

Truth or Consequences: Advancing Equity in Family & Consumer Sciences in the United States

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Abstract

This paper examines the history of home economics (family and consumer sciences) education and Cooperative Extension practices in the United States, from 1862 to the present. Efforts are made to understand in what ways the lives of marginalized people were addressed by the home economics profession over time within the United States. In light of this historical context, this paper features current efforts to decolonize FCS/home economics across three practice settings, including an Historically Black College/University (HBCU), a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) (land-grant), and the Cooperative Extension System. As members of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Diversity and Inclusion Community, the authors conclude with questions and goals for addressing colonialism in the home economics profession in the United States.

KEYWORDS: COOPERATIVE EXTENSION, DECOLONIZATION, EDUCATION, FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES, HOME ECONOMICS, EQUITY

Introduction

Noting the impact of national truth and reconciliation commissions, this issue's preamble highlights national responses surrounding the rights of Indigenous peoples. As part of these national responses, education could be examined as a space for addressing the impacts of colonialism, while further decolonising curricula, accounting for the complex lenses that support the identity development of diverse students. This also holds true for Home Economics (HE). Exemplified by Fox and Owens (2021), decolonising HE requires confronting the Eurocentric status quo permeating [Canadian] HE, while working to indigenise (integrating the traditions and cultures of Indigenous peoples) the [Canadian] HE curricula.

The United States has similarly colonised Indigenous peoples. Its history of enslaving Africans, accompanied by continued systemic racism among these and other groups, generates additional

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complexity. The United States has yet to nationally formalise any truth and reconciliation commissions, though some states and local communities have responded to trauma endured among Native and African Americans (Lu, 2021; Martin, 2020; & Souli, 2020). In the absence of national policy, and in the midst of political partisanship of varying degrees across the states, various institutions, including education, have committed to culturally responsive practices (Gay, 2018; Herrera, 2016; & Muhammad, 2020). Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) in the United States has lagged behind—reflecting a degree of ambivalence, inconsistent with the critical, emancipative perspectives central to the FCS discipline and profession (Brown & Paolucci, 1979), though reminiscent of the founding intentions of FCS/HE in the United States (Richards, 1912).

Fox and Owens' (2021) observations are similar to those of Penny Ralston made decades earlier. Ralston accounted for conformity to White Euro-American norms reflected in cultural bias toward Black life and other marginalised groups, likewise disenfranchising Black home economists from the profession's inception through the 1960s (Ralston, 1978, 1988, p. 29). Eurocentric US-FCS values, practices, and content persist, though change is beginning. Responding to member concerns, the American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) sanctioned the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Community, to review Association practices and policies; forward advice to strengthen DEI throughout the organisation; create a plan of work incorporating DEI practices; and facilitate programming enhancing DEI on every Association level (AAFCS, 2022b). As members of the DEI Community, we (the authors) have been steeped in deep dialogue on how to move US-FCS forward with strategies for collectively advancing and incorporating meaningful DEI practices into our work.

This general review paper aims to bring the US-FCS profession into this ongoing international dialogue surrounding decolonisation of HE. This paper seeks to better understand the historically situated, colonising practices of the US-FCS/HE profession, especially FCS education, teacher education, and the Cooperative Extension Service (Extension). While working to understand in what ways the lives of marginalised individuals and families were addressed by FCS/HE over time, this paper also features current efforts to decolonise FCS/HE across three practice settings. We couple US-FCS/HE history with current practices, reflecting Nickols' belief "that understanding the historical context (population, economic, cultural, environmental transitions, etc.) in which FCS was sustained and the parallels to the present provides insights for advancing FCS today and in the future" (2017, p. 8). As such, we illuminate the truths of racial bias and colonisation in the US-FCS/HE profession, while aiming to eliminate their persistent consequences for those we serve. As the case studies demonstrate, current practices assert the value of all people, challenging normative practices of cultural displacement for the dominant narrative (Caswell, 2014).

Methodology

This paper strives to better understand the FCS/HE professional positionality in the United States, by utilising self-study as a historical, reflective and active approach for building equity and social justice within the profession. The multi-method approach for historical research outlined by Nickols (2017) includes content analysis of archival records (e.g., syllabus and curriculum review), the synthesis of academic literature, and integration of multiple current case studies to understand the scope, depth, and challenges of FCS/HE in the United States.

We selected articles, books, and syllabi to understand how FCS/HE education addressed the lives of marginalised individuals, families, and communities over time. The literature search focused on historical FCS/HE culturally relevant practices across multiple contexts: FCS/HE programming, teacher education, and Cooperative Extension. This included how cultural and ethnic groups were referenced and words used at the time each document was written. We accessed literature and other resources from three university library catalogues, Home Economics Archive: Research, Tradition and History (Cornell University Library Digital

Collections, 2020), *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, and database searches using Academic Search Premier, ERIC, and Google Scholar. Search terms included: *home economics, teacher education, Cooperative Extension Service, culturally relevant, policy implications, Negro/Black experience, Indigenous experience, Native American experience, Black extension agents, and home demonstration agents.*

Confronting racial biases in FCS/HE requires observing FCS/HE within the context of several major events occurring in the United States beginning in 1619: slavery (1619-1863); Native American removal (1780s-1851); European, Asian, Southern and Central American immigration (1619-present); United States Civil War (1861-1865); Reconstruction (1865-1877); *Jim Crow*, a racially-based class system (1877-mid 1960s); migration of Black citizens from southern states (1916-1970); world wars (1914-1945); the Great Depression (1929-1941); the Civil rights movement (1940s-1968); and major education legislation (see Table 1). We only include those studies that provide information about the FCS/HE experience within the United States.

