

'Families need more earthworms - on the utility of living together—a plea'. My thoughts evolved from that title. Earthworms are wonderful animals. Their contribution to nature is of enormous value. Without them we would not have much to eat. They are a foundation for the variety of fauna and flora we depend on existentially. However the title also needs to be understood the other way round - 'Earthworms need more families'. The family is an important place. It is a breeding ground for values such as respect for nature, sustainability,

frugality, meaning of life, quality of life, the ability to maintain a relationship or the development of global awareness.

We live in a complex globalized world but I will restrict myself to the role of families in developed countries. By 'family' I refer to all forms of living with children, not necessarily based on biological relation, but also to social institutions such as schools or the crèche. The call for reevaluation of middle-class families with a mother, a father and two children, in my opinion, is outdated. I am an advocate for a variety of families: extended families, small families, collective families or single parent. The criteria for a healthy environment in which children can live and grow, whether in shared houses or schools and crèches, is a committed and loving relationship. It is neither gender specific nor bound to blood relation or to a man and a woman living in partnership. Where up to a hundred years ago it was a social necessity for a woman to have children, this today has become a conscious decision<sup>1</sup>. Konrad Adenauer said People have children anyway<sup>2</sup>. He was wrong. The issue of 'children' is not an issue of 'women' or an absolute necessity; it is a social and political challenge. Women can't be blamed for the aging of our society.

The origin of economy lies in home economics. In it we find a vast creation of values. That is why I understand all the work performed by families and communities as economy. I don't separate private enterprise from domestic work because it is problematic for the ethical question of the good life. Domestic work is usually underrated or its value negated. Cooking, cleaning and looking after children are being idealized and reduced to acts of love. To make an overstatement: there is no private enterprise without domestic work. The topic of this congress is 'reflecting the past and creating the future'. I will analyze the present, specify challenges and discuss steps towards the future for you to create "this future".

### **White man and ethicist**

I grew up as a white man in a middle-class family. Today, I am 50 years old. I experienced 'house economics' through my mother. I did not see it as a chore, but rather as a natural matter of course. It is only today that I recognize the great effort my mother has put into it. My father was occupied by his challenging job as an engineer and left it to my mother to do all the chores and look after my two brothers and me. In my first profession I was a farmer. That's probably why I am fond of earthworms. I was thirty years old when my daughter was born and it was clear that my partner and I would share our chores.

Why am I telling you that? I am convinced that my life experience has led me to my current thinking. My thoughts shall be a contribution towards an analytical discussion. The intention is to show ways how to tackle the challenges the future has in store. Ideally, my thoughts shall encourage you and give some hope.

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<sup>1</sup> Antje Schrupp: *Methusalems Mütter. Chancen des demografischen Wandels.* Königsstein/Taunus 2007. S. 64f.

<sup>2</sup> ebd. S. 38

## Ethical assumptions

I won't serve you perfect solutions on a silver platter. Instead, I offer plausible and well-founded solutions. If you do not agree with them we will have to engage in a dialogue. I will happily give up my position as long as you can come up with valid arguments. Freedom is pivotal. As long as I have the freedom to make a case I must allow you the same right. Only through participation and dialogue will we be able to make decisions.

In order to explain the importance of families and the 'home economics' for future challenges, I will take two steps. It is assumed that families are often exposed to the risk of poverty.

First I try to follow a question through to its logical conclusion. The conclusion becomes my central theme. Families are of great importance for the adaptability to future needs, within them values and norms penetrate to the deep layers of humans. Young people grow into individuals through loving and committed relationships and develop values needed to face positive challenges such as happiness, solidarity, frugality, critical faculty and global awareness. Families shape the view of the world, of humans, of women and men, and also shape the patterns of behavior and consumption. The family defines what kind of personality young people eventually will have. What is needed is a radical support for families.

Second I am mapping out passable approaches for the here and now against the background of my central ideas. The increase of self-confidence of mothers, fathers and workers in house economics, or the political revaluation of families, education and professional development as well as financial improvement are all worth mentioning. It means for schools to consistently extend their daily structures and it means to introduce all-day school. There are plenty more ideas.

The method in both steps is based on change of perspective. In other words I will put myself in my opponent's shoes. If I am not in a position to get an answer from another person I will address the question to myself, such as what do children expect from life in 20 or 50 years. There is a high possibility that in 50 years they wish for clean water, healthy food, clean air, social life, acceptance, and to live in a safe world. It is also an ethical challenge not to diminish the options of action. If people in 20 years are forced to deal with rubbish, with open and structured violence based on social injustice or with diseases of civilization we have caused by our behavior now their options of action will be limited. Ethics is often being blamed for being an instrument which could be applied almost at will in a pluralistic world. Ethics is not user-defined because fundamental values such as the right to live, right to food, self-determination, integrity or human dignity are inalienable. They have a high degree of plausibility and must not be abandoned. In contrast other values such as loyalty towards the country or the company are negotiable. The most important foundation of our society is freedom. I understand freedom as "freedom in relatedness"<sup>3</sup>. Freedom without relationship and commitment is arbitrary which leads to injustice and violence. Freedom in relatedness means to stick to ethical norms which provide a good life for everyone, today and in the

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<sup>3</sup> Vgl. Ina Praetorius: Handeln aus der Fülle. ;Gütersloh 2005. S. 2003. S. 103

future. This is the crucial resource we need in order to solve our problems. Whoever sees in it a limitation of freedom is putting his personal interests above everybody else's.

My thoughts are based on abundance. In abundance I see the beneficiary results of nature, culture and tradition. I did not create earthworms but earthworms create beautiful things for me, they provide me with healthy soil and healthy food on a daily basis. On a cultural note I benefit from preliminary works of farmers who painstakingly grew seeds, enabling us to feed ourselves. Also our Jewish Christian and Greek-antique tradition provides us with a basis of values that enables us to live in harmony. The achievements of our mothers (and fathers) are of crucial importance for today's theme:

*The law is not, as many may believe the beginning of good human action, it is the result of it. To feed and to be fed, to be treated well, rules that consider life and good action together form a flow, whose world historical beginning is not reconstructable, whose permanent new source most people experience: we all are born as helpless babies and would not survive, let alone would not be able to contribute to a good life if there wasn't a mother who gives her body and spirit for nine months, and if there wasn't a community that for years offers the necessary comfort as initial abundance. <sup>4</sup>*

To consider this abundance as a starting point means at the same time to express a certain attitude to life. I am thankful for everything that is around me and therefore I will be able to pay respect to life in all its forms.

To talk about abundance could be seen as cynicism whilst a certain shortage many people are suffering from is being repressed. I see it the other way round: appreciation of abundance enables us to handle shortages better, to see starvation and misery as a scandal and to campaign for a better distribution of goods. To talk about abundance is an answer to the 'era of shortages' <sup>5</sup> because with the attitude of being abundant frugality and solidarity will rise. In order to prevent terror, war and misery more people are needed, capable of living a good life based on low energy consumption and use of fewer resources.

## Challenges of the future

The 'era of shortages' is a major challenge for the future. We are being challenged on different levels.

### Ecology

Our lifestyle and our system of production are jeopardizing the relatively stable ecosystem<sup>6</sup>. Once that stability is not guaranteed anymore our adaptability will be overstrained and we will inevitably face vast social crises. Sealing and wrong cultivation will destroy soils. Erosion

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<sup>4</sup> Ina Praetorius: Handeln aus der Fülle. ;Gütersloh 2005. S. 2003. S. 93

<sup>5</sup> Isidor Wallimann, Michael N. Dobkowski (Hg.): Das Zeitalter der Knappheit. Ressourcen, Konflikte, Lebenschancen. Bern 2003

<sup>6</sup> Hans Ruh, Thomas Gröbly: Die Zukunft ist ethisch - oder gar nicht. Frauenfeld 2006. S. 71ff.

caused by wind and water, contamination through pesticides, waste and salinization will in 10 years make 30 percent of the soil<sup>7</sup> almost useless for agriculture worldwide. Air, water and biodiversity will also be affected. Man-made climate change is dramatic. Conclusion: the ecological foot print as an expression of our use of nature is by far too big. Considering that all people are equal one person should only have one ecological foot print. In Switzerland the number is 2.9, in the USA 5.6, in Bangladesh 0.3 and world average is around 1.25. It means that the developed countries need three planets in order to survive in the long term.

### **Economy**

Poverty and misery are a scandal. Swiss sociologist and UN special envoy for food Jean Ziegler equals death from starvation with murder, because the world has enough food for everyone. In 2002 one billion people lived in poverty on one US dollar a day. Around 2.6 billion lived on two US dollar a day and daily 100.000 people died from starvation.

Economic globalization has indeed improved the situation in some countries, but has at the same time widened the gap between rich and poor. I see it as a goal to abolish extreme poverty. Provocatively I claim that we can solve the problem relatively fast. There is enough food for around 12 billion people, there is enough money, and considering the logistic masterpiece of globalized cross-border trade the abolishment of extreme poverty should be a possibility. Economic globalization as we know it today cannot realize it because it is blind towards ecological and social needs. In regard to social needs not everybody has the right to live a humane life. People become needless. The fatal consequences can be found in unemployment of the youth; loss of acceptance, loss of meaning and often open violence. People's life is at risk because human beings are more expensive and less predictable than machines. Talking about one's own responsibility puts a mask on the fact that subject to the terms of competition, only the healthy, strong, smart and privileged can win. It widens the gap between have and have-not. To live the American dream is the exception. Systemic toleration, if not 'creation' of overworked, sick and needless people is not only a violation of their dignity it is also an economic insanity. Next to high costs one can also expect an increase in violence. An increase in police force undermines the quality of life of the poor and just as much of the rich.

### **Energy**

We are at the end of the fossil era because we are running out of oil and gas. The oil peak is real, a truth hard to accept. The maximum possible oil production will be overstepped in a few years and therefore decline. At the same time the yearly oil consumption will increase by approximately 2 percent. We must convert our economic system fully into a solar energy system within the next few years. This only works with a change of lifestyle. A life and the management of our economy by the principle of 'smaller, slower, closer' will be necessary.

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<sup>7</sup> Hans Ruh, Thomas Gröbly: Die Zukunft ist ethisch - oder gar nicht. Frauenfeld 2006. S. 171.

This indeed contradicts the popular ideals but could definitely be a chance. The meaning of 'downshifting'<sup>8</sup> is to cut down your working hours in favor of a better quality of life.

### Population growth - Demography

It is often said that our planet is over-populated. On one hand it is true but on the other hand there are still 20 percent of people in developed countries using 80 percent of the world's resources. On top of that the Chinese are beginning to copy our lifestyle and wish to drive a car. If we tried to stop the Chinese to drive a car because we worry about the climate we would lose our credibility. We rather should admit that our lifestyle is not to be generalized. We must scale down our ecological foot print.

In demographic terms the family structures have gone through a major shift. The number of children has declined; marriageable age and the divorce rate have increased. Developed countries often complain about the increase of old people who need to be looked after by a declining number of young people and that the pension scheme will collapse. Here it needs to be said that life expectancy has dramatically risen. This of course means that the birth rate will decline not because of women having fewer children; the reason is a higher population dwarfing their numbers<sup>9</sup>. Nevertheless the current situation does not invite to raise children. German political scientist Antje Schrupp said:

*Of course there are external elements that influence women's life and they are not convenient: A globalized and more competition orientated economy make it hard to maintain private and personal relationships. The growing social insecurity creates a climate of angst and irritation which discourages personal risk taking - and having a child is always a risk.*<sup>10</sup>

Demographic development is a big challenge because we have to reconstruct our society. To tell women to have more babies won't work. Women refuse to be objectified. The call for middle-class values and virtues is unqualified, "because competition, self-interest, individualism and autonomy are all together invented by the middle-class"<sup>11</sup>. They won't be able to bring back altruism and the care for each other. However Antje Schrupp also sees big chances:

*Despite all problems the aging society offers us the unique chance to finally say good bye to the patriarchal concept of human nature whereby a grown up man at his peak of performance is the measure of all things. We should seize that chance*<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Antje Schrupp: Methusalems Mütter. Chancen des demografischen Wandels. Königsstein/Taunus 2007. S. 82.

