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**Special Issue: Decolonising of the Home Economics Profession**



# IFHE

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FOR HOME ECONOMICS

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# International Journal of Home Economics

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Issue 15(1) of the *International Journal of Home Economics* has three sections.

### **Part A—Special Issue: Decolonising of the Home Economics Profession**

This Special Issue of the *International Journal of Home Economics* on the topic Decolonising of the Home Economics Profession is unsettling and has the potential to be disruptive to many taken for granted practices in the field of study. This is a good thing. Being challenged to reflect on what was a difficult history for the profession and on what remains embedded in the culture of the profession has the potential to lead to more inclusive ways that are genuinely about every individual, family and community. Indeed, this has the potential to transform our field, and to reflect contemporary values. Guest Editors for this Special Issue are Associate Professor Kerry Renwick, Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, University of British Columbia and Dr Shannon Leddy, an Associate Professor of Teaching, University of British Columbia.

### **Part B—Peer-Reviewed Papers**

This section of the *IJHE* presents three peer-reviewed papers, each of which has been through a rigorous, double blind review process.

### **Part C—Executive Summary**

This section provides the Executive Summary of a paper published elsewhere that may be of interest to *IJHE* readers.

### **Editorial Board News**

I am pleased to welcome a new member to the *International Journal of Home Economics* Editorial Board: **Dr Miriam Ismael**

Dr Miriam Ismael worked as a contract faculty member at Brescia University College and sessional lecturer at Ontario Tech University. She has taught courses such as *Fundamentals of Community Nutrition* and *Prevention and Rehabilitation of Complex Chronic Conditions*. She has also been invited as guest speaker to lecture on “Obesity: A call-to-action” and “Food Insecurity”. She has been invited as a key speaker at the International World Food Day (WFD) Conference “Safe Food Now for a Healthy Tomorrow”. Dr Ismael finished her undergraduate degree in Nutrition and Dietetics, master’s degree in Kinesiology and a PhD degree in Health Promotion. Dr Ismael is a Certified Nutrition Manager and a Professional Home Economist.

Dr Ismael's action research has resulted in a national and international peer-reviewed journal articles of over eight peer-reviewed articles and a reviewer for more than three peer-review journals. Dr Ismael is a member of several professional associations including the Canadian Society of Nutrition Management (CSNM), Knowledge Transfer and Exchange Community of Practice (KTECOP), Canadian Institute of Food Safety (CIFS), and the Ontario Home Economics Association (OHEA).

Dr Ismael's expertise is in:

- Public Health
- Health Promotion
- Population Health Intervention Research; Program Design and Evaluation
- Knowledge Translation
- Implementation Research
- Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis.

Donna

Professor Donna Pendergast

*Editor, IJHE*



## *Part A Special Issue*

# Decolonising of the Home Economics Profession

## What We Bring to the Table: Decolonising, Métissage, and Home Economics

Kerry Renwick  
*University of British Columbia, Canada*

Shannon Leddy  
*University of British Columbia, Canada*

**KEYWORDS:** HOME ECONOMICS, DECOLONISING, MÉTISSAGE, EVERYDAY PRACTICES, CURRICULA PRACTICE

Dr Kerry Renwick is a woman of a predominately Celtic background. She is a fifth-generation settler depending on which branch of the family tree She was born and raised on the traditional and unceded lands of the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrong people. Renwick currently lives and works on the traditional and unceded land of the Musqueam people. As a qualified home economist Renwick has experience contributing to professional associations regionally and internationally. In her current role at the University of British Columbia, she has program responsibility for home economics as a teaching specialisation and graduate programs for human ecology and everyday living.

Dr Shannon Leddy is a member of the Métis Nation and of Irish ancestry. She is a Vancouver based educator and writer whose practice focuses on decolonising education through infusing Indigenous content and pedagogies in teacher education. More specifically, she employs arts-based pedagogies that invite educators into dialogue with contemporary Indigenous art in order to develop decolonial literacies that help them avoid reproducing colonial stereotypes and misrepresentation. Leddy is the Co-chair of the Institute for Environmental Learning, a UNESCO Regional Centre of Excellence, through which her focus is to bring more Indigenous voices to the table to expand the discourses of environmental and sustainability education beyond Western tropes.

We live in challenging times. In as much as the trend towards globalisation that began more than 500 years ago has opened our eyes to the world, it has also both created and made evident the many ways in which wealth, power, and influence are unevenly distributed. The colonialist project has been driven a hegemonic position associated with Euro-White men that has relied heavily on the idea of *otherness* to separate out and diminish groups of people based on gender, race and culture. For Indigenous people, their histories after the arrival of colonisers and settlers are replete with examples of marginalisation, discrimination and violations of their human rights. Common elements within the experience include the stealing of traditional lands, loss of language, cultural genocide, reduced health outcomes and a loss of personal and cultural agency. As a way to begin to redress this the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations [UN], 2007) on September 13, 2007.