Table 1 Summary of Federal Laws and US Supreme Court Decisions Impacting Teacher-Education and Home Economics Extension in late 1800s, and Early to Late 1900s

Legislation	Impact
Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862	allowed the creation of land-grant colleges using proceeds from sales of federally-owned land for the benefit of agriculture and mechanic arts.
Morrill Land Grant Act of 1890	institutions received cash instead of land and aimed at former Confederate states. Act required states to show that the current land-grant institution did not have race as part of the admissions criterion, or else to designate a separate land-grant institution for persons of color.
Plessy v. Ferguson 1896	US Supreme Court decision ruling that racial segregation laws are allowed as long as accommodations for each race were equal in quality. This became known as the “separate but equal” concept.
Smith-Lever Act of 1914	federal law establishing the cooperative extension services, connected to land-grant universities.
National Vocational Education Act / Smith-Hughes Act of 1917	provided for federal funds directed to vocational education in agriculture, trades and industry, and homemaking
Capper-Ketcham Act of 1928	provided additional funds for extension agent salaries.
Indian Reorganization Act / Wheeler-Howard Act of 1934	legislation to reverse the goal of cultural assimilation of Native Americans into American society and to strengthen the tribes and perpetuate their historic Native American cultures. Act also restored to Native Americans the management of their assets and to provide for vocational education.
Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka 1954	US Supreme Court overruling 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson and determining that “separate but equal” was unconstitutional for public schools.
Civil Rights Act of 1964	act outlaws discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin in the workplace and public facilities.
Civil Rights Act of 1968	act prohibited discrimination with regard to housing, known as the Fair Housing Act.
Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994	provides land-grant status for certain Indian colleges and institutions.

Historically Situating the Formation of Home Economics Education

Multiple Proceedings from the Lake Placid Conferences explored specific course offerings; scope of FCS/HE; related subject matter; vocational and industrial inclusion; and delivery of education. Additionally, cultural relevance had some recognition in FCS/HE curricula. In 1903, Sarah Louise Arnold, articulated several traits of a successful teacher, including “knowing the minds with which she deals”, “know[ing] her subject in its relation to the pupil”, “know[ing] the pupil”, and “study[ing] the experience of others” (Arnold, 1903, pp. 8-9). The *Syllabus of Home Economics* (AHEA Committee on Nomenclature and Syllabus, 1913) included specific statements regarding culturally relevant curriculum (plausibly derogatory). For shelter, the *Syllabus* included considerations such as: “customs of *primitive* races; solution of shelter problems in nomadic (tent dwelling) tribes, under patriarchal and communal conditions, in isolated and grouped dwellings and so on; usages of other times and other races” (emphasis added, p. 62). For food preparation, the *Syllabus* provided guidance including “customs of different times and races” (p. 23). These are only two of multiple statements found in several areas of study in the *Syllabus*.

Textbooks, Curriculum, & Colonialism in United States Home Economics Education

Textbooks can provide some insight into student readings and provide a template for classroom instruction. Early HE education textbooks demonstrated some attention to cultural relevance. *Teaching Home Economics* (Cooley et al., 1919) presented a scorecard for rating teachers on what appear to be culturally relevant characteristics, including a sense of justice, attention to individual needs, and fairness, where a successful teacher is “interested in human nature” and has “time and thought and interest to give to the individual pupils in her class” (p. 236). Relatedly, Matthews (1926) advised:

When planning a course in [FCS/HE] for any school it is essential that the teacher should know from what kinds of homes the students come; what is the average income of the families of these girls; what nationalities they represent; what is the social life of the neighborhood. (p. ix)

Brown and Haley (1928) recommended that “the curriculum must provide for individual differences” (p. 74), and encouraged teachers to learn about community members. More explicitly, Fleck (1980) promoted examination of cultural pluralism and development of cross-cultural and multiethnic understanding. Fleck included an entire chapter on values, identifying cultural relevance for teachers throughout the text, recognising that teachers facilitate learning by being able to think and feel like their students.

While these textbooks suggest some culturally responsive thinking, a critical account of FCS/HE education contributing to colonialism is essential. Trennert documents (1982) that education for Indigenous girls consisted of learning domestic chores including “the manufacture and mending of garments, the use of the sewing machine, laundry work, cooking, and the routine of household duties pertaining to their sex” (p. 275). Disciplinary practices were used to train girls, as was the *outing system*, placing girls in White households for domestic training and English language acquisition. Expanding westward, many schools had limited funds, relying on Indigenous girl student-laborers for maintaining schools, with little emphasis on formal education. “Domestic sciences continued to dominate the women’s program” (Trennert, 1982, p. 281).

Similarly, the intent of domestic science for Black women was to prepare them for their roles as wives and as domestic servants in White homes, denoting limitations on opportunities, and lower expectations for student success (Ralston, 1978). Five years after passage of the 1917 Vocational Education Act, a report on 13 United States Black FCS/HE education university teacher-training programs (Lyford, 1923) described the negative living conditions of rural and urban Black families, emphasising sanitary conditions, food supply, clothing, homemaking skills,

and family budget[ing], recognising domestic training as a means for improving girls' lives. Lyford further noted:

Table service must be taught as it will be possible of practice in the student's own home *or in homes in which she may have vocational experience*. Housing planning must be developed with the thought of improving the unpainted frame shanty so common in many sections, and of encouraging home ownership and developing attractive cottage home. (emphasis added; p. 62)

This report noted "improved standards of workmanship and of good taste in dress were observed in most of the clothing classes and in the dress of the girls" (p. 33), implicitly suggesting lower standards and degraded quality expectations for students. All of this suggests that US-FCS/HE contributed to the colonialism of both Black and Indigenous girls.