<sup>9</sup> Antje Schrupp: Methusalems Mütter. Chancen des demografischen Wandels. Königsstein/Taunus 2007. S. 15.

<sup>10</sup> Ebd. S. 13.

<sup>11</sup> Ebd. S. 66

<sup>12</sup> Ebd. S. 23

## Who and what controls our world?

Being confronted by all these challenges I am asking the question about the control tools. The deeper sense of neo-liberalism says that the ‘invisible hand’ of the market leads to the best of all worlds. Problems like poverty, starvation, water shortage or ecological destruction refer to the non-functioning market. Had water, as an example, economical value its price mechanism would lead to a more careful handling of water and prevent wasting it. Since there is no freedom within equals in this market, it creates poverty, exploitation and destruction of the environment. ‘Free’ market also creates a problem for public and existentially necessary goods such as climate, air, knowledge, water, seeds and food. Who still thinks about the earthworm? To protect it is economically absurd. Privatization through patents and exclusive rights plays into the hands of a small number of influential people. In the end it will be the spending power and not starvation and thirst that decide if I have access to water and food. However it contradicts human dignity and the right to food. By commodification of these goods the democratic control will be lost. Pure market control intensifies that problem.

Single players like multinationals are powerful to such an extent that their propositions often have to be adopted as they stand by laws of countries or by regulations of world trade. It not only means a loss of a country’s significance it is also a loss for farmers, employees and people without a voice. For investors and banks to have an important control function plays also a part in the concept of economic globalization. Investments are normally done in places where profits are the highest. Consideration for long term social and ecological sustainability hardly exists. Capital intensive and large-scale industrial projects have preference. In this case there are mostly not only greater risks for the environment there is also a breach of democratic co-determination and an abuse of human dignity. I am a strong advocate for democracy and wish for a strengthening of democratic co-determination on all levels. Where do science and technology stand? We inevitably depend on scientific research and technological achievement. Science and technology can indeed aim for goals but it is not clear how sensible the goals are and if society has a desire for them.

## Ethic thesis and demands

The future is ethical - or not at all. Ways to a functioning society. Under that title I have together with Hans Ruh written a book in 2006. The title is the thesis at the same time. In order to tackle the challenges of the future we must not orientate ourselves neither on technical nor ecological principles. We only have a future if we follow a moral point of view and ethical standards. I refer to the definition of “moral point of view” by William K. Frankena:

One takes the moral point of view,

- if he does not let himself be guided by the principle of egotism,
- if he follows principles,
- if he is prepared to generalize these principles and

- if he, considering all that, respects the wellbeing of every fellow human being to the same extent<sup>13</sup>.

From that point of view there exists an absolute priority of human rights and the existential needs of every human being regardless of sex, race, age, health or ecological performance. It means that interests in profits are always second rate. The radical demands for ecological sustainability, not to use more than what grows back or regenerates, has as well absolute priority over economical interests.

### **Values evolve from families. That's why earthworms need families**

How can human beings mobilize their inner strength in order to subject their individual interests to global requirements? How can we achieve global awareness? Everybody knows by their own experience, and studies prove it as well, that moral call can hardly move people to act. Even financial incentives do often fail. However to learn what others are doing does make a difference. A study looked into hotel guests' behavior why they reuse their towels instead of changing them daily. Moral call to environmental awareness was not very effective (38%). Financial incentives such as donations to environmental organizations did not work either (36%). Only the information that nearly 75% of hotel guests do reuse their towels had an impact on 48% of the guests. This might be a banal example but it tells us that crowd behavior does have the strongest impact<sup>14</sup>. Thus we can hope for a snowball effect when a certain number of people act sensibly, with the future in mind.

Primary values and strong personalities with a global awareness evolve from close-knit and committed relationships. Exactly that happens in families. Trust and self-respect evolve from here. Trust is a precondition of any economy management but is undermined in a competition orientated working world. Where do people capable of remaining open to criticism evolve from? Where resource orientated criticism is integrated in a culture of error lived in a positive way, where failure and error are absorbed by a healthy relationship. How do people become loveable? To be surrounded by loveable people. How do people develop solidarity and learn to lobby for the frail? By experiencing empathy and solidarity themselves and seeing it as an improvement in their lifestyle. How can people living by the rule 'less, slower, smaller' experience it as rewarding? By having learnt how to enjoy freedom and peace.

### **Challenges for families - Future of families**

A plea for proliferation of living together. My story of the earthworm and the family connects here. Both are in need of fertility. Good soil for an earthworm is equal to the culture of openness, equal opportunities and freedom in a family. They make quality of life possible. They provide the basis for everyone to develop their potentials.

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<sup>13</sup> William K. Frankena: *Analytische Ethik. Eine Einführung*. München 1994. S. 138.

<sup>14</sup> Sonntag, Nr. 5, 3. Februar 2008, S. 50

### **Families need more earthworms**

The title addresses the existential importance of the soil and the environment. Around 50% of people live in cities and have little relation to nature. Besides water I see the soil as being a problem in the 21st century. We can perceive water with our senses; the same does not apply to the soil. City people consider soil often as dirt. Healthy farmland is a habitat for a vast variety of creatures. Earthworms and many other creatures not only build up humus they also dig long corridors which provide the soil with air, enhancing the retention capacity of water. One square meter of healthy soil absorbs up to 150 liters of water per hour whereas compacted soil through industrial agriculture only absorbs 10 liters. Healthy soil contains around 300 earthworms per square meter, bad soil only 16. Healthy soil helps to prevent flooding, needs less fertilizer, erodes less and produces healthier food. Healthy soil is a highly efficient protection for the climate because carbon dioxide stored in humus is being bound and cannot escape into the atmosphere. Nutrition as part of "home economics" must not only point at the health of food but also at the health of the ecosystem. There is a need for regional, seasonal and unprocessed food, in the best case from organic farming. That knowledge and awareness can be built up in families.

### **Earthworms need more families**

Household chores and family work are of existential necessity for the adaptability to future needs, however they are like foreign bodies in a world ruled by economy. How can devotion be rationalized? What does it mean to look after a sick child if time is money? Home economics works in a different way. It is based on 'love' and not on cost-benefit calculation. It would be impossible to raise children under the condition of economic rules because devotion, acceptance, comfort, genuine closeness or love can't be purchased with money. The cost-benefit equation finds its purpose outside the activity, whereas home economics as 'love' economics ends in itself. I love a certain person because I just do and I look after a sick child because it just needs to be looked after. There is no real explanation for these actions. Exactly that devotion is the core of home economics and must not be jeopardized. Such altruistic relationships are the foundation of an upbringing of discerning and creative human beings. They need free space and we must create it. Countries as well as enterprises must create it because it is about our adaptability to future needs.

To turn home economics into 'love' economics of course has its danger when devotion is being idealized. That kind of work is being upgraded since I understand economy as a system where 'home economics' is part of it.

### **Outlook - What steps lead towards that direction?**

#### **1. Demand on the society**

Briefly I would like to outline what these thoughts could mean. It is important to me that the achievements of home economics are brought to light. The Swiss national statistics contains a so called satellite account. For Switzerland the achievements of home economics make up around 40% of the GNP. This great and unpaid performance not only justifies a conceptual appreciation but also a financial improvement. It is a serious question why not to bear the

costs of raising children collectively. It is self-evident in terms of old age pension. Why not the same with parenting since children are our future?

A different approach is the concept of *unconditional basic income*. Everyone should be capable of satisfying their existential needs if human dignity was more than a slogan. Demographic 'problems' could be solved through unconditional basic income independent of work for everyone<sup>15</sup>. Apparently our economy is not capable of guaranteeing work and income for everyone so one can live a life in dignity. Some have no work at all because they can't keep up with pace and demand. Some work a lot but are not able to live of it, the so called working poor. Others in turn work too much, for this reason fall ill (burn out) and live in fear to lose their job. At the same time it is not clear at all who contributes what to the durable society. Perhaps a mother does more good than a bank manager. Wage is hardly an appropriate indicator of performance. The idea of a basic income independent of work evolved from that thought. Everyone has the right to an unconditional basic income. It is high enough to just cover the existential costs. It has its various advantages. No one needs to accept any work out of existential fear. The position towards employers is a better one. The bureaucracy of unemployment insurance fund or pension scheme can be abolished. It strengthens families and equal opportunities for women and men. This concept enhances the freedom of everyone and the possibility to develop and live one's own potential and passions. At last the balance between family and career will be improved.

## 2. Demands on people in home economics

If my thesis proves to be right people in home economics will be able to draw on the society with great confidence and to encourage each other. As we could witness it needs genuine and reliable relationships with young people. It is especially important in our times where people increasingly communicate digitally. That kind of care must also be of value for people on the other side of the globe as well as for nature. It means in practical terms: a diet of seasonal, regional and organic food or clothes produced with organic cotton through fair trade.

Our work sharing society is taking us to a point where we won't be able to produce our own supply anymore and instead are forced to buy everything. It has simplified life on a big scale and enhanced dependency at the same time. We are highly qualified at work and blind in consumption. In view of the complexity of production, produce, additives, processing and transport we hardly know anything. A strategy to strengthen autonomy is a strengthening of local supply and the enhancement of the capability of making self produce. This is not a denial of the global market. However it should only be the exception and local supply the norm. The conversion should start in families. Earthworms could be an example. They feed locally and hence strengthen the eco system rather than weaken it.

### Creating the future - Creating the future with enthusiasm

Not only families but also all players in the society have an obligation. However today we talk about the role of families. Considering the abundance I have described before you are now

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<sup>15</sup> Hans Ruh, Thomas Gröbly: Die Zukunft ist ethisch - oder gar nicht. Frauenfeld 2006. S. 213ff.

encouraged to tackle the exciting and fascinating task with relish. What's better than taking part in this project 'creating the future'? It is exciting to lead others and one self to a global awareness, to work on it so I can see myself as part of the world. There is already plenty of bad news about violence, abuse and exploitation every day. There is no need to deny the dark side but there is an urge to deprive it of its force. Let's use our energy for the 'love' economics so we can happily live together. Let's do it with enthusiasm and humor and let it rub off on others. And let's say a toast to all earthworms and all human beings.

# The role of education in equipping individuals and families to be resilient and active participants in the global community

Ursula Renold

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## Abstract

*Switzerland has great significance to the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) as it was founded in Fribourg in 1908. Following the most recent world congresses in Asia and Africa, you have now returned to Europe for your 100-year anniversary. This paper will contribute some thoughts on the theme of your congress from Switzerland's point of view, and from the viewpoint of professional education. Here, I can make a link to the founding congress of 1908, as education was already central (the topics were: The training of home economics teachers, the Necessity of involving the greatest number of girls in home economics education).*

*As I would like to show, home economics has played a role that should not be underestimated in the development of professional education in Switzerland. And home economics education will play a key role if we want to equip the coming generations to master the global social challenges (Creating the Future).*

## A look back

Reflecting the Congress motto of “Reflecting the Past - Creating the Future” I will also first take a look back. As I found out from a piece of historical research, home economics has played an important role for the discussion of women’s education in Switzerland. Initially, it provided access to education for an increasing number of women (e.g. 1895: there were Frauenarbeitschulen (colleges for women’s work) in 30 places; in 1921 there were already 671 institutions). A “Federal Decree on the household and professional training of the female sex” in 1895 spelled out the importance of home economics for the beginnings of women’s education in Switzerland.