As a profession home economics has existed for over 100 years. Given its development out of America in a time when understandings about the colonial project were informed by White

Renwick, K., & Leddy, S. (2022). What we bring to the table: Decolonising, Métissage, and Home Economics. *International Journal of Home Economics*, 15(1), 4-9.

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privilege, the potential for the profession to be implicated in colonial practices is significant. Within everyday lives home economists have recognised the unequal distribution of resources necessary to live, making resource management a key content area. In the most recent era intensive competition for resources by some has meant destabilised economies and food insecurity for others. Additionally, the experiences of a global pandemic beginning in 2019 caused by COVID-19 has not only created a considerable health impact, but the associated supply chain disruptions and shortages made it quickly apparent that Home Economics, in both the literal and curricular senses, is worthy of serious consideration.

When offering the call for papers for this issue we argued that there are multiple ways of knowing (Smith, 2016). And that there is more than one perspective to inform our work, with particular attention being given to our local context. We offered two provocations for consideration:

- i) For holistic learning about the everyday there is a need to challenge ethnocentric beliefs and invite Indigenous perspective (Smith, 2016); and
- ii) To claim holistic, interdisciplinary practices within home economics claim to be working for and with families globally decolonisation of our educational practices is necessary (Martin et al., 2020).

In our call for papers, we invited contributors to consider that there is a need to not only recognise what has gone before but to also look to practices that decolonise and act in more inclusive ways that are genuinely about every individual, family and community (CFP, n.p.).

In reading the papers submitted for this special edition we have been reminded of the methodology and intent behind the concept of *métissage*. In their 2009 book *Life writing and literary métissage as an ethos for our time*, Hasebe-Ludt et al. describe this process as “a counternarrative to the grand narratives of our time, a site for writing and surviving in the interval between different cultures and languages, particularly in colonial contexts” (p. 9). Given that our contributors discuss Home Economics in the contexts of North America, Australia, the Middle East and Africa, we see that objective as being fulfilled here.

In his consideration of what it might mean to engage in *Indigenous Métissage*, Donald (2012) points to the notion of “ethical relationality” as “an ecological understanding of human relationality that does not deny difference, but rather seeks to understand more deeply how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other” (p. 535). This, we feel, is at the heart of asking authors to consider what decolonising approaches to Home Economics might look like and why they are necessary. Although we are aware of the watering down of decolonisation that Tuck and Yang (2012) warn of, we also recognise the way this concept applies in the field of education where we deal with the impacts of colonial curriculum and the formation of personal, local, and national understandings of what it means to live in a colonised country.

Given the focus for this special edition of the journal we felt that there was a need to consider the review process so that there was consideration of the paper submitted by those from within the field of home economics, from Indigenous scholars and from those whose work is undertaken in the regions where an article is positioned. We are grateful to those scholars, for their insights and valued feedback as this journal would not be possible without their support.

To lead us into discussion about home economics and decolonial practices McGregor provides a treatise that systematically explores the theorising of key terms specifically colonisation and imperialism, postcolonialism and decolonialism. The piece begins from a place of loyalty and possibly a sense of outrage around linking the home economics field and profession to being

complicit in colonisation. McGregor's commentary offers insight into her intellectual process to explore the possibilities and probabilities given the profession's focus "on using moral judgements and practical reasoning in its work with, through, and on behalf of individuals and families" (see p. 10). At the end of her piece McGregor recognises that there are challenges in confronting both personal and professional consciousness around decolonising practices. Her work offers key insights into the challenges inherent in such transformative considerations.

Moving from an exploration of whether home economists need to consider decolonising their practices, Renwick (see p.16) offers an exposition about the philosophical framing of the field and therefore the profession. Renwick uses an epistemic frame to discuss how ongoing debates about the name of home economics followed by an exploration of how the profession is positioned through a scientific, colonial, patriarchal and an indigenous lens, and then a consideration of whether the profession need decolonising. Epistemic lives is a philosophic concept about how we come to understand our world through everyday practices. Renwick uses epistemic lives, and therefore different world views, as a way to reconsider home economics' mission to genuinely advocate for all families.

Several of the papers reflect on home economics curriculum as it is practiced in four different countries in three world regions. Each explore possibilities for decolonising curriculum while providing some insight into the local experience of home economics educators. These papers provide insight into how the local curricula are informed by colonial positioning while at the same time exploring ways to decolonise.