Separate but "Equal": Land-Grants, Education Funding, & Extension

Before the United States Civil War (1861-1865), Black Americans were largely prohibited from any formal education with a few exceptions, primarily in northern private institutions. In the southern states, educating Black Americans was a criminal offense (Williams & Williamson, 1985). The Morrill Act (1862), established federally funded land-grant institutions, offering training for agriculture and industry. While the intent was to "educate the common man, crossing socioeconomic and racial barriers" (Brooks & Marcus, 2015, p. 234), southern land-grant universities prohibited Black students. Data on several northern land-grants documented a long gap between institutional establishment and when the first Black student graduated (Slater, 1996).

Throughout Reconstruction (1865-1877), shortages of Black workers and Black students barred from southern land-grants led to the second Morrill Act (1890) (Comer et al., 2006), prohibiting racially discriminatory admission policies at federally funded institutions. The legislation came with a caveat: states could establish separate yet "of like character" institutions instead of integrating their flagship land-grant institutions. Across the South and Southeast, states established separate land-grants for the education of African Americans, now known as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). This legislation established 19 Black land-grant institutions, compared to 57 White land-grant institutions, where funding discrimination between these institutions was consistent with other legislation of the times.

The severe underfunding of HBCUs, including teacher-training programs, provides significant historical economic context as suggested by Nickols (2017). Southern legislators threatened passage of the 1914 Smith-Lever Act (establishment of Extension Service) if equal funding was required for both White and Black land-grants (Manor, n.d.). Documentation surrounding the distribution of Smith-Hughes vocational teacher-training funds revealed a disproportionately low share of funds to Black institutions (Florence, 1938), consequently underfunding HE education for Black students (Brooks & Marcus, 2015). Federal law mandated funds be allotted to states according to the total state population, though states frequently distributed funds to White and Black colleges unevenly. In 1928, although Black citizens constituted 35.7% of Alabama's population, only 10.5% of teacher-training funds went to Black teacher-training institutions, while those in Maryland and Missouri received none (Florence, 1938). The racial funding gap persists in higher education, impacting tuition, resources, and facilities (Murakami, 2020), with evidence that HBCUs "are systematically shorted of critical resources [by various state legislatures]" (Broady et al., 2021, para. 8).

Mandated by the 1914 Smith-Lever Act, land-grant universities and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) conducted Extension work jointly (MacNab, 2014; Manor, n.d.). Extension utilised demonstration work, considered the most effective approach for extending university research to educate the farmers and homemakers. While the Capper-Ketcham Act (1928) funded all states to enlarge their Extension programs and hire new

Extension educators, it did not equally distribute funds for hiring new White and Black educators, amplifying discriminatory funding by state legislatures controlling Extension funding, resources, and programs (Wilkerson, 1938). Arguments made for hiring Black Extension educators were not about equity in hiring but because politically and socially, White women were not permitted to enter Black homes (Harris, 1997). Until the 1920s, when the 1890 colleges took charge of the Black Extension, the 1862 land-grants controlled both White and Black Extension and home demonstration educators. In 1956, the 1862 and 1890 colleges merged to form one land-grant group (Brooks & Marcus, 2015).

Prohibiting Discrimination in Extension

The Civil Rights Act (1964), Title VI, increased equity by prohibiting discrimination in programs, including participant exclusion or limitations, and denial of benefits for any program receiving Federal financial assistance. Programmatic equity was a concern for both Black and Indigenous communities. In the 1930s, Extension educators in the Division of Extension and Industry of the Indian Service investigated the “sociology of home economics among the Indians” (Burton, 1936, p. 1), under the umbrella of the Indian Legislative Reorganization Act (Wheeler-Howard Act 1934). Several presumed issues causing serious problems of living were reported: Indian attitudes, social disorganisation of the Indians, unstable economic conditions of the Indians, prevalent theory of Indian government and Indian education. While the very premise of Extension education should have supported the right and ability for people to exercise self-determination for themselves and their land, political, and economic systems, the Eurocentric colonial lens degraded, disregarded, and devalued the lives, traditions, and values of both Indigenous and Black individuals and families.

This review of historical documents provides evidence of limited culturally relevant curricula drafted by founding US-FCS/HE professionals, with no Black representation. The early textbooks emphasised concepts of knowing the students and their needs, while later texts encouraged cultural pluralism. The documents also provide a glimpse of Black public-school FCS/HE programming. Given the passage of time, it is difficult to assess culturally relevant practice. The example of building attractive cottage homes might or might not reflect deculturalisation efforts. Teaching Black women FCS/HE for the purpose of being domestic servants is indeed an example of colonialism. The intent of teaching Black women ways to improve health, food supply, clothing, and family budget has merit if the curriculum was approached with an understanding of, and consideration for, the values, needs, strengths, and assets of the Black community. In the next section, we offer case examples featuring culturally responsive teaching, including practices that demonstrate commitments to inclusion, access, equity, and diversity (IAED) within an HBCU, a predominantly White (land-grant) institution (PWI); and within Extension. Juxtaposing this historical overview of FCS/HE colonial practices with current examples to decolonise FCS demonstrates the importance of seeking understanding to advance US-FCS (Nickols, 2017).

Current Examples of Culturally Responsive Practices

Case 1: Highlighting Contributions of African Americans in Human Sciences

Black home economists may feel a certain amount of ambivalence when viewing their role in the profession. While they have a desire to promote the importance of home and family life, they must also deal with the stepchild way in which their own involvement in the profession began. Black home economists were not included in the Lake Placid Conference and were victims of the political and economic implications of domestic science curriculums. And for the most part, Black home economists have not played active roles within AHEA (American Home Economics Association) until recently. (Miller et al., 2009, p. 38)

As the above quote implies historically, marginalisation or absence of the contribution of Black people to all aspects of American life exists on every professional level. This perspective elevated White people, promoting the false narrative of them as prominent contributors to FCS/HE. Without a concerted effort to feature the contribution of all races, these deceptions are perpetuated and impact the way non-Whites view themselves. This view is especially poignant in younger generations. Consequently, the curriculum taught in several courses at Morgan State University has been infused with the rich history of the contribution of Black Americans to the human sciences profession. These projects aimed to provide students of colour a holistic view of the contributions people of colour, especially Black people, made to the field of human sciences.