In the early days, the foremost priority was to prepare women for their duties in the home and the family. This cemented the dualistic idea of reserving gainful employment for men, and tying women to the home. But there were also first steps in a different direction: as an offshoot of home economics schools, for example, training schools were set up for (female) gardeners, that is, for a trade that would enable them to earn a living. The training of home economics teachers - one of the few areas of teaching that was undisputedly accessible to females - contributed to professionalising women’s education. The qualitative development

of home economics lessons also led towards professionalisation (issues of developing curricula were addressed early on).

### **Economics starts with Home Economics**

A few decades later (Second Swiss Frauenkongress in 1921) the discussion around home economics education received a new direction and the pioneers spoke with growing self-confidence. Previously, home economics education had served to professionalise the activity as housewife and mother (performance of household duties); now it became a factor in economic power. The activists introduced this consciously into the debate.

Bertha Trüssel argued: “Individual enterprise is the starting point for the economy. Up to 60% of the consumer economy lies in the hands of the housewife. The better she (...) manages, (...) the more she will contribute to raising the economy and the general culture of our country. Better instruction and enlightenment of young women about the links between domestic and public economy is an urgent necessity.”

The call became loud, to rationalise home economics and give it a scientific basis. Reasons for this included a comparison with the male domain of agriculture: “If, most recently, an Institute for Animal Nutrition (...) is to be set up as an annex of the agricultural department of the Federal Institute of Technology at the demand of the Schweizerischer Bauernverband [Swiss farmers’ association], then we should not describe it as immodest if housewives, in view of the economic significance of their work, beg for the satisfaction of their economic needs” (Julie Merz).

The proponents of home economics education worked towards making home economics a publicly recognised profession (with a professional association, scientific basis, access to subsidies etc.).

The campaigners for home economics education were particularly conscious of their purchasing power (and the influence associated with it). They would certainly also like to have known the monetary value of their work. This economic connection - the value of housework - is now known (see SFSO Pilot study 2004). The figures for Switzerland:

- The value of unpaid work in the household is put at CHF 172 billion, of which women perform more than two thirds.
- At 31 hours a week, women spend almost twice as long on house and family work as men (17 hours).
- Unpaid work in Switzerland is estimated at over 70% of Switzerland’s gross value added in the economy as a whole.

This gives us pointers (only estimates, of course) to the value of home economics. But what about the value of education in this field? This is what I would like to investigate next.

### **Basic skills for everyday life**

The economy starts with home economics (the motto of the association Hauswirtschaft Schweiz): the pioneers already recognised this, and it is now more applicable than ever. Recognising links between home economics and the economy should now be part of

everyone's basic skills, independent of educational background or gender. There is much in favour of giving sufficient space to home economics education. I should like to give some reasons for this:

- Climate change and ecological menace is now the most pressing problem, in the population's perception as well. To combat this actively, we require knowledge. Which products are environmentally friendly, or CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral, how does personal action affect the global context, where is the greatest effect possible? (example)
- Product diversity is constantly growing, new labels are created, additives are put in food, products are refined using new technologies. Finding your way around here is not a trivial matter. Responsible consumers need background knowledge even for their daily shopping.
- Consumers' purchasing decisions have far-reaching consequences, e.g. for the working and living conditions of the producers. We should all be aware of these (ethical aspects)
- Diseases of civilisation (obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases) are on the advance and will - in addition to the personal harm to those affected - also have adverse consequences for the economy. Improved knowledge about diet and health education from early childhood could counter this.
- Daily activities such as cooking have become trendy: just think of the cookery shows on all channels and the cult status of TV chefs. This is where we should meet young people and enthuse them, to counter the paradox that in parallel to the trends mentioned, less and less cooking is done at home and eating on the hoof is increasing.
- How to handle money, managing a household budget, has to be learned too (debt is continually increasing, particularly among young people; in Switzerland there is a larger than average number of children/adolescents living in households that receive social benefits).
- Skills for everyday life (bringing up children, running a household, organising living together) are no longer automatically learned in the family of origin, or cannot be transferred 1:1. There are still too few role models of new lifestyles (e.g. fathers who also do housework and raising children). Here, home economics lessons can prepare the way.
- New lifestyles require new skills and problem-solving strategies. The ever more frequent combination of family and career, and shared responsibility between both parents, brings relief on the one hand, because the responsibility no longer lies solely with the mother. But this also requires more communication and coordination, e.g. for unforeseen events. Parents with shared responsibility have to agree on standards in bringing up children and in the household (it is, for example, interesting that there are gender-related differences in couples who share the housework: fathers spend 70% of the time that mothers do playing and doing homework with children, while

for washing and ironing clothes this is only 7%, for cleaning and tidying up 17%, and for preparing meals 24%).

- Preparation for daily tasks makes sense. According to a Swiss study, working in a household with children has comparable requirements with running a small business.
- Along with social change comes new tasks; e.g. the care of elderly relatives. This requires models and skills.
- Home economics education can contribute to integrating children with a migration (CH: more than one fifth of schoolchildren have foreign nationality) and intercultural learning. In shared activities, knowledge transfer and exchange about different traditions is possible, even when linguistic ability is limited.
- Home economics education is interdisciplinary and demonstrates diverse interlinkages.
- Home economics education is creative and practical, and is fun. It can serve as a balance to other lessons while still teaching knowledge.

### **Education on all levels**

Home economics education links directly to the daily life of every individual and is therefore not tied to a particular level of the educational system. Corresponding topics should be addressed from kindergarten up to specialised university level.

Just as home economics constantly has to engage with new social trends, educational systems have to adapt continually to new situations and prepare themselves for the future. Thus, in Switzerland, we have comprehensively modernised the education sector over the last few years. Which overarching themes were pursued can be demonstrated using professional home economics education as an example:

Complete integration into the national education system (of which the pioneers dreamed) was achieved with the introduction of a three-year apprenticeship (Berufslehre) to become a home economics professional (previously, the training lasted only one year, as for many women's professions). In the past few years the range of educational opportunities was further completed with a shorter basic training and a multiplicity of advanced courses.

One thing that is completely new is a basic professional education for people with practical skills (basic diploma in VET on home economics). It lasts two years and includes the option, if there is aptitude and interest, to switch to an apprenticeship and so continue the career. The background to this new educational vessel is our aim to bring as many young people as possible into education post-compulsory schooling.

In the tertiary sector there is - harmonised with the different demands of the practice - an impressive range of advanced training possibilities:

- Advanced Federal Diploma of Higher PET in Home Economics Management
- Advanced Federal Diploma of Higher PET in Social Institution Management

- Basic Federal Diploma of Higher PET in Home Economics Management
- Federal Diploma of Higher PET in Home Economics Management
- Basic Federal Diploma of Higher PET in Housekeeping
- Advanced Federal Diploma of Higher PET in Farming
- Basic Federal Diploma of Higher PET in Farming
- Advanced Federal Diploma of Higher PET in Facility Management
- Basic Federal Diploma of Higher PET in Caretaking

Swiss campaigners in 1920 demanded a professorship for home economics and the possibility of taking doctorates; they reported enthusiastically of professorships in the USA. Today we are not far off, as the University of Applied Sciences degree in Facility Management (Betriebsökonom/in FH) has made annexation to the university level a reality. And home economics is also a subject for teacher training at university level. Research projects considering issues from the home economics sector in recent years, including some at universities, complete the overall picture (e.g. SNSF project HausArbeitsEthik).

### **Transparency and modularisation**

We consider compatibility with the whole education system - and thus accompanied by the possibility of taking unconventional education paths and switching fields - to be important prerequisites for the further development of a branch of education. Transparency is particularly important; precisely in fields where a lot of women traditionally trained, and which in Switzerland were often organised differently from the courses that were more often chosen by men.

[It is notable that the course in Facility Management is integrated into a field (Zurich University of Applied Sciences) that traditionally has more male students - whether this will bring more of a gender balance in home economics education or more inequalities remains to be seen ...]

To change occupational images and gender stereotypes, many measures are needed, and above all, patience. We have prioritised this aspect as well, and supported numerous measures to raise people's awareness; which of course include making traditionally female careers attractive for men.

One further important objective of our educational reforms is to account appropriately for education acquired in a non-formal way. Skills that an individual has acquired in a job, in household and bringing up a family, or in voluntary work, can today be validated and taken into account when acquiring a professional qualification. It should be obvious that these possibilities are of particular significance in home economics.

### **Education of the future**

The challenges for which our educational system must prepare its students as well as possible are often of a global nature. Equally, our educational systems are embedded in an

international context. The engagement with international trends and the positioning of our educational system is therefore one of the key tasks. Priorities that we have set in this regard in Switzerland include

- Implementing the Bologna reforms at university level
- International recognition of degrees
- Participation in the Copenhagen Process for more transparency and mobility in professional training
- Participation in the EU Programme Life Long Learning, and in the EU Framework Programmes for Research.

### **Attractive Swiss system**

Not everything has to be changed. We can be proud of what is established, and can recommend it further. The dual Swiss professional training system is attracting interest in numerous countries. We therefore want, in the coming years, to focus particularly on the international development of professional training, and intensify our contacts accordingly...

### **Conclusion**

We have seen that home economics knowledge is significant in the daily life of each individual, and home economics knowledge is also important for the design of our future. In view of this, that your professional association is organised at international level, and that you have a regular exchange, is greatly to be welcomed.

## **Celebrating the past: A critical reflection on the history of IFHE and the Home Economics profession**

Kaija Turkki & Virginia B. Vincenti

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### **Abstract**

*This plenary paper is built upon the history of home economics including its international dimension, which we regard history as a great resource. Our basic framework emphasizes the on-going important need for interaction between the profession, societies and universities that educate new professionals and encourage generation of new knowledge. Our paper has three parts. The first focuses on history and its multiple dimensions followed by the analysis of some leading trends that have influenced our profession and consequently our professional practice and pre-service education. Examples are mainly from the U.S. The second part widens international dimensions to other countries, and moves discussion to international communities as promoters for our profession. The third examines our field and profession to reveal some essentials that has been present and fundamental, but seldom discussed. These 'hidden dimensions' or silent knowledge have a central role in our profession's future. This section points out the importance of family and everyday life, which should be made more visible and powerful in our societal systems in the future. We discuss some of our resources available through our professionals' efforts and through IFHE activities to strengthen these qualities and focus more on future needs. Our rich and valuable history will help us to meet these challenges.*

### **Introduction**

This Plenary session is built on history. We hope to communicate the idea that history has many roles to play and that it can be approached in diverse ways. We regard history as a great resource and want to bring the international dimension to it. This paper looks at our history from a U.S. or North American perspective and from Finnish or European perspective because of our own backgrounds. There are a lot of similarities between these two regions, but also many essential differences. However, our aim is not to introduce the history of these regions, but to demonstrate some historical emphasis that in our understanding has an important role to play in our profession.

The presentation title is very demanding and challenging. "Celebrating" the past connotes to us something very positive, but without struggles or misunderstandings or ignorance, you

might never notice the richness or the multidimensional character of your work or profession. To critically reflect “on the history of IFHE and on the home economics profession” we have selected perspectives we think have shaped and structured our field in many countries and internationally.

Activities related to home economics/family and consumer sciences have been run around the world for centuries, under different cultural and political systems or climate conditions by individuals and professionals with quite diverse educational backgrounds or resources. However, the human basic needs and everyday activities follow the same basic rules around the world across generations. This tension between similarities and differences makes our profession and international networking rich. It pushes us to learn more from our international colleagues to cultivate our own thinking and it prepares us to meet the challenges of our rapidly changing, globalized world.

We are celebrating IFHE this week which has provided a forum and integration platform for us. It has supported many professional activities with limited economic resources, but an abundance of intellectual, social and cultural resources and primarily women’s power.

Our basic framework for this presentation emphasizes the on-going need for and importance of interaction between our profession, societies and universities that educate new professionals and encourage generation of new knowledge. We believe that you all can find your own position within this frame.

The paper has three parts.