As a way to explore our practices as guided by curriculum, Smith begins by describing how language and theory inform the profession. Smith utilises structural theory as a way to expose "colonialism, racisms and microaggressions are social structures" (see p. 32) and how home economics has not been immune from the nature pervasive nature of this form of hegemony. Examples of events from within the classroom provide examples of why reflexive action for decolonising both thought and action is necessary in the work undertaken by home economics professionals in the classroom and research agendas.

In their article "Decolonising Home Economics in Eswatini" (see p. 44), Pinkie Zwane and Moly Mpfu discuss various foci of decolonising curriculum in a post-colonial African context. Through highlighting the importance of regionally and culturally specific considerations around clothing, culinary traditions, and ecological knowledge, the authors make their points clear with a review of historic and contemporary Home Economics curriculum. In this work they show the ways in which decolonising approaches can function to roll back the impacts of oppressive colonial curriculum and pedagogies in order to empower Indigenous citizens and hold up their long-standing and well-reasoned ways of life.

Buttegieg Fiteni offers a grounded glimpse into a Middle Eastern context for Home Economics in her article "Decolonising and Indigenising Home Economics Pedagogies to Advance Gender Roles in UAE" (see p. 55). Although some may argue that the author has conflated decolonisation and gender parity (while also remaining entrenched in a gender binary), the article is ultimately highly successful in offering an important review of literature that paints a clear picture of the need for critical curricular intervention in UAE. Here, decolonising curriculum and pedagogies can have deep and wide-ranging impacts in transforming notions of who can participate in learning for all aspects of family life and daily living. The author provides ample evidence of the ways in which Indigenous and decolonising pedagogies from other parts of the world can serve to break apart colonial, patriarchal, and oppressive aspects of existing and recent Home Economics curriculum.

In the United States, there is heightened level of complexity around colonial practices and possibilities for decolonising education generally, and home economics more specifically. As a part of the colonising process countries such as the US have dispossessed and disadvantaged Indigenous people (Burnette & Figley, 2016) while beginning as a British colony in which practices of Black slavery were routinely argued as economically necessary. Duncan, Holland, Russell, Saboe-Wounded Head and Spangler explore the growing gains in the intricate work of diversity, equity and inclusion (see p.70). An historical exploration of home economics/family and consumer studies in the US highlights ways in which colonial perspectives are evident and the associated impact for people of colour, especially women. Subsequently, the paper presents two collaboratively developed case studies that work through possibilities for decolonising home economics/family and consumer studies.

In her paper (see p. 90), Britto also contends with the impact of colonialism and diaspora. Britto provides vignettes based on what she sees as critical incidents. The first incident is a description of what occurred within her family to investigate the ways in which her family members have responded to and inculcated aspects of colonialism to develop a particular sense of self, identity and a right for inclusion. From this follows a searching for greater understandings about ways to decolonise. The second incident describes an unfulfilled desire for a better understanding about respecting and acknowledging traditional, unceded lands that have by and large been stolen. As Britto points out decolonising work is not easy and it requires ongoing effort. Eurocentric, settler populations have lived through a colonialist positionality so there is a need for the same population to do some considerable “lifting” to both contribute to and live in a decolonised place.

There are three papers that have been submitted by teachers reflecting on the teaching and learning occurring within their classroom and how these can be reviewed in light of decolonising intent and practice. These are not written in a way that holds to a purely academic style. Rather these authors are writing as reflective practitioners (Schön, 2017) and teachers who are researching their practice (Kincheloe, 2003; Loughran, 2004) While the authors draw on academic literature to present their case, they are not driven by a Western, masculinist, positivist, linear, rational research process rather they are putting forward concerns about their practice and engaging in professional inquiry.

The majority of home economics professionals are engaged in work as educators. There are a very small number whose work is positioned within universities with possibilities for research in more formal ways. Further much of the theorising and championing of home economics is tagged to the practical nature of the field. Brown and Paolucci (1979) claimed that the profession support families in the building and maintenance of meaningful systems of action. Bubolz and Sontag (1988) speak to the professional practice, practical reasoning and resolution of practical problems. McGregor et al. (2008) writes about the profession focusing on resolving practical, perennial problems and describing different actions arising out of technical, interpretative and emancipatory practices. Brown (1985) has described the philosophical basis of the profession as having a practical-intellectual heritage and it is this perspective that forms the basis for the contributions from the practising teachers.