As noted earlier, prohibition of Black students attending White institutions paved the way for creation of HBCUs. HBCUs were, and continue to play a vital role in the education of Black people. FCS/HE has served an essential part in the mission of these institutions (Jackson et al., 2021). Religious or non-government entities founded several other HBCUs. Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland, was founded by the Washington Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1864 (Morgan State University, 2022), with Home Economics being one of the 10 majors offered at the college in 1933 (Morgan State University Alumni Association, 2022).

Strategies to Highlight People of Colour

Orientation to FCS is a course designed to introduce students to the field of study. It provides an overview of FCS/HE and investigates the history, theoretical foundations, mission, and role of FCS/HE professionals in assisting individuals, families, and communities in achieving optimal quality of life. Expected learning outcomes include: researching the significant contributors to the profession; appreciating the history of the profession and the FCS department at Morgan State University; describing the AAFCS Body of Knowledge, including the integrative elements, core concepts, and cross-cutting themes; researching FCS/HE career opportunities and discussing future trends; explaining the role and impact of public policy on individuals, families, and communities; exploring and analysing FCS careers and career pathways, and conducting a comprehensive self-assessment that will determine career potential. A unit was created highlighting the influence/presence of this critical group of human scientists. An historical account of significant events in the United States coupled with the role of FCS/HE and its influencers, especially people of colour, provide a more accurate picture of contributors to the profession. As a result, students acquire a holistic view representing their ethnicity and culture, and generating a sense of pride.

Through the *Exit Seminar in FCS People of Colour* podcast, students are informed of the impact people of colour have contributed to FCS/HE. Assigned a paper to research persons of colour who have or are contributing to the field, students chronicle their backgrounds, lives, and career history. Students select individuals based upon personal or career interests, conducting a 60-minute interview with the individual, supplemented with information discovered in the public domain, including articles authored, curriculum vitae, news articles and so on. In instances when an individual is deceased, the student utilises library and web resources to complete the research. The culminating experience is creating a podcast to inform others of the investigation. Following the research assignment, students participate in a podcast to tell information about the person. The podcast series "Let's Talk FACS" aims to reach a wider audience possibly unfamiliar with the profession, provide new information on contributions to the profession, and provide perspectives from students of colour. In the words of one student, the experience desired for those listening to the podcast "is to inform about how marginalized communities come together and create meaningful experiences for others."

Video of Founders of NCBD FCS

Although AHEA was established in 1909, African Americans were not permitted to join the organisation until 1972: 63 years later. Even then, African Americans and other people of colour were not fully embraced in the governance and programming of the organisation (Miller et al., 2009). The National Coalition for Black Development in Family and Consumer Sciences (NCBD FCS) was founded in January 1980 to fill a void in recognising and recording the myriad contributions of individuals of African descent to the FCS/HE profession on a national and global platform. The mission of the Coalition is to enhance and strengthen the presence of FCS programs in traditionally Black institutions, to coalesce with other organisations to ensure the continued advancement of the profession, to provide support and career development for the next generation of Black professionals, and to recognise and record the contributions of professionals of African descent (NCBD FCS, 2022). On the most recent 40th anniversary, several of the founders recalled their founding of the organisation. Students were required to view the recording and share their impressions, reflections, and personal application. The following written contemplations embody their thoughts:

It was refreshing to hear these ladies advocating for more people of color, specifically women of color, in the [FCS/HE] field. I enjoyed listening to these ladies share their experiences and appreciated all they've done for our field.

Even though these women faced so much, they still persevered and, in my eyes, they are heroes. Their undefined determination intrigued me.

These women displayed to me what a real black woman is and how we should be viewed, as strong, determined, courageous, and talented beings.

The drive of these women has given me a push to be able to do whatever obstacles come in my path. Even though these women experienced hardship throughout keeping NCBD FCS, they still managed to keep going and allowing more African Americans to be in a nurturing space and allowing them to have a place to network and learn more from each other.

The (founders) of NCBD FCS live up to the name of Black Girl Magic.

The activities created to enable student discovery on the contribution of Black Americans to the FCS/HE profession was impactful. Infusing the curriculum helped shift any feeling of displacement that students may have considered, as Caswell (2014) reports. As one student who participated in the podcast indicates:

In my interview with Dr Miller, I was inspired to carry her vision out of Networking to build the profession and establish myself with People of Color and people in the total profession.

They now have a broader picture of how individuals representing their culture have contributed significantly to the profession. Such knowledge sustains affirmation in positive ways.

Case 2: Predominantly White Institution (PWI): Transforming Teachers

Whites, it must frankly be said, are not putting in a similar mass effort to reeducate themselves out of their racial ignorance. It is an aspect of their sense of superiority that the white people of America believe they have so little to learn...resonant resolutions about brotherhood fall pleasantly on the ear, but for the Negro there is a credibility gap he cannot overlook. (Dr Martin Luther King Jr, 1967, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?*)

An essential strategy for decolonising FCS/HE is through professional preparation at predominantly White institutions (PWI). At Kansas State University (KSU), commitments to both foundational FCS/HE knowledge and the national education accreditation standards (Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium and Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2020) drive FCS/HE educator preparation. These standards reflect the importance of ethical practice, as educators demonstrate understanding of *their own* cultural, gendered, linguistic, and ability lenses shaping potential biases and their “impact on expectations for and relationships with learners and their families” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013, p. 41). Deliberately confronting the credibility gap observed by Dr King (Dreasher, 2021) requires engaging FCS/HE pre-service educators in self-reflection and disciplinary studies.