The first focuses on history and its multiple dimensions followed by the analysis of some leading trends our profession has followed and which have structured our professional practice and education. Examples are mainly from the U.S. The second widens international dimensions to include European ones and moves discussion to international communities as promoters for our profession. The third examines our field and profession to reveal some essentials that have been present and fundamental, but seldom discussed. These ‘hidden dimensions’ or ‘silent knowledge’ have a central role in our future profession.

## **Part I: What can we learn from our history**

### **History and its value for our profession**

Through the mid-century 20th century, the U.S. was a leader in conceptualizing home economics which provided well paid positions for college-educated women for this growing profession. Many internationals came to the U.S. to obtain advanced degrees and to study our curriculum and programs. Times have changed and today the focus is on other regions where the field seems to be faring better than in the U.S. Why? Our presentations may shed some light on this question by examining it historically.

History is a field and mode of inquiry that interprets the past by using sources with meanings that have become obscure because of changes in language over time, cultural differences, and historical accidents such as loss of parts of documents and inaccurate recording of events

and intentions (Howard, 1982). It does not predict what people will do, nor does it determine what they should do, although it can help inform ethical decisions.

History is concerned with developing understanding through an historian's engagement with the sources. It uses common language, not jargon or operational definitions, making it understandable to historians and non-historians. In fact, Becker (1966) argues that everyone needs historical insight continuously as history evolves every moment.

Historical research attempts to discover not a mere event or person, but why it happened or why a person was as he/she was. Real historical activity is seeing and establishing, through evidence, connections between the focus of study and its context. However, because points and connections are almost endless, any particular history cannot make all the possible connections (Vincenti, 1981, p. 25). Therefore, historians must test their own prejudices and point out the inconclusiveness of their own assumptions, as well as other possibilities offered by the sources. Historians and their work are part of an ongoing conversation affected by the past and affecting the future. Therefore, a historian cannot write the history, only a history of something (Vincenti, 1989, p. 88).

An historical investigation looks over time at the interplay between events, thoughts and the larger social context to reveal patterns of continuity and inconsistency not apparent when examining individual experiences (Vincenti, 1981). Historical self-knowledge can facilitate critical self-examination by clarifying who we are, what we value, and what changes need to be made for our future.

Although historians bring their individual knowledge and experience (referred to as their second record) to their interpretation of something that happened in another time and place, it is essential that they understand the experiences and context of the authors of the historical records to avoid confusing their own second record with that of the past. Hagel, the philosopher, explained that historical thinking requires concrete analysis whereas scientific thinking isolates its subject from its interconnections with its context. When scientific findings are used solely in deciding what should be done, philosophers refer to this irrational thinking as a naturalistic fallacy that Runes (1960) defines as an error in reasoning that derives ethical conclusions from non-ethical premises. An example is assuming that "what is common practice" is equivalent to "what ought to be."

By conceiving an object or idea within its context, it is possible to understand the complexity of factors which influence it. An historical perspective allows the real possibilities to become more apparent and decisions to be made with more efficiency than is true only by thinking abstractly. Abstract thought used in the scientific method isolates things, takes them out of context and treats them as though they were autonomous, ignoring their interrelationships and their interaction with more than a very limited set of factors in their context (Peterson, 1979, p. 68 in Vincenti, 1981, p. 24).

History tries to understand what has happened beyond people's intentions and actions (Linge, 1976, p. xi) and how particular people and situations have come unintentionally to be and to be understood as they are. Relevant to everyone, the purpose of history is to better know

who we are and how we will live in this world. For example, interpersonally, by asking what experiences brought another person (spouse, student, parent, or client) to hold a particular perspective or feeling, we can gain a deeper understanding of the other and develop empathy and insight that can improve the relationship and our own way of responding to this person and others.

History challenges us to enter into dialogue with the sources (print, audio, visual, artefacts, and oral history interviews), asking what questions each is answering and testing our prejudgments about what happened and why. Yet, it is not merely a means to increase self-consciousness, but a way of being and approaching the world, an integration of what we know with who we are (Vincenti, 1989, p. 84).

Identifying and justifying history's approach and assumptions as distinctly different from the sciences does not denigrate either. Each asks different questions; each is useful for our professionals and everyone.

In summary, history can help us determine which of our prejudices are founded and which are not. It helps us understand human nature generally and in particular people, relationships and everyday situations. It can help us understand ourselves now and consider what kind of person we want to become and how we want to interact with other people. It can help us understand why our present has come to be as it is and help us find meaning in life by interpreting experiences.

It can help us examine consequences of choices made by revealing long- and short-term effects on those affected. History can help us consider the consequences of particular definitions of success and which subsequent actions were successful and why. It can also help us understand alternatives when the consequences of past actions were disappointing. Therefore, it can help us envision better possibilities than we would recognize otherwise. Because disciplines and professions have been considered communities, Selznick's identification of historicity as one of seven key values or interacting variables essential for the development and nurturance of community life is relevant to our discussion here. A sense of history, rootedness, belonging, and commitment to others are qualities for strong communities. Having a common history/heritage allows us as a professional community to understand our possibilities and limits and it also contributes to our ability to make sound collective judgments about the goals for the evolution of our profession (Baldwin, 1995, p. 25). By learning about what has influenced us in the past and influences us today, we can consider the legacy we want to leave to future generations.

### **Historical reflection on the profession: The U.S. as a case example**

We in the U.S. and possibly a number of other countries hold attitudes about history that fail to recognize its value. Three underlying influences on U.S. attitudes about history are positivism, capitalism with its market mentality, and individualism.

#### **Positivism**

After the 17th century Enlightenment, when Descartes denied that history was a serious field of study, historians tried to make their field respectable by developing it into another

science. The overwhelming success and prestige of the natural sciences during the 17th and 18th centuries intensified the 19th century romantic era's craving for a natural science of history (Berlin in Weinsheimer, 1985). In the formative years of our profession Ellen Richards described the ideal college curriculum for women as including "history as a science" (Richards, 1898, p. 24). Luckily, historians realized the inappropriateness of this goal and conceded that history is an interpretive rather than a descriptive field.

Positivism is a philosophical ideology and movement based on beliefs that all valid knowledge is 1) factual, based upon "positive" data derived from observation and experience and 2) logic and pure mathematics, e.g. statistics and methodological rules. Also called empiricism, it draws from the scientific method that uses careful observation and experimentation. Scientific research controls conditions (variables), isolating phenomena from its context, to eliminate bias, thus assuming objectivity (Britannica, 2008).

*Science seeks to discover natural laws, principles, i.e. generalizations, that describe things as they are and how they work, making it possible to predict and therefore, control natural and social environments and human behaviour. Positivism considers other ways of coming to know something as less valid or invalid, such as those used in history and theology. This belief prompted non-sciences and professions to strive to adopt empirical methods and assumptions (Britannica, 2008). It ignores non-scientific aspects of life, accepts its descriptions of human experience and society as givens, ignoring ethical issues and humans' need to create meaning deeper than description.*

Psychology, sociology, and economics have been influenced by positivist philosophers. Although positivism has been controversial, it has been "tenaciously held by many scientists" (Britannica, 2008). From the positivist's perspective, progress is made by replacing scientific theories with new ones based on new facts discovered about "the way the world really is". Consequently, the old is denigrated and the new is revered as more valid and closer to the truth.

Positivism has created a hierarchy of disciplines and increasingly narrow specializations resulting in a reduced understanding of life as an integrated whole. If epistemology were part of general education, would it increase understanding that although history and science use different approaches, they both generate value knowledge.

#### Capitalism and market mentality

Capitalism, its resulting market mentality, and individualism are not separable, but I will attempt to discuss them separately while recognizing overlap. Capitalism grew out of the notion that individuals should be free to pursue their own economic self-interest competitively with minimal limits needed only to protect others right to do the same. Its success is dependent on continual growth in demand. Since people's needs are limited, demand has to be created by planned obsolescence and advertising promoting the new and rejecting the old in order to increase demand. This has led to materialism resulting in an expanded work week, lost weekends, increased stress, greater emphasis on convenience, little time for family life, reduced family communication, overscheduled children, less creative play and exercise, more impulsiveness and less self-discipline, record levels of

personal debt and bankruptcies, and frequent consumption of fast food resulting in an obesity epidemic. The belief that time is money has also increased the pace of life with intrusive and time consuming E-mails, text messages, and phone calls we don't want.

Callahan's (2004) book, *The Cheating culture: Why more Americans are doing wrong to get ahead*, also points out a decline in our civility toward each other when it comes to economic advancement. According to Callahan (2004), cheating has increased in educational institutions as it has in business, politics and other aspects of society. Education is seen as a commodity to be obtained with the lowest cost in time, energy and money. What is valued is what can clearly lead to that goal. Higher education has become quite vocationally oriented, making most majors (not just home economics/FCS programs) today preparation for paid employment. Many students see college not as a means to becoming a better person and increasing our ability to improve our society, but as a means to a good job with a high income. The vocational perspective prepares students for the workplace "as it is" in terms of values, power relationships, assumptions, and use of humans instrumentally. It accepts the economy and its impact on individuals, families, society, and the world "as they are." Because it ignores ethical questions, it is not concerned with what is right and just, in making society "as it should be".

#### Individualism

During the last 25 years, these growing trends just described have become norms contributing to deterioration of the quality of life. Competition pits people against each other and emphasizes individual self-interest rather than the greater good. History helps us to understand that some of our ethical mores have eroded over time in an effort to get ahead individually. Bellah and his colleagues, in their 1985 book, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, described American individualism as arousing in us a strong desire for autonomy and self-reliance, while we also hold a deep conviction that life is empty unless shared in interdependent community with others. The language of our culture of individualism encourages a negative view of community life and a preoccupation with achieving our own private desires as a means to fulfilment. The "rat race" results from pursuing what can never give life meaning in the fullest sense because getting ahead is relative to others, not based on a level of living. As others "get ahead" we must continually raise our standards to measure our "success" and our self-worth. When we are on this competitive treadmill, we become impatient with reflective study of how our lives got this way for fear of falling further behind our moving target. We have lost a lot of the meaning of life for lack of time to ponder it and to live in deeper relation to each other. Many have lost the meaning and benefit of education as we focus on our individual competitive race toward economic success. Mary Catharine Bateson (1994), anthropologist, pointed out that we have a great capacity to recognize the interdependence between ourselves, others, and our environment, but we have encouraged ourselves to focus too narrowly. Our specialized views of knowledge, careers, self-interested goals and gratification, often culturally defined, have weakened our ability to see the interdependence of ecosystems. We believe life is a competition for dominance or power over other people, leading us to believe that the earth and its resources are to be conquered and dominated because they exist for our use. Bateson (1994) argues that we need to reemphasize an integrative, interdisciplinary perspective and

collaboration with others because we need each other because we each possess needed and unique expertise and perspectives.

Ellen Richards, one of the founders of our profession in the U.S. presented a paper entitled, "The social significance of the home economics movement," at the 1908 Lake Placid Conference on Home Economics. In it she wrote, "The home has a distinct ethical as well as economic meaning. It should include mutual helpfulness in spiritual matters as well as mutual economic benefit" (p. 14). However, she lamented, the consequences of industrialization have removed much of the productive work of the home and shifted values and relationships within families from cooperative labour needed for survival to more individualistic consumption of goods and services obtained from outside the family. She also acknowledged economic exploitations of factory workers by the "successful" men who did not furnish decent housing for labourers, who worked such long hours that they had little time and energy [left for their families]. . . . Family members "slept under the same roof, but had no common life and no common interests" (p. 15).

This trend has increased over our 100 years to the point that family members can be even in the same car or same room, but all are electronically connected to different activities, reducing opportunities to get to know each other, negotiate common activities, discuss problems, and learn ethical reasoning and social skills. Science and technology, individualism, and capitalism have brought us here. Without an historical perspective, we may not realize the impact of our daily lifestyle choices on our and others' families, our societies, and the world.