As editors we have provided a methodological introduction to these teacher contributions. Our intention is to set the scene for what follows from practitioners in the field by supporting possibilities for different approaches to research that work for home economics and home economists in their role as teachers. We highlight how teachers are researchers (Kincheloe, 2003) as they investigate their professional practices and how self-study and narrative as recognised research methods can be used by educators including those in school contexts to inform and enlarge their professional practice. In homage to Brown’s (1985) practical-intellectual framing of these approaches to research the intention of the methodological

introduction is to allow our practices to be understood through theorising while concurrently developing our theoretical understandings through practice.

In her contribution (see p. 106), Wong writes about grappling with possibilities for racism to exist within her classes. She describes situations in her classrooms where she is engaging with steps towards decolonising her thinking. Wong lays bare the problematising of what for some, could be a benign name for a recipe to explore how it is problematic for others. Reading some of this at times uncomfortable, raw even. However, Wong describes the difficult challenges in rethinking her work through a decolonising lens. It is not necessarily a step-by-step process rather personal, often messy and emotional but it is both important and necessary work.

In Canada teachers are now called upon to include Indigenous content and approaches in their classrooms. As a teacher of home economics, Durnin-Richards considers both personal and professional possibilities for colonial practices through self-reflection (see p. 123). Echoing Smith's point in this issue that decolonising must include our own thoughts and actions, Durnin-Richards provides insights into her own history and perceptions as someone who is of the settler population in Canada. From family, experience as a student and teacher in an education system that until recently has ignored Indigenous perspectives, to a recent experience of working in northern Manitoba with predominately Indigenous families, Durnin-Richards' journey highlights the importance of necessary work that has barely begun. In this piece there is no self-flagellation, no overlaying of guilt; rather, she offers an emotionally mature recognition of the need to learn how to do things better and to genuinely engage with transformative practice.

Continuing the exploration of practices and actions that can emerge from decolonial thinking Leddy and Renwick have provided a paper (see p. 133) that describes a communal knitting project facilitated at their university. The project was inspired by The Tiny Orange Sweater Project, initiated by Jennifer Kent Symons on Facebook in the summer of 2021. More than 589 members across Canada are knitting orange sweaters in remembrance of the children who did not return home from Indian Residential Schools. In Leddy & Renwick's paper, knitting is described as a public pedagogy using Giroux's conceptualisation of public pedagogy as a dynamic space that explores the "relationship among culture, power, and politics" (2004, p. 62). The Orange Sweater Project is a participatory and ongoing action towards reconciliation as it draws our attention towards a tragic and shameful experience in an apparently benign way. Private pedagogy draws from learning in the everyday and is connected to "larger systemic considerations, and through which individuals could imagine themselves as critical and engaged social agents" (Giroux, 2020, p. 246). As a personal activity knitting enables the knitter to engage in a form of meditation while also offering a form of therapy, a creative practice that offers the knitter an intrinsic value. Knitters are able to make a political statement through their craft and for the project described in this paper it also offers a possibility for truth and reconciliation.

As a footnote, the installation will be mounted within the Faculty of Education building in late 2022. It will become focus for greater understanding about the experiences of loss and grief felt by Indigenous people in Canada and serve as an act of public pedagogy and remembrance. The aim is to draw in teacher candidates/pre-service teachers to consider alternate ways to include Indigenous histories in their classrooms.

Taken together, we believe these articles offer an excellent example of the way in which *métissage* can function as a curricular practice that "can be used to resist the priority and authority given to official texts and textual practices" (Donald, p. 537). Particularly because these articles come both from post-secondary scholars as well as those practicing in the field, they offer dialogic provocations that are multi-directional in defiance of academic traditions of hierarchy. In itself, this makes this special edition a powerful site of transformative potential.

## Biographies

Kerry Renwick



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Kerry Renwick co-ordinates the home economics education program at UBC, a teaching specialisation whose content and practice are inherently linked to building and sustaining respectful relationships. Her research focuses on social justice in context of K-12 educational settings.

Kerry's previous research includes health promoting schools; exploring the relationship between school gardens and mental health in youth; and teachers' practice in health and food education. She is currently the Principal Investigator on a SSHRC Partnership Development grant focused on global food literacy education. The Food Literacy International Partnership (FLIP) includes Deakin University, Australia; Sweet Briar College, USA; and Gothenburg University, Sweden.

Shannon Leddy



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Dr Shannon Leddy (Métis) is a Vancouver based teacher and writer. Her PhD research at Simon Fraser University focused on contemporary Indigenous art as a dialogic prompt for decolonising. She is an Associate Professor of Teaching at UBC and Co-Chair of the Institute for Environmental Learning.