Mirroring original 1862 land-grant institutional practices, KSU was founded by and for White people and built on lands stolen from native nations (Kansas State University, 2020). The institution examines inclusivity (and its absence) through university-wide dialogue and educational experiences, including Indigenous Peoples Day. The annual conference features settler colonialism challenges while promoting the sovereignty of Indigenous nation leadership and activism. The College vision statement expresses commitments to diversity, preparing educators to work in a “diverse and changing world” (KSU College of Education, 2022, n.p.). Against this backdrop, an FCS Education professional literacy course was developed, focusing on inclusion, access, equity, and diversity (IAED).

Promoting transformative educators, the course centres on the synthesis of the FCS Body of Knowledge, FCS foundations, and a critical science lens accompanied by commitments to IAED; sustainability and global literacies; and interdisciplinary pedagogy. This layered approach reflects the collaboration between disciplinary and literacy specialists (Wingate, 2018), enhancing the capacity of FCS pre-service teacher disciplinary understandings through reading, writing, speaking and advocating for the field (Duncan, 2021).

Importance of FCS Foundations: History, Philosophy, and Current Commitments

The history of FCS/HE reflects the United States: slow to integration, despite landmark judicial decisions and federal legislation. *The Secret History of Home Economics: How Trailblazing Women Harnessed the Power of Home and Changed the Way We Live* introduces students to this history. Throughout, Dreilinger (2021), narrates the profession and its women leaders, juxtaposing the experiences of diverse leaders with their White counterparts. The book initiates dialogue about multiple issues, including the:

- underlying authority of majority perspectives;
- historically segregated institutions and FCS/HE work;
- uneven distribution of resources supporting FCS/HE work;
- absence of diverse FCS/HE leaders; and
- the importance and intentionality of the NCBDFCS.

FCS/HE intellectual foundations, including the FCS Body of Knowledge (Nickols et al., 2009); Brown and Paolucci’s definition of HE (1979); and the discipline’s critical science perspective (Brown, 1985) supply the intellectual tools students need to explore the profession’s challenged history, as they craft an IAED-centric professional practice. Shaping professional commitments to DEI through multiple public policy resolutions (AAFCS, 2022d), its Code of Ethics (AAFCS, 2022a), and in its recently published DEI statement, AAFCS further anchors student IAED professional identity:

The AAFCS celebrates, embraces, and respects the value of every person. We denounce all expressions of hate, racism, injustice, and discrimination. Our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice is demonstrated through our work to improve the well-being and quality of life for individuals, families, and communities. (AAFCS, 2022c).

Translating Professional IAED Commitments Into Practice

Translating these professional IAED commitments into practice hinges on pedagogical practices, beginning with the FCS/HE critical science-centred Reasoning for Action Standards (Lead, Educate, Advocate, & Develop FCS Education, n.d.). These standards activate content application in FCS secondary programs, challenging status quo practices and advancing socially just practices, by promoting critical dispositions among students. FCS pre-service educators make connections between FCS-specific critical perspectives with those from the broader pre-service education curricula. Faculty collaborations among multicultural and multilingual educators introduce strategies for ending *curriculum violence* toward students of colour, and promoting teacher understandings of student identity through biography-driven instruction (Herrera, 2016), leading FCS pre-service educators toward culturally sustaining practices.

Seeing is believing. FCS pre-service educator understandings are strengthened through faculty cross-institutional partnerships. Learning about the intentions of the HBCU FCS project illustrates for the PWI students the concerns shared by both HBCU and PWI FCS faculty. Introducing them to curricula embracing an IAED perspective early in their program, is important to FCS pre-service educators. One exemplar is *Finding Our Roots: Indigenous Foods and the Food Sovereignty Movement in the United States* (Ferguson, 2019). Based on FCS standards, the curriculum explores culinary practices through an Indigenous lens, featuring traditional food practices.

Reflection is essential. Students regularly reflect on their FCS secondary classroom observations in relation to course learnings. Students first develop their working definition of [FCS/HE] education, where they are asked to provide:

- Their developing definition of FCS/HE, based on foundational disciplinary studies;
- Contextual considerations on which their definition is based;
- Important vocabulary needed to support their work;
- Essential resources and references used to support their definition; and
- Emerging questions stimulating their thinking.

Moving toward a dynamic understanding of FCS education, student definitions range from focus on the skills and knowledge needed “to enhance life for a person and community” (Student C) to that which shows deepening perspectives, as another student wrote:

... [FCS/HE] addresses the *root* causes of issues facing *people* locally, nationally, and *globally*. It equips people to *see their potential* through *life skills* & affect positive and *sustainable change* in the world. (Emphasis in the original, Student A)

Student C reflected on the historical context of the field, noting the history “brought so much more meaning to me. Controversy has been ongoing in my opinion, and we need to be advocates.” Another student attended to the importance of the geographic environment. Summarised by Student A: teachers need to “take students from a self-centered perspective to a we-centered perspective” made possible through the lens of “social change leadership.” This student’s reflection led them to question “what does the future of [FCS/HE] look like [and] how can we make its existence sustainable?”

Study of biography-driven, culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy (Herrera, 2016), moved student reflections from an outward lens exploring FCS/HE professional perspectives, to nuanced understandings of themselves as change agents. As Student A exclaimed, “It is so smart to shift to looking at how we *can* work to be culturally sustainable” (emphasis added). Student B further acknowledged the importance of culturally sustaining pedagogy, speaking personally:

Being a child of immigrant parents who grew up in a Mexican household who didn’t speak English as [my] first language, I first hand saw, felt, and experienced many of the things [our speaker] hit on during [their] visit. From the language barrier, to access, differences, and lots of judgment, *it is extremely important for us to educate ourselves on this* (emphasis added).

Student B recognised the importance of self-education about future students and their own self:

I think the biggest thing I have been learning in pieces is being Culturally Responsive [sic] and *attending to everyone’s history and experiences...* touching on building upon community, learner, family, *and our own biographies* was powerful (emphasis added).