This argument espousing the value of historical inquiry is not meant to diminish the value of empirical research, ethical reasoning and critical inquiry, but to encourage use of historical knowledge in addressing issues of individuals and families, which impact society and the global village (See Hultgren & Coomer, 1989). Thus, in order to plan and act responsibly and meaningfully now, an historical perspective in our personal and professional lives is essential. For instance, making wise decisions about our future would be impossible if we were suddenly struck with amnesia. How would we be able to determine the best course of action? We wouldn't know who we are; we wouldn't remember insights from past experiences, we wouldn't understand our interrelationships with others. An historical perspective is essential for sound professional practice that is truly beneficial to families, consumers and society. Brown (1984) argued that our profession has been influenced by positivism, capitalism, and individualism to our own detriment and that of those we serve. They have influenced the amount of funding available for different types of research. Non-scientific and non-financially oriented concerns of people and families have had much less funding available than the sciences and athletics, even though they have immensely important contributions to make. As a profession and individually as professionals, we are all influenced to some extent by these powerful contextual forces. It is difficult to maintain a reflective and skeptical focus in a culture that doesn't respect deep questioning of the dominant ideas of the society.

However, with historical insight, we can learn to communicate better within our own society by understanding our philosophy, research, and practice within an international context that provides a diverse array of perspectives and practices that stimulate self-reflection. An

historical understanding provides insight about what options might work well in our own country and culture that a present-oriented perspective cannot provide. Such insight also helps us to understand our international and global interdependence. We have the power to change, to strengthen our profession and its impact, if we have the knowledge, skills, and desire to look beyond our status quo. With an understanding of alternative modes of inquiry, including history, we can help individuals and families understand how their situations came to be and realize options previously invisible. Historical understanding can help us see beyond the present and avoid getting swallowed by these cultural values. We owe it to those we serve to develop an historical perspective on what is happening in the world and why. With such depth of understanding, we will be more likely to be reasoned and ethical decision makers and able to enable our constituents to be the same. We can contribute to the tempering of excesses in our society and individual and family lifestyle choices that will lead to more meaningful lives and a better world.

## **Part II: International communities as promoters for our profession**

An historical understanding of IFHE can help us create a collective memory which would strengthen us as a collaborative, international community. Those who have been active in the IFHE or other similar international organizations have a different view on international issues than those without such experiences. Our new history book introduces the various international activities and achievements of our profession in detail. It also introduces many personal accounts and insights that reflect international thinking. We invite you all to read the history book and to use it as a resource in your work and personal life (The IFHE History Book, 2008).

We believe that home economists around the world have been quite international from the very early stages of the profession. However, there are great differences between regions and countries in dealing with international issues, reconciling international and national activities, and seeing their value for our own countries. Reflecting on the meaning of 'international' has been nearly missing in our discussions, and defining 'international' and/or 'global' may differ greatly.

The first part of this paper mainly focuses on US history and the North American perspective, which are important for all of us to become familiar with because they have had such a clear influence on many educational and professional activities in all regions. Many of you or professionals in your countries have been educated in US universities or may have used textbooks, research articles or course material that originated in the US.

This part of the paper takes another approach to international issues based on European experiences and the possibility of reflecting on home economics internationally. In my case (K.T) the IFHE has provided an excellent forum in which to make personal and professional connections widely in Europe and all four other regions, and to communicate with researchers worldwide. This all has had a great influence on my thinking and my understanding of home economics. Under the next heading we will reflect on some main points of IFHE history and how this international community—our global platform—can contribute to our personal and professional lives. The third part presents some results.

## **Making it together - The IFHE as a global platform**

The IFHE History Book (2008) clearly reveals that we have had a strong message, but has our voice been heard in critical arenas that influence structures such as educational systems and national policies that affect home economics (family and consumer issues)? The answer is **yes** and **no**, and we certainly can bring our voice to the various new forums that have been created as well as make our voice stronger. It can be made stronger only by our members working together on activities and by strengthening our networks. The strength of our voice is also dependent on how successful we are in making our message understandable and appropriate for the diverse situations that we are involved in. Our history as well as our present situation strongly confirms the plurality and various forms of our professional practice. This variety of practice can be a great resource if different solutions complement each other and if constructive communication brings more expertise and new kinds of networks and interest groups within our reach. Unfortunately, plurality can also result in fragmentation which separates units starting to build their own orientations.

By looking at our history, we can find hundreds of examples of the achievements of home economists. Much of this work is invisible and not recognized in any public records. On the other hand, home economics is present everywhere in our societies, but we say - even amongst ourselves - that home economics has disappeared. Something that is sure—and we hope you agree—is that our societies are calling for our expertise and knowledge on many frontiers and in all countries. Our work is focused on the fundamentals, the necessities of human life that will never disappear. As a professional organization, it is our task to ensure that our understanding and practice addresses the needs of each era. At this point in time, it is time to summarize our activities, clarify our main goals and real competences, and to use our international networks to bring this all together.

## **Our engagements and ownership of IFHE**

The IFHE is a very special and unique forum. How we see the IFHE is very much dependent on how we are engaged in this Federation. We can engage IFHE in different ways. Through our membership we can pursue our own interests or be linked to our professional organization or our work community. Whether we build our relationship to the IFHE at a national level, regional level or international level makes a difference. For many members the World Congress is their only concrete link to the IFHE, but similarly our history reveals that there are many who are committed to this Federation at several levels and for several decades on a voluntary basis. There are many examples of whole families participating in the IFHE and enjoying their experiences. We have seen so much continuity and human commitment to our organization, and without it, this 100-year milestone could not have been realized. All the members and participants of even one single Congress are important, but because the number of members is a very critical issue for any organization, we want to reflect on this matter a bit more.

We can approach this issue by counting the possible members who could have joined. From this perspective we can say that the IFHE is an international organization that has attracted only a limited number of people. If we count all the professionals who have been educated and who have worked under this organization, the number of individual members has varied

greatly over the past 100 years, with the largest membership being in the 1970s and 1980s. The peak was in 1979 when 2775 individual members paid their fees. The number of member organizations has been in general between 100 and 200. Most professionals are linked to the IFHE through their member organizations, which can be professional associations, educational institutes or other organizations related to home economics. This is why the critical question is how these member organizations have integrated an international dimension and the IFHE into their professional activities. How well do they support their members and development of international understanding, and how eager have they been to bring an international or global perspective to the work of their organization? We have heard many times that international issues have been designated as the responsibility of single persons, which seldom produces sustainable results. One single person can certainly be an excellent role model to inspire others, but usually cannot create changes in thinking and behaviour on a larger scale.

The different types of relationships we have with the IFHE greatly effects how strongly we feel towards this organization. The concept of ownership or mental ownership is very useful in this context. The notion of mental ownership has much in common with engagement, commitment and feelings of responsibility (Breiting 2007). If you feel mental ownership, you certainly can link the IFHE more closely to your personal or professional life, and you can create many more resources around it. We are sure that there are a large number of home economists with a high level of mental ownership in this Federation. The problem with the IFHE is that our actions can be focused in so many directions that it is impossible to account for all of them and to draw a complete picture of all our achievements and results. For many it is quite difficult to identify what is an IFHE activity and what is not. We have a visibility problem and an accountability problem, which we will return a bit later.

By being involved with various activities of the IFHE since Oslo Congress in 1984, I developed bonds to the IFHE that are multidimensional and rich. For me the IFHE is a worldwide network where you can reach nearly all countries and access the diversity of other members. The traditions of holding conferences and meetings in various parts of the world and of including cultural events, even home visits, open our eyes and demonstrate new ways to practice our field and daily life. It is difficult to measure the value of hospitality and friendship and the understanding gained from such experiences. The value and importance of all these personal contacts and networks enrich and make great contributions in my work as a university teacher as I try to share these insights with my students. The IFHE has made the relationships to many international organizations such as the United Nations concrete and real to us and reminds us that we can have an influence. I hope that many of you experience strong feelings and pride concerning the International Year of the Family in 1994, which we regard as a huge achievement, and that you approve of the successful networking that resulted from it. As a whole I regard my membership and work for the IFHE as an investment. It is an investment in myself, our students, and our profession. I feel that the IFHE is my international home.

### **Our global challenges and responsibilities**

From our history book we have noted the importance of our consultative status to various agencies and our activities with the United Nations. At the Federation level several valuable contributions have been recorded. The UN has also provided many home economics career

possibilities, which should be promoted much more within our professional bodies and educational systems. Our representatives have maintained continuous communication between the IFHE and the UN. Unfortunately, in the history book we read “that our UN representatives have not been provided with sufficient support and information from members.” Certainly they have been left alone too often.

Quoting again from our history book, “If IFHE is to continue to engage in and have an influence on UN activities, and through these activities, to advocate on behalf of families and households worldwide, the issue of wider involvement of IFHE members is an issue that will need attention in the future.” The possibility is there to be involved with various themes and topics. It is just a question of whether we can educate our professionals to see the value of this kind of international work and whether we can formulate our message better to fit the present issues on the UN agenda.

This section (II) entitled “*International Communities as Promoters for our Profession*” has briefly introduced the tremendous resources that we all have under the IFHE, but has also pointed out many concerns that need more attention. Internationally, many different voices and dimensions have resulted in a fragmented image. On the other hand, the richness of our field is built on diversity and multiplicity. We need interpreters, approaches and frameworks that help us to decipher that complexity and to integrate our knowing. Interaction with society will remain central.

Our final section (III) points out the importance of family and everyday life, which should be made more visible so that it can have power in our societal systems in the future. We discuss some of our resources available through the efforts of our professionals and through activities of the Federation to strengthen these qualities and to focus more on future needs. Our rich and valuable history will help us to meet these challenges.

### **Part III: Demonstrating the diversity and capturing the whole**

This third part tries to look beneath the surface to reveal something that is regarded as valuable to and characteristic of our profession. These qualities have been practiced, but not often discussed. This is why their presence in and influence on our profession have both positive and negative sides. We call these characteristics ‘hidden dimensions’ or ‘silent knowledge’. The IFHE and our profession might have achievements that we have not even discovered ourselves. We will reflect on our goals and missions, our research contributions, the multiplicity of our practices and our relationship to society.

#### **Reflecting on Our Goals and Missions**

We, the IFHE and our profession, have always had a mission that is clear enough for all to follow. This mission has been titled a bit differently and reformulated several times, as the IFHE history book explains (2008). Our mission will be discussed during this Jubilee Congress as well. We give the mission our full support, but at the same time we realize that there are other professionals besides us who have the same mission to serve individuals, families and communities and to promote well-being. Something we want to say is that the mission is not enough to guide us further. We need *visions* - preferred states - that we want to achieve, and

we need functional tools that enable us to take the steps to fulfill that mission. Home economics is a mission-orientated field, but at the same time it is practical, philosophical and future-orientated. Without a vision, no real progress can be made.

Upon reflection on our achievements, it is not completely clear whether our daily activities have followed our mission and a clear vision. We have followed certain lines and built structures that might not allow us to use the *full capacity* the profession of home economics is capable of, based on our long and rich history.

When approving our goals and missions we have to pay attention to the fundamentals of home economics. Our goals must be related to the body of knowledge we have created and to the practices we use in our teaching, research and other areas of action (see Kieren, Vaines & Badir 1984; Vaines 1992). It is important keep this in mind and to critically examine whether our everyday practices and research procedures follow the goals to which we are committed. In this way the fragmentation that has been one of our main ‘problems’ throughout our history can be avoided. The other concern is that of ‘specialization’ - not the specialization as such—but how it has been introduced to our students, new generations and as those outside our field. We are wondering if our specializations have followed the needs of society closely enough. Behind the *fragmentation* and *specialization* we can find some reasons we should consider. Many scholars, such as Marjorie Brown (1985) in her philosophy book, Rosemary von Schweitzer (2006) in her new theory book or Sue McGregor (2006) in her transformative practice book, have pointed out our restricted view of human beings, family and everyday life, and society. Several examples can be pointed out in education, in research or in the work done for business and administration etc.