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## Decolonising Home Economists' Minds: A Commentary

Sue L. T. McGregor  
McGregor Consulting Group

### Abstract

*In this commentary, I recount my personal reaction to the International Journal of Home Economics' recent call for papers for a special issue about "decolonising of the home economics profession". After acknowledging my knee-jerk reaction that this accusation was unfair and unjust, I explored why I felt this way, which involved understanding colonisation, imperialism, and decolonisation as constructs. I explored what others in the profession were saying about this phenomenon and concluded that IHJE's editors were right—we must come to our truth that the work we do can be colonial in nature whether we know it or not. We are thus obligated to approach our practice with a clear conscience and astute colonial awareness. This can lead to the decolonisation of (a) the home economics profession and discipline and (b) individual home economists' minds.*

**KEYWORDS:** HOME ECONOMICS, IMPERIALISM, COLONISATION, COLONIAL AWARENESS, POSTCOLONIALISM, DECOLONISATION

In the *International Journal of Home Economics'* recent call for papers for a special issue about "Decolonising of the Home Economics Profession" the guest editors intimated that the profession is complicit in colonisation (Renwick & Pendergast, 2021). I must admit that I was not comfortable with this idea ... *not comfortable at all*. My knee-jerk reaction was that it is not fair to tar the profession with this accusation. Colonisation, and its partner in crime, imperialism, is akin to immoral, even illegal, behaviour (respecting that other home economists may not see it this way). Witness the ongoing Canadian trauma of using ground-penetrating radar to unearth thousands of unmarked graves of First Nations children who died or were killed in residential schools all in the name of colonisation by imperialistic powers (Deer, 2021).

Surely, labelling our profession as complicit in colonisation *must* be unjust, especially a profession that prides itself on using moral judgements and practical reasoning in its work with, through, and on behalf of individuals and families—always asking ourselves what *should* be done not what has always been done or can be done (Brown & Paolucci, 1979; Nickols & Kay, 2015; Smith, 2019). So, why were my hackles initially raised when I read this call for papers? What did I *think* we were being accused of?

I will try to explain the evolution of my thinking in this commentary. "Commentaries are short, narrowly focused articles of contemporary interest and [are] more editorial in nature and cover an aspect of an issue that is relevant to the journal's scope" (Biomedical Central [BMC], 2022, para. 1, 3). As scholarly contributions, commentaries share in-depth opinions of knowledgeable and experienced scholars who are interested in advancing a field by stimulating dialogue on a topic (Berterö, 2016). As a caveat, this personal commentary is an account of my experience with understanding the necessity of and possibilities for decolonising our practice. Each home

Mc Gregor, S. L. T. (2022). Decolonising Home Economist's Minds: A Commentary. *International Journal of Home Economics*, 15(1), 10-15.

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economist must look inside themselves around this issue and decide what to do. If we all do this, the profession will be in a stronger position to understand unacknowledged philosophical positions that guide its work. We can thus come to our truth that the work we do can be colonial in nature with possibilities to decolonise it.

## Colonialism and Imperialism

*Colony* is from the Latin *colonia*, “settlement” (Harper, 2022). Harper (2022) described a colony thus: “a body of people who migrate from their native country to cultivate and inhabit a new place while remaining subject to the mother country” (para. 2). A colony is under the control of and occupied by settlers from another country who invaded a space where people already live (Anderson, 2014). *Colonisation* (verb) is the practice of acquiring control over another territory, occupying it with settlers, and economically exploiting the territory and its Indigenous people. For example, the Americas; the African continent, and Australia were colonised by Europeans (Kraidy, 2005).

More specifically, colonisation entails the acquisition, establishment, maintenance, and expansion of power by an occupying force that exploits people in another territory. The colonising nation (occupying power) subjugates the other nation (regarded as culturally, racially, or religiously inferior) usually to acquire natural resources (e.g., land, wood, oil, water, native species, precious metals). The result of colonisation is an uneven, exploitative power relationship and the domination and suppression of a once-free people (Belfi & Sandiford, 2021; Kraidy, 2005; Merryfield, 2002).

For clarification, colonialism is not the same as imperialism, which is a policy of extending one country's political and economic power and influence into another without significant settlement. This happens through establishing a colony, the use of military force, or some other means. The intent is some combination of maintaining a military presence to their own advantage, ensuring a flow of resources, or exerting cultural influence. Imperialism does not have to involve colonialism (e.g., Rome did not colonise Britain; Britain did not colonise India) (Barth, 2015; Gunner, n.d.; Kraidy, 2005; Merryfield, 2002).

Imperialism can be exerted in one of three ways. As noted, the imperial nation can establish a colony. Second, it can establish a protectorate to indirectly rule inhabitants of nations that maintain their sovereignty (e.g., French Morocco, and the Chinese Protectorate). Third, countries can maintain cultural links with nations where their power is waning. These are called spheres of influence with examples including the Roman sphere of influence (e.g., I used Latin to define colony, which tells you the lingering influence of the Roman empire) and the modern American sphere of influence. For example, most nations privilege the English language, and many value American democracy (Barth, 2015; Gunner, n.d.).