Student A recognised the humanity in others and themselves:

I found the idea of humanizing EXTREMELY important... *I hadn’t fully thought about how important that is in a family-teacher relationship.* It fully makes sense to me to work to humanize my students and how they are dealing with things just like me, and even humanizing myself...

Student A continued, connecting to the purposes of FCS/HE Education, noting: “I hadn’t really thought about how important it is to give families grace ... *and of all the areas of education to give families that grace, it should be us* [FCS/HE educators]” (Emphasis added).

Student reflections demonstrate understandings that building inclusive and engaging FCS/HE classrooms for all students requires deliberate action. Student C acknowledged, “it is up to us to create the change we are looking for. We can’t just be fixers as educators. We have to build the community and family. *Not only in official and unofficial space but in the third space.*” Referencing the notions of the *official*, *unofficial*, and *third space* introduced by Gutierrez et al. (as cited in Herrera, 2016, p. 14), the student recognised the importance of creating a transformative, collaborative learning space in their future FCS classroom. Student B summarised the students’ shared learning:

As future educators, *we must train our brains* to ask how our planning and teaching may be negatively affecting students in our classroom ... *By responding to the needs of our students that stem from their biopsychosocial history, we are fostering an environment that will allow them to succeed.* (Emphasis added.)

This course experience indicates that developing understandings that deliberate decolonisation of FCS/HE is squarely centred in FCS pre-service educators’ own studies.

Case 3: Extension Research Based Programs: Improving Lives of All?

The key role of land-grant institutions, created by the Morrill Acts, was developing knowledge to help farmers produce enough food and fibre to meet the nation’s growing needs. The Smith-Lever Act created Extension to consistently disseminate research-based information to communities through non-formal education programs. Land-grant university Extension educators conducted community-based education intended to help farmers,

homemakers, and youth use the latest research, improving their lives (MacNab, 2014). In the early 1900s, programs focused on strengthening rural areas; eventually becoming integral to urban and suburban communities. Lives were improved with newly adopted practices. Extension educators developed programs, teaching new knowledge to solve problems impacting the wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities.

Attempts to Carry Out the Mission of the Cooperative Extension Service

But how was Extension being implemented across the United States? Early implementation of the Smith-Lever Act saw unequal funding for certain groups and disparities in hiring and employment practices. Limits in funding, hiring Extension personnel, and programming were enforced and justified in the southern states because African Americans were considered inferior to Whites (Harris, 2008; Schor, 1986). A connection between race and intellect justified the proposed Extension policy excluding African Americans from equal access to the program and resources provided to Whites (Harris, 2008). Wage discrimination for the educators continued through the 1960s. The Black county agent also had to navigate societal norms for behaviour with Whites (Crosby, 1983). If these norms were not practiced, the agent risked being fired.

Despite funding and employment limits, Black Extension educators were impactful in carrying out the Extension vision. During the 1920s and 1930s, eastern Tennessee Black Extension educators worked with Black farm women to develop programs to meet Black farm family needs. This program development was undertaken amidst the White-controlled local/state/federal Extension service agenda (Walker, 1996). Black Extension educators worked with a small budget and served several counties, in contrast to the White Extension educators who typically were assigned one county. Home improvement programs were offered to both White women and Black women; however, Black women were able to make only minimal improvements because of a lack of money to purchase appliances and the absence of electricity in the farm homes (Walker, 1996). The Black Extension educators stressed sanitation, including adding screens to keep out flies and insects. Black educators worked with women's wishes to meet basic needs and to promote family survival, such as maintaining a healthy water supply, teeth care, cold prevention, home gardens, food preservation, and poultry. In 1925, the Black Extension educators' reports mentioned craft instruction (such as shuck-work shopping bags, rugs, and baskets). Walker (1996) was unable to find evidence of how this program was initiated; this activity was not listed in White women's club activities. Walker suggested that perhaps African American women requested the activities or that programming varied between races.

In South Carolina, African American women became involved with in-home Extension activities even before the state distributed funds for Extension services under the Smith-Lever Act (Harris, 2009). Women were shown how to prepare meals and develop year-round gardens. In 1914, Sumter formed tomato clubs for Black girls. Black women were hired, trained, and formed clubs as emergency Extension educators teaching food production, canning, and sanitation during World War I. In 1924 Head to Foot Clubs formed to develop habits of cleanliness. Topics included washing and combing hair, skin and teeth care, constructing clothing including underwear, and dressing properly (Harris, 2009). In addition to emphasising material wellbeing, community building and leadership development were emphasised. The 1930s brought further trends. The Better Homes program supported renovations to improve the liveability of homes. Programming included financial management, along with reusing old clothes and other materials to make new outfits. "A 4-H girl who could not afford cloth used flour, meal, and sugar sacks to make 3 hats, 5 dresses, 3 slips, 10 towels, 27 handkerchiefs" (Harris, 2009, p. 103) and many more items. At a 1936 conference, participants received instructions on making a kitchen sink from an automobile gas tank. Today conservation movements abound. These

examples illuminate the innovation found within the Black community yet much credence was not given to the approach and process.

Black Extension educators worked with farm women to optimise limited material resources (Jones, 1998). Specific to the late 1930s, Jones noted that North Carolina Black Extension educators surveyed community members, identified problems, and created programs meeting the needs of Black farm women. The home educators enabled rural Black women to locate multiple government services such as public health care and to “develop a sense of accomplishment and nurture leadership skills” (Jones, p. 456). Needs assessment and community engagement are typical practices used in Extension today.