The world is changing and so is home economics. Our history verifies that home economics can be practiced in various ways, which we regard as richness of our profession. Home economics is largely context based on and expected to result in diversity in our products and achievements. However there is—and will remain—a common fundamental *core* for our profession worldwide that supports some degree of unity. Our task is to discover and to use this core as our key resource and nurture it in our activities, whatever they are. This core serves us on a personal and professional level, the family context, in our communities and in all sectors of our societies and in international forums. We have to create for ourselves a clear understanding of this core and how it is constructed. Otherwise our message will remain ‘messy’, as our history book also documents. And if our message is messy, it is very difficult for people outside our profession to understand our premises and for us to work together effectively.

#### Reflecting on our research contributions

Research is an essential source for new knowledge, and what kind of research is carried out in our profession is not a trivial issue. The importance of scientific discussion and knowledge has been present under the IFHE from its beginning, but it took a relatively long time before research was emphasized in our World Congresses. The first research sessions were in Ottawa in 1980, but it took until Minneapolis in 1988 to have a full scale research program including published abstracts (Brittin, 1988). The history book details the activities run by the research committee. The discussion under the committee has been innovative and highly professional,

but many great ideas or proposals have never been completed for many reasons. It is quite hard to work on a voluntary basis under time limitations and very often with a lack of support from your background organization.

In this jubilee congress we have nearly 400 research presentations. This can be regarded as an excellent achievement, and we congratulate all the researchers who have contributed. The research presented here reflects very well *our traditions* in higher education and the university sector. It is a result of how we educate our researchers and the research strategy of each university or country. The research also reflects the qualities of the units under which home economics researchers are located.

After being involved in five screening processes (since 1992) of about 1700 abstracts submitted to the IFHE, I feel a responsibility to raise the question of whether the research and all the hard work behind it has been the best possible investment for the future development of our federation and our profession. We have had far too little discussion of the premises of research as well as of how to get young researchers involved and how to get your research financed or published. This is not a new concern since it has been discussed several times in our publications. But it clearly has resulted in some negative effects on our federation as well. The lack of a stronger research emphasis has led researchers in many countries to find other forums and organizations in which to identify themselves as researchers. The message of the IFHE as a research forum has not been clear. This is why we welcome all the initiatives during this Jubilee Congress to strengthen our research and to connect the research to professional practices. A strong connection between research and practices in both directions characterizes us well. However, it is good to remind ourselves that the Federation cannot change the situation. The main target groups are our universities and research organizations.

#### Reflecting on our practices

Understanding and reflecting on practices is the most important focus our professionals can take. It has been our strength historically, and should be taken even more seriously in the future. It is a question for all of us, not just researchers or teachers, to think about. It may start from reflecting on your practices in your own daily life, and extend to how you identify your contributions on an international scale. We might pose many questions to ourselves and our work communities, such as how to teach, how to do research, how to communicate, how to support your colleagues and students, how to keep contact with other professionals and how to react to something that looks strange. Asking why may be even more difficult. Practices can function as *integrating bodies*, and most subject issues, dimensions and processes are connected to practices.

#### The qualities and dimensions of our practice

Our practices reveal our understanding of knowledge, of our values and of our relationship to society, culture and nature. With our actions we build our relations to different environments and reflect our knowing (Turkki, 2007). The complexity of everyday life and the huge variety of various processes related to family and consumer issues make this challenging. We process elements from various origins, which results in many new combinations and relations to be

recognized. Further, the human commitment and hidden messages inside these relations need more attention. This simple framework has followed us from very beginning and teaches us something very basic about us and about human nature.

Reflecting on the practices of the past and present is challenging but rewarding. It may lead us to create that fundamental core for our profession that many of us are looking for. It can be said that we have primarily looked at practices from the outside and have not succeeded in revealing their inner contents, dimensions or value based on the human point of view in all its variety. To be part of a human profession means knowing what a human is like? Much of our research has certainly been in this line, for example, estimating the value of housework or women's work in general or working on health or environmental issues, but in most cases the reasons and rationality for the research have been defined narrowly and not based on the qualities and value of those practices to people. The approach has not been based on everyday life realities.

Social and cultural issues need more attention. Human action is socially and culturally constructed. In our societies we all greatly enjoy our cultural and social achievements, but in regards to our field, we may not have emphasized enough our similar achievements, our cultural and social innovations, that we have created and practiced. In Finland some years ago, researchers in the field of social policy invited 100 key persons to nominate a few social innovations that have had remarkable contributions to Finnish society and its welfare. The list of social innovations is interesting and has much in common with our field. (Taipale, 2006). The IFHE may establish a similar worldwide project to collect a hundred of the best social innovations from each country. As a result, during our next conference we may introduce 10,000 social innovations that our professionals have invented or promoted. The Finnish list includes innovations such as free school lunches for all children, a special kitchen cabinet, some traditional food items, the North Karelia project to change food habits etc.

Discussion on social or cultural innovations is not strongly enough present in defining innovations in our societies (Wilenius, 2005; Himanen, 2004; 2007). Innovation has been highly technology driven and has not resulted in enough human friendly solutions. It is also true that the discussion on sustainable innovations is just getting underway (Hautamäki, 2008). Another aspect is how to assess and measure social and cultural contributions or well-being including these contributions in a comprehensive manner. Many countries and international forums are examining and generating new measuring tools that we should focus our interest on because of our approaches and knowledge base. Our holistic approach can connect social and cultural dimensions to ecological, economic and technological ones. This is something our practices promote since we work with people we have opportunities to have their voices heard, such as consumers, citizens and members of various defined groups in all sectors of society. These opportunities also challenge us to strive for balance between the various groups and perspectives we deal with. New combinations of ideas result in discovering some new qualities.

Various human commitments (such as values, ethical codes or cultural sensitivity) that function as uniting elements between economical or technological and social or cultural dimensions are embedded in our activities. This has helped us to create and promote human

approaches to economics or technology that are different from the approaches from within the pure sciences and economics. We need appropriate competences to bring these perspectives together because we realize, and have been committed to throughout our history, that this is the only way to reach sustainability. Relating, uniting, coordinating and innovating are examples of processes in our professional practices that are difficult to point out but essential for achieving valuable results.

Our commitments challenge us to be specialists in human approaches. We believe that this area should be given more attention in order to reveal all the nuances of our past achievements. This is an exciting journey to which more passengers should be invited and which also leads us to pay more attention to knowledge and learning. In our history, education and development processes represent our stance, and our practices have focused on preventative efforts and are mostly based on long term goals (Bubolz 1996). We certainly do have all the competence needed to reach a *sustainable future*. Education for all is a real vision we have adopted, but unfortunately many of us limit the education to the specialists of education.

### **Knowledge, ignorance and learning**

Understanding knowledge and its relation to practices is very relevant in our field but too often taken for granted. All citizens living in information or knowledge societies should be interested in different dimensions of knowledge and how to create new knowledge. We can also improve our message if we show evidence of our real understanding of knowledge and its relation to our research and education practices. We have many scholars such as Eleanore Vaines (1992; 1997; 2004) who has addressed this issue in a fundamental way while creating frameworks for a family perspective on everyday life. Her 'many ways of knowing' maps reveal different interpretations of knowledge but also analyze knowing as a quality of people, groups and societies that are meaningful in our interpretations of practice. She also relates knowing to time, space and power structures with which we constantly straggle. Her approach corresponds fully to that of the home economics perspective and is rooted in our history (Turkki, 2004b). Paying attention to different dimensions of knowledge and doing research on knowledge-creating processes can enrich our body of knowledge in a remarkable manner.

Besides the concept of knowledge, we should not neglect that of 'ignorance'. The researchers in the Club of Rome have held an interesting debate on ignorance, its presence at all levels and its different forms (Neuvonen, 2004). In present societies we appeal to evidence-based knowledge, but we may ignore the fact that most of the problems of society are due to ignorance. At a personal level ignorance can be based on a lack of basic education or motivation, or can be caused by manipulated information. At the systems level it may be dependent on outdated structures, a false analysis of situation, or a lack of vision. Applying this to our practice, we should ask whether it is a question of ignorance or just a hidden dimension. To discover our ignorance is one part in our reflective journey.

Education has had and will have a central role to play in home economics, and our profession has been very strong and highly innovative in education at various levels and in many sectors of society. It is the core of our intellectual heritage, and teacher education should be

regarded as its main generator. Our focus in education has always been preventive. If we succeed in educating all our citizens to have the capacity to supplement their basic needs related to food, housing, care and safety jointly with their communities, many of the present problems could be avoided in the future. The preventive quality makes education and learning key resources in our societies. Recalling our premises to work on a long term basis and to envision the future, we certainly can claim that home economics has always been committed to the idea of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning includes all forms of education, and not just formal. Learning in everyday life, while taking care of our daily activities, is our future classroom.

Education and communication together can build strong competences in our professionals within and outside teacher education. Home economics is about relations and communication. We help people create relations between themselves and different aspects of their environment, including nature and cultural and social environments. Human actions are tools in creating those relations. Our specialty in contents such as food, services, housing, family finance, gender issues, health and child care serve as our means of communication. We try to bring our home economics message to the forum, our networks, task groups and teams to make it available publicly. The more competent we are in building relations and in strengthening communication, the more deeply embedded we are in society.

#### **Promote holistic and integrative thinking**

Home economics can be seen as a combination of human development, healthy living, social responsibility, the sustainable use of resources and cultural diversity (Turkki 2001; 2004a). In our daily life these are integrated and form an interdependent whole. This makes it important to build competences and to support thinking that helps us to structure the whole and to recognize the importance and constant movement of various relations, which can be made meaningful and their influence on the whole can be revealed. In our definitions or theoretical approaches, some of the strong lines that we have followed can be regarded as our collective achievements. They have been introduced and practiced in different formats. The two fundamental approaches discussed here are household or family resource management and human ecological theory, which we do not claim have been perfected, but they have included everything needed to cover and introduce our key messages. At the moment there is an urgent need to reflect on them further. Both of them can also be indicated as titles of university study programmes or names of institutes. This gives them visibility. We are sure that most of you know the basic premises of these theoretical approaches (e.g. Deacon & Firebaugh 1978; Hallman 1991; Goldsmith 1996; Engberg et al. 1996; Goldsmith & McGregor 1999; Rettig 2003; von Schweitzer 2006).

These theories have evolved over time into several emphases and applications. The fact that their origin lies in other fields demonstrates the applied nature of our profession. However, these theories have many implications and directions that progress to critical science and beyond. Their value and importance has received a greater emphasis over the past few decades because of environmental and global concerns. Their grounds lie on systemic premises. Both theories emphasize the relation between home and society and between human action and the environment, which has convinced us to give them a special place in

our history. They will lead us into the future, helping us to maintain our diversity of ideas, methodologies and applications.

We believe that our ecological heritage, which includes strong human and social commitments and integrates ideas about resource management, can help us promote sustainability and better understand interrelated and connected wholes. Throughout our history we have paid attention to both economic and ecological thinking and promoted cultural understanding, which have transformed our practice. Productivity, sustainability and creativity can be combined together (Turkki 2007).

In Finland we have much experience in working with these frameworks within household or consumer economics and in home economics education historically. Many research applications have been introduced in our international household and family research conferences since 1990. One of our aims has been to cross disciplinary borders and to pay close attention to different theoretical approaches, research methods and paradigms. Since 1994 these premises have also framed and formed our Finnish national home economics curriculum (National Board of Education 2004). Home economics is a compulsory subject for boys and girls, and we have teacher education in home economics at the level of the Master's degree to allow and encourage a strong research emphasis. For our centennial in 1991 the historical research done on our achievements and crises will serve as a valuable resource which can be used to reflect on the profession and to build a holistic understanding of it (Sysiharju 1995).