## Postcolonialism and Decolonisation

In my heart of hearts, I am pretty sure that the home economics profession should not be branded as guilty of colonisation and imperialism. But, with some distance from my initial reaction, I think I can agree with Renwick and Pendergast's (2021) other assertion that our minds may have to be decolonised, which is a very different thing all together. Home economists may unknowingly be complicit in perpetuating the colonialism legacy and narrative. Perhaps a better title for this special issue would be “Decolonising the Minds of home Economists”. Let me tease out this thought.

Said (1978, 1993) took issue with the fallout of both imperialism and colonialism and coined the concept *postcolonialism* to refer to the critical academic study of their cultural legacy. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986, 1993), a Kenyan scholar, encourages African writers to use their own

language rather than their colonised language (e.g., English, French, Dutch). He called this *decolonising the mind*. In short, colonial assumptions and worldviews (usually unstated) continue to shape today's citizens, including both those who experienced the colonisation process and those influenced by this process (Said, 1993). Merryfield and Subedi (2006) called this "the baggage of colonialist assumptions" (p. 284).

Decolonising minds can happen when people living with this lingering baggage finally become conscious of the fact that colonisers have imposed their world view so deeply that ensuing generations cannot see that their present-day decisions and actions are shaped by the past. Their colonised identity is embedded and deeply entrenched in their mentality and collective psyche (Merryfield, 2009; Merryfield & Subedi, 2006). I feel confident when claiming that, for the last century, many home economists have been dragging around the baggage of colonialism and imperialism and not even known it; *that* we might be guilty of rather than being directly complicit in colonisation itself. Instead, home economists may unknowingly perpetuate the colonial narrative and its suppressive power.

### Decolonising Home Economics and Home Economists' Minds

If that is the case, then Renwick and Pendergast (2021) were right, and home economics must be decolonised, or else we cannot be accountable for our practice. Indeed, this may be one of those times when home economists are guilty of the "self-glorification of home economics as a profession, which is blind to the many challenges facing the field" (Christensen, 2019, p. 76). With this 360° turnabout from my original knee-jerk reaction, I turned to the home economics literature to see if we were already writing about this compelling issue.

How I missed it I am not sure, but the only explicit home economics paper I found was by Smith (2019) titled "Re-visiting Vaines: Toward a decolonising framework for home economics". Smith concluded that decolonising the profession will not be easy because, like the rest of the world, home economics is implicated and complicit by its uncritical (blind) participation in systems that privilege imperialistic nations who engage in colonisation. She actually said we should either practice in ways that respect this reality or "relinquish our roles as researchers ... and make way for [others who do]" (Smith, 2019, p. 20). Many home economists are privileged, and they do not even know it. Renwick and Pendergast (2021) challenged us to remove our blinders, to decolonise, despite this being "a difficult history for the profession to acknowledge" (p. 1) (see Figure 1).



Figure 1 Decolonise Minds

Renwick and Pendergast (2021) and Smith (2019) were not alone in their admonishment. Not only home economists but anyone benefiting from colonialism and imperialism has a moral obligation to push back against the enduring colonial narrative and deeply entrenched systemic power imbalance. They should not claim *historical amnesia* or *settler innocence* to absolve themselves of their accountability. Neither should they blindly adhere to *settler privilege* (Belfi & Sandiford, 2021; Sanchez, 2019; Tuck & Yang, 2012). In fact, home economists must do more than decolonise their minds. They must also take action to decolonise home economics (Renwick & Pendergast, 2021; Smith, 2019), which involves “deconstructing settler-imposed systems that continue to oppress Black, Brown, and Indigenous people” (Belfi & Sandiford, 2021, para. 9; see also Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Our professional rhetoric has sensitised us to this decolonisation imperative. “Throughout its history, the mission of home economics has been inclusive and universal” (Nickols & Kay, 2015, p. 159). For the last 45 years, our philosophical leaders have consistently directed us to engage in moral reasoning while addressing practical perennial problems using three systems of action. This approach ensures that we refrain from doing what we have always done in an expert role and instead critically examine each situation with those affected by our actions to ensure their needs are met whether these actions are technical (how to), interpretive (feelings), empowerment (liberative action), or some combination (Brown & Paolucci, 1979; McGregor, 2014, 2022; Smith, 2019).