An in-depth 1936-1937 analysis of Negro participation in agricultural and home economics Extension programs in 16 southern states reiterated the purpose of the Smith-Lever Act, including the statement “to aid in diffusing among the people of the [United States] useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics, and to encourage the application of the same...” (Wilkerson, 1938, p. 332) Wilkerson provided an overall goal for Extension agents to improve “home practices concerning such problems as child care and training, food selection and preparation, clothing, intra-family relationships, sanitation, home-nursing, home beautification and the like” (p. 333). Contextually, Wilkerson also emphasised the disparities of resource allocation and state-level decisions on federal fund distributions.

Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) were not designated land-grant status until 1994 through the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act (USDA, n.d.). In the 1980s, the Extension programs on American Indian reservations were funded through the Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program (FRTEP) (Emm & Breazeale, 2008). This program creates an Extension presence, providing support for outreach on Federally Recognized Indian Reservations (National Institute of Food and Agriculture, n.d.). FRTEP is a competitive grant opportunity placing Extension educators and programs on reservations. Previously funded projects are prioritised, ensuring continuity of service. With 314 Federally Recognized Tribal reservations, funding is limited whereby less than 25% can secure the funding. Extension is currently only serving about 10% of the Native American communities in the United States (Hartmann & Martin, 2021). Aside from limited funding for the Tribal Extension program, traditional approaches used within predominantly White communities are not as effective within Native American communities because of differing community needs, lack of cultural relevance, and the Eurocentric programming approach.

Moving Extension Forward

Extension celebrated its Centennial in 2014. Currently housed within the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, improving lives in rural and urban areas by helping individuals, families, and communities through increasing knowledge and implementing research-based practices continues to be the core focus. Extension has undergone various paradigm shifts in program implementation strategies and assessing programming needs. Millions of lives have been improved by adopting new practices and gaining new knowledge designed to solve problems and change their lives. In working to meet the needs of their communities and audience, Extension educators considered, embraced, and integrated culturally relevant practices to meet audience needs and anticipate change. To this day home economists encourage people to leverage their skills, interests, and talents for use in and outside of the home, modelling more culturally responsive and relevant practices in formal and non-formal education. There is still work that needs to be done.

Initially, Extension utilised a top-down approach with university administrators and specialists determining program needs and implementation. The 1920s brought a move toward more educator autonomy, responsive to audience concerns rather than anticipating or planning for

change. At that time, information was not as accessible as it is today. Previous examples document educators going out to farms and homes presenting information to individuals or small groups. Another shift that occurred early in the 1900s was the role of women: home manager versus producer (i.e., producing agricultural products). Throughout the 1920s, home economists revised their plans allowing crafts such as basketry to be included in programming (Babbitt, 1993).

Atilas and Eubanks (2014) reviewed FCS programming over the past 100 years to identify challenges for meeting the needs of changing audiences. Extension educators must continue efforts to understand the most effective way to reach new Americans, urban populations, new family structures, and virtual clients. A new approach is needed even when some of the FCS issues are the same such as economic stability, diversity, consumer fraud, and resource management, poor health and chronic diseases, family relations and parenting, and risky behaviours (Atilas & Eubanks, 2014). With these perennial problems, Extension educators will need to utilise approaches that are holistic and comprehensive. Technological advances demand reimagining the *home demonstration agent*. How can educators connect with individuals and families through technology, using smartphones, virtual programming, and online media such as podcasts?

Franz and Cox (2012) proposed the idea of disruptive innovation, reflecting on historical Extension approaches and strategies that need to be retired. They found it is challenging for Extension to be disruptive because the organisational culture supports status quo, lacks diversity in customer base and staffing, is funding-challenged, traditionally operates as expert rather than in collaboration with clients, and is more focused on rural audiences. Examples of these challenges have been described throughout this paper to document how the focus of Extension has been carried out. Franz and Cox document evidence of disruption by describing how fees are being levied for programs, grant funding is being secured, and sponsorships are secured from community partners rather than 100% reliance on federal and state funding. Another disruption is moving from a county-based model to a regional model. This move is partly due to limited funding. It requires revamping of programming by educators, now responsible for larger geographic areas, limiting intimate relationships with community members, but engaging a more diverse audience.

A third innovation was implementing evaluations that focused on behaviour change (Franz & Cox, 2012). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 required Extension to document that all potential program participants were being given equal opportunity to participate, essentially documenting demographic information. Disruptive innovation meant focusing on how the work impacted individuals, families, and communities, not just that the programs were occurring. Fidelity of the program, evaluation, and designing research to help improve the program quality was not originally factors considered in determining program effectiveness. Abell et al. (2015) developed and tested the Implementation Issues Framework (IIF) to identify and analyse factors contributing to effective community-based programming. This framework “consists of the actions taken to transform a program’s conceptual design into programmatic efforts capable of achieving identified outcomes given a particular set of participants and staff within a specific organisational climate and community” (Abell et al., 2015, p. 1). The IIF links inputs, outputs, and program outcomes to ensure effectiveness and documentation for program impacts which can prove to stakeholders the value of Extension.

Another approach utilised in Extension that has components of disruptive innovation and the IIF is evidence-based programming which can increase the effectiveness of outreach efforts, help educators and specialists become more accountable to funding agencies, and demonstrate positive outcomes to stakeholders (Olson et al., 2015). An argument against this approach is that programs are not meeting the unique needs of the audience because the fidelity of the

program needs to be maintained. Evidence-based programs are designed to be implemented without program modifications, essentially as-is. Clients are looking for programming that addresses community needs rather than just disseminating information (Strong et al., 2015). Evidence-based programs can meet community needs if the focus remains on the client and not the content.

Native American Extension programming, a partnership between 1862 and 1994 land-grant institutions, focuses on providing effective educational and program strategies to meet the interests of tribal communities. Noted previously, traditional programming approaches used for the dominant culture were not as effective in Native American communities. Through a needs assessment of a southwestern United States Indian reservation, Emm and Breazeale (2008) found that quality of life was a priority with programming focused on employment, preparing youth for the world of work, drug and alcohol education, community safety, and family conflict. Comparing perspectives of educators from Indian reservations and non-reservation counties, Tuttle et al. (2009) found significant differences in educational objectives, curricula, delivery methods, evaluations, and volunteerism. Hartmann and Martin (2021) determined that successful programs with Native American communities needed to be culturally relevant, use a humanistic approach that values interdependence among and between participants and educators, allow participants to form the direction of the education, and promote participation and relationship building in the learning environment.