Many other characteristics should be pointed out to clarify our progress in Finland and other countries. The qualities of a society in a broad sense certainly contribute to the presence and form of the home economics profession. In Finland we can say that our society supports home economics and home economics education quite well. Many of our educational and social policy issues are in line with home economics concerns, especially consumer affairs and citizenship issues. We have long traditions in household and consumer research (National Consumer Research Centre and TTS-Institute, 2008). The same goes for women and family organizations and adult education systems (Finland, 2008). Our investments in technology and international issues may also have an important influence in many respects. Transferring all teacher education to the university level and raising the requirements of teacher education to the Master's degree level were important actions that have strengthened our ties to social, behavioural and human sciences (see Jakku-Sihvonen & Niemi 2006). However without a strong interest in new kinds of research based on theoretical, philosophical and practical grounds, no greater progress could have been realized. Rethinking home economics and focusing on human action in everyday life have provided the basis for many innovations (Turkki 2007; Tuomi-Gröhn 2008). Difficult times and "our crises" in the 1920s, 1940s and 1990s have pushed us to develop valuable and sustainable insights that have led to new thinking and practices.

#### Reflecting on our relationship to society

It is not easy to see home economics in our societies. Can you point it out? Where and how is it manifested in our education systems, in the media, in politics and in business? Even countries that have never had home economics as a subject can certainly have home

economics issues in many forms. We can also argue that some activities labelled home economics may not actually support the premises of this profession.

Reflection on our relation to society has been discussed in this paper. Few would claim that our field and profession does not relate to society. However, we have a reason to say that our relation to society is one issue that has been greatly neglected, forgotten and hidden away. This should not be the case. The future of home economics as a profession is greatly dependent on how successful we are in clarifying and strengthening our links to society and how our messages are received. It is time to make our many societal contributions more visible and to become accountable for those relations. Within our profession we have created a broad base of knowledge, but many outsiders have the understanding that our focus is narrow and trivial without direct links to present society. Now it is time to bring our knowledge and expertise to the forums that are establishing new procedures and are indicators of societal contributions, social responsibility, sustainability, multiculturalism and citizenship, and work-life balance issues, all of which have an influence on our everyday life and on most of the professional activities we are involved in.

From our research we know how critical it is if we cannot identify the value of such things as household work, education or social services. We also know how critical it is if children do not have good food and a good living environment. We waste human potential and innovative capacity in all societies if we do not learn to read the society and its dynamics and bring different dimensions together. Our role as advocates for individuals, families, consumers and communities is to promote the understanding that connects economical issues to those of human potential, respects the diversity of people and their resources, integrates cultural and technological innovations, and respects nature and acknowledges its limits. We do have that expertise, but we still struggle to make those connections and unite ourselves intellectually. It is also important to work diligently on our key subjects of health and welfare, nutrition and food safety, consumer and family management, housing and living environment, gender issues, and education. There will be new knowledge and innovations generated, but these areas will remain necessities.

Our societies need the contributions of our professionals. Many of these needs have been added to the agendas of the international organizations that the IFHE works with. Calls for expertise to address environmental and climate change, health and safety, cultural diversity and human rights and trust-building are numerous. The call for education will never abate. All these calls represent needs at all levels of society from basic human needs to global systems (Turkki 2007). In addition, new needs offer opportunities and challenges. The presence of these fundamental needs within our profession provides a reason to reflect on our education systems, research policies and our professional practice. This centennial celebration and these valuable historical documents provide new tools for further reflection. This year is also an excellent opportunity to evaluate our international federation to determine whether we could develop closer links to other organizations and networks that have goals similar to ours. Our members surely have great ideas to bring to the common forum. New initiatives may be linked with themes already announced, such as *Education for All*, *Education for Sustainable Consumption and Education for Global Responsibility*, which we hope will stimulate contributions in all countries, regions and at the global level. Our common network - the IFHE

- provides a common forum in which to work together and to learn from each other. Our common commitment and our cultural and national diversity are meaningful and important resources to help us promote any of those themes, and many of our members are already working on them.

This section (III) entitled, “*Demonstrating diversity and capturing the whole*” has reflected on our profession and our professional practice from personal to professional and local and global dimensions, providing some recognized and hidden dimensions that can strengthen the core of home economics. These findings bind us tightly to our societies as active contributors. This section also has reflected on the uniqueness of our knowing - home economics knowing.

### Conclusion

Our history informs us that home economics has a sustainable mission. After looking at our profession on an international scale and through its hundred year history makes us to conclude that we are serving our societies in multiple ways and we have created a knowledge base for our profession that is fundamental to the society. Since we are a life supporting discipline and field, we address many basic life-sustaining elements such as food, housing/shelter, and care of people in various cultural, social, and natural environments using our ecological heritage. We are convinced that we have a role to play in the continuously changing present and future world because advocacy for individuals, families and communities as basic units of all societies and cultures around the world is and will remain relevant. As long as we are loyal to our profession and able to integrate our knowledge with others, we will make progress with promising results. Change is our challenge.

We cannot escape our history, but we can generate it as an enriching resource. We invite you all to learn from reading our history and analyzing it at various levels—locally, nationally, regionally and internationally. We also have to learn to analyze our societies better. The phenomena of everyday life are very complex, being connected and influenced by various structures and processes in our societies and in families as depicted by various theoretical models or frameworks and demonstrated through our professional practices.

These claims are not easy ones to fulfill. They invite us to continuously develop our competences as professionals. This is why the universities and all other bodies that have responsibilities to educate new professionals and create new knowledge and new thinking have key roles. They create joint social activities within our own countries at national level and among international partners. They have a responsibility to continuously reassess their own structures and operations and look critically at the foundations of society. For society-oriented and mission-oriented professions such as home economics, it is essential to understand the interaction between the profession, society and the universities, which is a key message of this presentation.

The main task of a professional organization is to provide a forum that invites professionals to share their experiences and knowledge with others in on-going debate and discussion. We can learn so much by listening to others. Our Federation is very rich in its diversity, which is a great resource we could utilize more efficiently. This centennial celebration provides us an excellent forum to rethink our premises and to identify new perspectives for our work. We

hope that this week will function as a renewing experience for many of us so we return home with new energy and hope.

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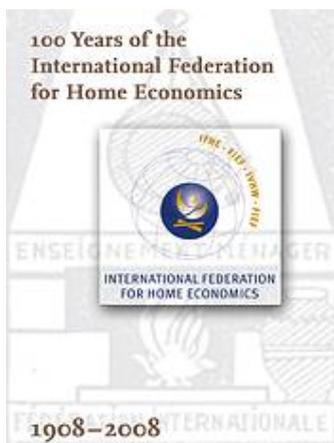
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## Book Review: 100 years of the International Federation for Home Economics

Sue L.T. McGregor

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*Arcus, M. (Supported by the IFHE History Committee). (2008). 100 years of the International Federation for Home Economics, 1908-2008. Bonn, Germany: International Federation for Home Economics. ISBN 978-3-9812393-0-0. 442 pages, Hardcover, dimensions of A4 paper [www.ifhe.org/299.html](http://www.ifhe.org/299.html) 45.00 Euro plus shipping.*

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) marked its 100 year anniversary in 2008 and prepared a written history as part of the celebration. The book was officially launched at the July centennial congress in Lucerne, Switzerland by Margaret Arcus (Canadian). 100 years is such a special occasion and this book really is an appropriate commemorative symbol. The cover of the book is intriguing. The original corporate logo is used as a watermark and the most recent logo is overlaid, also as a watermark. They blend together to stylishly represent the melding of 100 years. It is very heavy to lift but delicious to touch. You just want to close your eyes and enjoy the silky sensation of the feel of the cover and the inner pages. But please, do open your eyes to read it because it is chock full of IFHE delights.

A labor of love, the book reflects a true intellectual contribution to the profession. As the adage goes—we need to know where we came from in order to move forward. There is a preface, a table of contents, acknowledgments, lists of tables, photographs and illustrations,

both a name and a subject index, a reference list and several informative appendices. The book was vetted with 20 topic experts and re-worked using their feedback. The content is organized into two parts. Part 1, The History of IFHE, comprises five chapters, and accounts for half of the book. Part 2, IFHE Around the World, is one chapter containing regional, sub-regional and country reports prepared especially for this centennial story. Part 2 plus the Appendices account for the other half of the book.

In the 2-page Preface, Arcus explains the work of the IFHE History Committee and some challenges involved in preparing this compelling written history of the Federation. She recounts the loss of two boxes of original documentation in 1954, the challenge of reading the earlier documents prepared in the French language (IFHE moved from Switzerland to France in the middle of the century), and technical decisions about remaining true to original spelling, punctuation and the like and referencing styles. These details will matter to some people, and I am grateful that they are clarified for us. A most useful clarification is about the decision to use a Nexus typeset, which has the special, and initially distracting, feature of the use of the ligature ct, a connection of two separate letters into one. So, every time you encounter a word with c and t in it (like *Director*), you will see the t curled back so it joins the c. After awhile, you don't notice it—promise!

Part 1 traces an engaging history of IFHE organized into five chapters: (a) the founding of IFHE, (b) the nature of IFHE (mission, aims, etc. (c) the governance of the federation, (d) the work undertaken by IFHE, and (e) the future of IFHE. I will discuss each chapter in more detail, and direct you to a good summary of the first four chapters at pages 206-215. In 10 short pages in Chapter 1, Arcus draws us into the origins of IFHE during the very early days of the 20th century. She recounts the founding congress, the formal establishment of the Federation in Fribourg, Switzerland, and the first statutes detailing how the new International Office would function. Appendix A is a chronological, point form overview of the major milestones of IFHE, from its inception in 1908 to the Centennial Celebration in 2008 (five pages). Chapter 2 (40 pages) sets out the nature of IFHE by profiling the evolution of thinking and practice around such ideas as: aims and mission, name, corporate logo, the location of the head office, official languages, categories of membership, finances for the federation, and ongoing revisions of statutes (1922, 1954, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s). This chapter is enriched with many colored photos and illustrations, old and new.

Chapter 3 (25 pages) turns to a discussion of the governance structure of IFHE over the last century. The main instruments for running the organization are discussed in interesting detail: the Congress Assembly, the Council, the Executive Committee, Commissions/Standing Committees/Committees of the Council/Task Forces, the Secretariat (head office), the President, and the role of volunteers. From what I have heard about the internal politics of IFHE, the account shared in this book is a rather tame overview of the system of governance, but then again, Arcus used only written documentation and we all know that the dynamics often do not get set down on paper. I guess each member will have her own lived experiences to fit into the overall profile of the 'small p' political life of the organization. A few years ago, I noticed a huge improvement in the level of service provided by IFHE's head office. Arcus explains that in 2005, the current Executive Director implemented a Quality

Management System (QMS) to improve work efficiency. The implementation of this QMS formed the basis of PhD of the current webmistress and quality manager.

Chapter 4 (127 pages) tells the story of what IFHE has accomplished through its work over the last century. Arcus recounts, in splendid detail, the nuances of the 21 world congresses held by IFHE, and even provides the programs for each congress in Appendix B. If you presented at a congress, check the Appendix to see if your name is memorialized in this book. She then profiles the evolution of IFHE's modes of communicating with members and the public, from the original *The Bulletin* through the Newsletter to the website [www.ifhe.org](http://www.ifhe.org). She also identified three books published by IFHE and explained the publication policies and procedures developed by IFHE. In the third section of this chapter, Arcus shares the trials and tribulations of the IFHE documentation center and archives, referring to this as our international library. The archivists amongst us will be moved by this part of our story.

Still in Chapter 4, Arcus turns our attention to the Resolutions that have been passed by IFHE over the last century. She provides the original wording for almost 200 resolutions, in Appendix C, creating a repository of rich, marvelous insights into our social and political conscience over the last 100 years. This is a major contribution of the book, paving the way for future thesis and dissertation projects. Indeed, she posits at p. 126 that "Little information is available on the outcomes of IFHE's many resolutions."