That said, given the world’s enduring penchant for uncritical, quick-fix, expert-driven approaches to practice, I remain unconvinced that every home economist wears a critical, consciousness-raising hat in their practice. Such is the nature of colonialism—it robs *everyone* of the ability to see clearly until they realise they can *consciously* choose to decolonise their mind and take appropriate, liberating action (Ngugi wa Thiong’o, 1993; Said, 1993). Smith (2019) suggested that these actions unfold over time rather than all at once with home economists “beginning with self-work; seeking methods to decolonise curriculum and pedagogy; and decolonizing research” (p. 19).

## Conclusion

Decolonisation will be deeply challenging because home economics practice unfolds in an “inherently colonial project” (Renwick & Pendergast, 2021, p. 1), “a shared colonial condition” (Martin et al., 2020, p. 312). It will be hard to dig out from this quicksand, from under this mire. Paradoxically, breaking out of the confining box of the colonial legacy requires outside-the-box thinking with the first step being home economists’ acceptance of being a victim, a beneficiary, and an unknowing perpetrator of colonisation and imperialism. Home economist must contend with both the colonial legacy and imperialism, which, in some formats (e.g., mass media), promotes a local social norm as a global norm thereby self-perpetuating itself and further entrenching itself into our collective psyche.

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE), through its official organ, the *International Journal of Home Economics*, is to be commended for challenging us to embark on this journey. This special issue is an attempt to raise our consciousness. Be forewarned, however. Decolonisation is unsettling because “decolonization is not an ‘and’. It is an elsewhere” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 36). Home economists will have to engage in some very uncomfortable soul searching to transcend to a new place of practice—the elsewhere. Nonetheless, in good conscience, we cannot turn away from this call to action—whether it is to decolonise home economics, decolonise the minds of home economists, or both. Individuals, families, and communities can benefit from our efforts to help them optimise their wellbeing and quality of life. Meeting that obligation demands a clear conscience and astute colonial awareness.

## Biography

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Sue L. T. McGregor (PhD, IPHE, Professor Emerita MSVU) is an active independent researcher and scholar in the areas of home economics philosophy, leadership, and education; consumer studies; transdisciplinarity; and research paradigms and methodologies. She recently published *Understanding and Evaluating Research* with SAGE in 2018. Her scholarship is at her professional website: <http://www.consultmcgregor.com>

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## An Unsettling Perspective Within Home Economics

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### Abstract

*Home economics is a field that was initially established to support women effectively manage the home to ensure healthy living. Launched during a time of social change that included migration, increasing urbanisation and ongoing colonial practices home economics offered possibilities for managing the perceived social chaos using scientific and rational processes lauded at the beginning of the twentieth century. In all of the shifting debates and discussions about home economics, its name and philosophy since its inception there has been limited thought given to how the field may perpetuate colonial perspectives and exclude knowledges that predate White settlement.*

*This paper explores the concept of unsettling home economics within the Australian context. This is done through four moves. Firstly, a brief exploration of the name home economics through some beliefs and knowledges associated with the field and profession is offered. Secondly there is a discussion of four epistemological positions that provide varied world views and what human activity and knowledge is privileged over others. Thirdly the idea of home economics needing to be de-colonised is considered. Lastly the idea of epistemic lives where we come to know the world through our everyday actions becomes a way to begin to think about home economics as a field and profession that is inclusive and respectful.*

**KEYWORDS:** HOME ECONOMICS, DECOLONISATION, EPISTEMIC LIVES, PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE, PRAXIS

The home economics profession focuses on strengthening homes as the basis of society. It is the space where “equality starts and everyone can develop their full potential” (emphasis added, IFHE, n.d.-a, para. 3). This focus is a moral stance and is a commitment that requires moral practice or praxis. Kemmis and Smith (2007) describe praxis as being not only being morally committed action but it is also orientated within and informed by the field’s traditions. Understanding home economics practices using Kemmis and Smith’s understanding provides an invitation to consider what actions define the profession. Thought needs to be given to not only what actions should the profession engage but also a conscious understanding of who benefits from those actions.

This leads to some consideration about the possibility that home economics needs to think about how it needs to decolonise its practice. What follows is a brief review of the history of the profession when home economics began at the beginning to the twentieth century to respond to hygiene and health as social issues of that time. While scholars in Canada and US are referenced examples from Australia as a country colonised in 1778 are used to contextualise the arguments. Drawing on different ways of knowing or epistemologies it is possible to understand how some ways of knowing can be privileged over others. Understanding the positionality of each epistemology is important in this paper. It possible to know something

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without understanding however understanding something we need in order to be able to think about our world. Discerning the field of home economics, our professional world is explored through the ongoing debates about the naming of the profession and how it has been framed within epistemologies associated with science, patriarchy and colonialism. A different possibility for knowing is offered through an Indigenous perspective that offers a relational world view.