Discussion and Next Steps

According to a Survey of the Southern States in the United States (E Pluribus Unum, 2019) most White Americans do not believe the legacy of slavery impacts economic and educational achievement/outcomes today. The US-FCS/HE profession is situated in this milieu, often mirroring dominant cultural perspectives. We are at an historical moment in America. Given the ongoing social justice and racial equity movements, the AAFCS DEI Community is taking a stance as a field and discipline by further examining our situatedness within the colonised framework of formal and non-formal education, and participation in colonisation of marginalised families and communities.

This paper reviewed implementation of FCS programming through the lens of decolonisation. The review initiated an exploration of the US-FCS/HE profession's positionality, and implications for those served. Importantly, it showed the profession's dehumanising role, marginalising individuals, families, and communities, including FCS/HE professionals. While education is purported to empower individuals and ultimately improve society, these examples of colonialism demonstrated in formal and non-formal education devalued diverse perspectives, traditions, and values. This exploration has led to much reflection and raised questions surrounding the substance of FCS/HE teacher education programs and public-school curricula in both northern and southern states, with concern for implicit and explicit content. Understanding how and who was setting FCS/HE goals and standards historically will better inform current and future efforts to revise FCS/HE goals and standards.

The FCS Body of Knowledge cross-cutting theme, *capacity building*, is a concept made meaningful by FCS/HE professionals contributing to presumed positive changes in the lives of individuals and families. While a social reconstruction philosophical lens illuminated the emergence of US-FCS/HE (1909), the profession's current social justice lens needs interrogation. Do FCS/HE professionals in the United States hold a benevolent view of social justice absent of a firm commitment to dismantle internal neocolonial conditions within the field that causes harm to others (Tejeda et al., 2003)? How will FCS/HE professionals negotiate power differentials with those served across the country?

The case examples demonstrate efforts to decolonise experiences for FCS/HE HBCU and PWI students, and for those served through Extension education programming. These examples

cultivate the pursuit of identity, skill, intellect, and criticality; ideas introduced through Muhammad's equity framework for culturally and historically responsive literacy (2020), which emphasises intellectual development among teachers/professionals through study and engagement with cultures different than their own. Case examples showed the power of our foundational perspectives, especially the contributions of the field's own "Black Literary Society," the NCBDFCS. Coupled with development of a critical literacy, based on our shared FCS/HE mission (Brown & Paolucci, 1979), critical science philosophical perspective (Brown, 1985), FCS Body of Knowledge (Nickols et al., 2009), and the overlay of critical education dispositions (Duncan, 2021), we have the intellectual tools at hand to initiate a dialogue and path for change needed for US-FCS/HE. More substantive efforts are required to move FCS/HE forward. Continued examination of our history and FCS/HE in historical context is essential. Through a decolonisation lens, we are better poised to work with individuals, families, and communities to develop optimal quality of life for all, while becoming better international partners and collaborators.

Biographies

Janine Duncan

Dr Janine Duncan has served as a teacher educator of Family & Consumer Sciences for 16 years. In working with FCS pre-service educators, she explores the FCS disciplinary commitment to Critical Science and its applications to empowering the critical literacy and capacity of secondary students, especially surrounding inclusion, access, equity, and diversity (IAED). This informs her interest in professional identity development among FCS pre-service educators. Currently, she works with the AAFCS DEI Community, serves as an ACTE IAED mentor, and serves the International Federation for Home Economics as the Vice President for the Region of Americas.

Jacqueline M. Holland

Jacqueline M. Holland, EdD., CFCS, is Associate Professor and Chair in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences at Morgan State University. Throughout her career in education, she has served as a family and consumer sciences teacher, school administrator, and district supervisor for family and consumer sciences programs. Dr Holland served as the president of the National Coalition for Black Development in Family and Consumer Sciences and the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS). In 2020 she received the AAFCS Distinguished Service Award. She manages the AAFCS Community of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Her research interests are in housing, FCS/Home Economics education and family.

Mia Baytop Russell

Mia Baytop Russell, MBA, AFC, PhD is a Lecturer in the Johns Hopkins University Center of Leadership Education. Grounded in principles and processes of leadership, entrepreneurship, and communication, she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses designed to help students succeed and lead in a wide range of professional settings. As a family and consumer sciences professional, Mia has over 25 years of experience in the corporate, public, and private sectors including with Cooperative Extension. Mia's research interests include financial wellbeing and work-related wellbeing.

Lorna Saboe-Wounded Head

Dr Lorna Saboe-Wounded Head is the Family Resource Management Field Specialist for South Dakota State University Extension. Her mission is to educate consumers about managing resources, specifically finances, to improve their wellbeing. After working in the field of family and consumer sciences for almost 30 years, Dr Saboe-Wounded Head views her work through the lens of the FCS Body of Knowledge by understanding individuals, families, and communities' influence and affect on basic human needs. She has published 14 journal articles on family and consumer sciences/personal finance topics, reviewed manuscripts for six academic journals, and secured over \$60,000 in grant funding.

Alice Spangler

Alice Spangler, PhD, RD, CFCS, is Professor Emeritus at Ball State University. During her tenure at Ball State, she served as a faculty member and chair of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. She conducted historical content analysis research on the topic of obesity. And she researched nutrition status of African American older adults and of rural older adults. Recently her professional accomplishments were recognised by receiving the Leader Award given by the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. Dr Spangler is currently the foods/nutrition associate editor for Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal.

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