The Federation has consultative status at several agencies in the United Nations (starting in 1952) and with the Council of Europe (starting in 1970). In her discussion of IFHE's role as an international non-governmental organization (INGO), Arcus identifies 20 Statements and Position Papers prepared by IFHE (on such topics as food, the advancement of women, social development, poverty eradication, and the family) and the 20 major INGO meetings attended by IFHE (1972-2008). She then shares a compelling analysis of the issues arising for IFHE in its international work (e.g., heavy reliance on a small core of aging volunteers, public's perception of what is home economics, and inadequate funding to support such pressing initiatives). She includes a separate section in Chapter Four (14 pages) on the provocative and influential role IFHE played in implementing the UN International Year of the Family (IYF, 1994).

Continuing in Chapter 4, Arcus discusses the activities undertaken by IFHE to help clarify home economics terms and definitions in a complex international setting. I was not aware that, in 1963, home economics was defined in a Glossary of Terms, by an IFHE Committee on Terminology. Other related initiatives culminated in the 2008 IFHE Position Statement: Home Economics in the 21st Century, released at the July 2008 centennial celebration, and reprinted in the book at pages 164-166. In a span of 16 pages, Arcus tells the story of how IFHE's Programme Committees evolved over the years. IFHE did not have Programme Committees until 1981, when five original committees were established. Arcus describes the basic work of each of these five committees (including names changes and mergers with new renditions) and then adds sections for eight new committees that emerged between 1982 and 2003 (see Figure 3).

Arcus also discusses the establishment of the Young Professional Network (YPN) for students and recently graduated professionals of the Millennial and Generation Y age cohort and the Senior Advisory Committee for ex officio, retired (or invited) members of IFHE committees (established in 1998). The former is an attempt to recruit and involve students. Interestingly, there is no mention in IFHE's archives of involving students until 1968. YPN was established in 2002, and now has its own website at IFHE, [www.ifhe.org/238.html](http://www.ifhe.org/238.html). They define themselves as "a group of dynamic enthusiastic globally aware members of IFHE who feel empowered and proud to actively promote home economics."

Arcus concludes Chapter 4 with a discussion of the IFHE/Nestlé Student Study Abroad Program started in 1986 and suspended in 2000 (12 students to date), IFHE's three recognition awards, and the dynamics behind the eventual establishment of a World Home Economics Day. In 1981, March 20 was recognized as a day when members of the profession can promote IFHE, promote home economics and engage in activities that raise funds for IFHE. Arcus concludes the chapter with a overview of how IFHE moved from a collection of member countries to regionalization, wherein countries are organized into regions, four in 1973 and five regions in 1980. The intent was to expand the base of IFHE beyond that of Europe so as to improve communications, increase solidarity, expand availability for INGO related initiatives, undertake inter-nation research, and strengthen governance in regions outside of Europe's head office. Although in a separate section of the book, in Part 2, Arcus shares 20 pages of regional, sub-regional and member country reports (31 of 57), especially prepared for this written history. Everyone will enjoy reading their country's story and will wonder why their country is not included. I hope this section is an impetus for people to maintain records of related initiatives so rich accounts of country and region success stories are provided for the 200th celebratory history.

Chapter 5 is titled The Future of IFHE. I would have placed this chapter at the end of the book, instead of the end of Part 1. Regardless, Arcus shares a summary of the first 100 years of IFHE at pages 206-215, organized using 25 sub-headings. She then turns her gaze to the future, looking through the lens of seven dimensions of IFHE: world congresses, resolutions, IFHE as an INGO, programme committees, documentation center (archives) and institutional memory, and finances. She poses valuable reflective questions for each of these aspects of the lived life of IFHE. I appreciate these questions. Having read its compelling history, I am prompted to offer more ideas about IFHE for our reflective consideration and action, and I anticipate others will be so moved. I wonder about the impact of the: (a) worldwide decline in volunteers, (b) the worldwide decline in association membership, (c) the worldwide decline in the number and scope of university home economics programs, and (d) the lack of respect for the role of the family as a social institution. What about the struggle to get the Millennial generation involved in the profession?

Reading the book also prompted me to see new opportunities. IFHE could work to strengthen the connections between all generations: Millennial youth, Generation X, Boomers and Seniors. It could seek best practices for the nuances of running an international NGO facing financial constraints. IFHE can support graduate students intrigued with the themes, position statements, resolutions and such, leading to new research and commitment to the Federation. IFHE needs to reiterate the future proofing stance adopted in the 2008 Position

Statement. It should invite further comments about the Position Statement. I also recommend other program committees, to take us beyond the current focus on content areas (reflecting the plague of specializations and fragmentation) to embrace processes and contexts. Consider: (a) a Human Condition/Human Needs Committee, (b) a Sustainable Home Economics Committee, (c) a Professional Competency Committee, (d) even a New Intellectual Approaches Committee. Under new leadership, IFHE approved a new Philosophy and Leadership ad hoc committee at the 2008 Council Meeting in Switzerland.

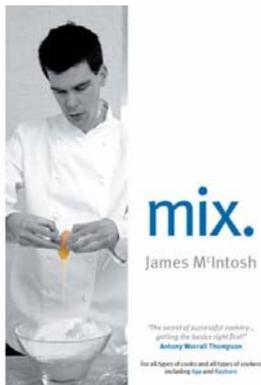
After I finished reading, I asked myself, "What would an outsider see if she or he read IFHE's story as recounted in this book?" I think they would gain a sense of the tremendous pride and deep commitment of a small cadre of worldwide volunteers working for a worthy cause. They would gain an appreciation of the scope and magnitude of the reach of IFHE, especially at the United Nations—most people do not know about this aspect of IFHE. They would see that IFHE has come into the 21st century with renewed purpose, an articulated position statement, and a sound technological infrastructure respecting the global nature of its membership and its work. The story gives readers a sense of, as Arcus said, "the inner life of the background of IFHE from day-to-day, over time." Readers will also experience an undertone of scarce resources, financial constraints, and a dwindling volunteer base couched in hope and connection to the future for the sake of the human condition and the family as a social institution. A heartfelt thanks to Margaret Arcus and the IFHE History Committee for honoring our past so we can honor our future. Rethinking the work of IFHE and the profession is forever enriched by this intellectual contribution to the field.



## Book Review: mix.

Suzanne Piscopo

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*McIntosh, J. (2008). mix. Evesham: Word4Word. ISBN: 978-1906316143. 100 pages, paperback, dimensions 14.8 x 10.8 x 1 cm*  
[www.bookdispensary.com/acatalog/James\\_McIntosh.html](http://www.bookdispensary.com/acatalog/James_McIntosh.html) £4.99

This pocket size 100 page book is brimming with recipes, variations of recipes and practical advice which James McIntosh presents using a light-hearted approach. The focus is mainly on basic and traditional recipes, perhaps more well known in Britain and in countries with a British heritage. However, there are also some classic international recipes such as crème brûlée, Genoese sponge and Dacquoise Pavlova, as well as more globalised recipes such as pesto, aioli and couscous. The recipes cover a range of basic mixtures which can be used for starters, sauces, main dishes, desserts, snacks or accompaniments—though James has chosen to use a simple classification of either savoury or sweet items. It's not clear however what criteria were used for sequencing within this classification—perhaps James wanted readers to read through the list to locate a recipe. The Index at the back does help of course.

The recipes make good use of vegetables and fruit, and sometimes a vegetarian version of a dish is given as well. Yet, clearly James did not intend placing emphasis on healthier cooking. Perhaps, as a Home Economics professional, I was expecting some effort at showing recipe modification to decrease the sugar or fat content of recipes and/or to add fibre. Tips on adding wholemeal flour to shortcrust pastry, choux pastry, scones and biscuits could perhaps have also been included. Moreover, teachers would have to be careful if using this book in a Primary or Secondary school setting as some recipes use alcohol. A glossary of key terms would have also been handy, for example, to bake blind, rubbing in, folding in etc.

Overall, however, this book has much going for it. It provides a good foundation for learning basic cooking processes, offers valuable safety and practical tips for achieving a good product, and encourages users to be a bit adventurous with their tastebuds. It is the first book in a series of four. I look forward to reading the next three, especially if they follow the same stated principles of “No fiddle, no fuss, just food.”

## LEADING HOME ECONOMIST WINS PRESTIGIOUS COOKBOOK PRIZE

Press Release 17 December 2008

This year’s prestigious Gourmand Cookbook award for Best UK Series Cookbook has been given to Home Economist James McIntosh, for his book *mix*. James will now qualify for the Gourmand Best World Cookbook award, which is to be announced in May 2009 at the annual Gourmand gala dinner.

Eduoard Cointreau, the president of Gourmand, explains that “the main objective of the Gourmand World Cookbook awards is to reward and honour those who cook with words”, and to help readers find the very best of the 26,000 food and wine books published every year. Previous winners include *Larousse Gastronomique: The World’s Greatest Cookery Encyclopaedia* by Prosper Montagne and PH10 by Pierre Herme. This year there were approximately 6,000-8,000 entries.

*mix*, which is published by Word4Word, is the first of four pocket-sized cookbooks by James McIntosh, the UK’s leading Home Economist. It is a terrifically comprehensive guide to basic proportions in cookery, giving the quantities needed for simple, everyday family food. It contains over 170 recipes, from how to make white sauce to how to prepare pastry and is an essential cookery book. James includes useful tips on saving money on food and fuel, as well as variations on all recipes.

Forthcoming titles in the James McIntosh Series will include dinner., veg. and cake.

## Notes for Contributors

### Frequency of publication

Twice a year. Papers for review will be accepted throughout the year to e-mail: editor@IFHEJournal.org.

### Focus

The International Federation for Home Economics is the only worldwide organisation concerned with Home Economics and Consumer Studies. It was founded in 1908 to serve as a platform for international exchange within the field of Home Economics. IFHE is an International Non Governmental Organisation (INGO), having consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC, FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF) and with the Council of Europe.

This refereed journal brings together emergent and breaking work on all aspects of home economics, and most importantly, how we might improve and renew the everyday work of home economists. It features quantitative and qualitative, disciplinary and trans-disciplinary, empirical and theoretical work and will include special editions on key developments. It aims to push the boundaries of theory and research—to seek out new paradigms, models and ways of framing home economics.

### Contributors

The *International Journal of Home Economics* welcomes contributions from members and non-members, from a variety of disciplinary and theoretical perspectives.

### Author's biography

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

*Associate Professor Donna Pendergast, PhD is Program Director in the School of Education, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia. Donna researches and writes about home economics philosophy, education and practice. Donna is a member of the IFHE Executive, Chairperson of the IFHE Think Tank Committee, and Editor of the International Journal of Home Economics. She has served as National President of the Home Economics Institute of Australia, and President of the Queensland division. She was Editor of the Journal of the Home Economics Institute of Australia for ten years and serves on several Editorial Boards. E-mail: d.pendergast@uq.edu.au*

### Manuscripts

Manuscripts should be sent electronically to Associate Professor Donna Pendergast, School of Education by E-mail as d.pendergast@uq.edu.au. Please send files as a Microsoft Word document (doc) or in Rich Text Format (rtf). Paper length should not exceed 6000 words. Each document should be double-spaced, with generous margins.

A standard coversheet must be submitted with all manuscripts. It is available from the IFHE website. Papers submitted without coversheets will be returned to authors. A separate first page should include the full title, a short title for use as a running head. The title should not exceed 10 words (50 characters), and should be followed by an abstract of 100–200 words and up to five keywords. Material which requires substantial editing will be returned to the author.

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The details required for books are:

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Pendergast, D. (2001). *Virginal mothers, groovy chicks & blokey blokes: Re-thinking home economics (and) teaching bodies*. Sydney: Australian Academic Press

The details required for journals are:

Names of authors or editors (year of publication). Title of article. Title of journal, volume (issue), page numbers, for example:

McGregor, S. L. T. (2007a). Consumer scholarship and transdisciplinarity. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 31(5), 487-495.

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