The ways in which the world is understood is directly related to our social connection and interactions with others (Barker et al., 2018; Vaines, 2004). These engagements shape our epistemic lives and how we can know in particular ways (Johnson, 2019; Stichter, 2018). Through its history the field of home economics has been buffeted by constant need to change especially by external attitudes. This constant churn has meant that there has been very little thought about looking forward, given the perception of an unending need to respond. Instead reorientating such efforts towards rethinking the epistemic lives of home economics professionals offers possibilities for everyday practice that is respectful and inclusive.

### What is in a Name?

Epistemic logic utilises rational approaches to knowledge, belief and related ideas. This approach engages with understanding how knowledge is structured, its boundaries and properties, both inert and dynamic (Holliday, 2018). According to Wang and Seligman (2018) a standard epistemic logic holds implicit assumptions that the names of an agent, as an individual and groups of agents, are inflexible labels so that it is common knowledge for those being labelled.

The debates over naming the profession at the Lake Placid conferences are well documented (Gentzler, 2012; Kay, 2015; Stage, 1997; Vincenti, 1997). Pendergast and McGregor (2007) note that home economics and human ecology amongst other designations were proposed (Brown, 1985; Bubolz & Sontag, 1988; Vincenti, 1997). However, human ecology and its intention to include people and their social dimensions as a way to create healthy lives was vetoed by men within the biological sciences. Through the twentieth century the name home economics was utilised by the field but in a way that continued to create discomfort, and an experience that still continues. In 1979 Brown and Paolucci had been commissioned by the American Home Economics Association (AHEA) to develop a position paper entitled *Home Economics: A Definition*. Based on the work of Jorgen Habermas, Brown and Paolucci's paper argued for the profession to realign towards engaging with critical theory and inviting reflection on the apparent acceptance of social norms and reliance on technical practices.

Pendergast (2001) recognised the changes to the profession in response to what has been seen as important and legitimate work within studies of home economics. Changes are wrought in reaction to external pressures to manage the field (Gentzler, 2012) and its presence as a viable subject in schools is frequently contested. In her presentation to AHEA in celebration of the Association's 75th anniversary Brown (1993) reflected on how the profession was individualistic rather than communal in its orientation, its excessive reference to science and technology. Amongst other criticisms was a concern that there was a narrow understanding of the field (Vincenti, 1997).

In spite of the professional continually re-imagining itself its pragmatic responses to ongoing shifting the profession has been muted and positioned out-of-sight allowing other professions to claim the field's focus. Brown (1993) further developing her presentation to AHEA argued that the profession was too prone to social shifts and movements on the basis of expediency rather than philosophical intent and agency from within the field. Home Economists working in education contexts represent the largest number of the profession and yet Williams (1994) notes that home economics curriculum has always had a fragile presence in school because of limitations promulgated by those outside of the profession. The editing out of home economics as a subject in school curricula and closing of departments in higher education is, according to

Renwick (2017), a continuing practice. Vincenti (1997) has argued that the use of different names for the profession has “exacerbated identity confusion rather than alleviating it” (p. 305).

Why do names matter? Names are labels that are associated with an individual’s or a group’s identity. They also provide ways for connections from one person or group to another. These relational knowings are dependent on others, on affiliations and associations, commonalities and connections to create a sense of belonging. Since its inception the field of home economics has been in what seems to be perpetual motion about what to call itself and how others have viewed the profession and its work. Others have argued that the frequent name changes have undermined the profession’s public identity and, in some case, has made the field invisible (see for example Gentzler, 2012; Kay, 2015; Stage & Vincenti, 1997). However, through all of this de Zwart (2005) contends that practices within the profession have served to maintain hegemonic positions—colonialism and the superiority of Western-Eurocentric culture over others.

### Professional Practice Through a Praxial Lens

For home economics to be defined as a profession there are specific practices that are used to determine if such a categorisation is possible (Renwick, 2015). Drawing on a definition of a professional as one who has an explicit concern for others, Renwick (2015) affirms home economics as a profession. Renwick argues for recognition of home economics with this categorisation because of its pragmatic approaches and commitment to action through its “focus on the wellbeing of others” (2015, p. 21). Within home economics peak professional bodies provide statements that frame the profession as being focused on “the wellbeing of people in everyday living in households and families” (HEIA, n.d., p. 2) and with an aim “to achieve optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities” (IFHE, n.d.-b). These ideas coalesce into a proposition seeking to understand “how should one live well?” (Smith, 2004, p. 124) an intention that is infused with specific values and moral stances that have largely gone unheeded (Brown, 1985). Such beliefs have been justified within the profession for over 100 years. In doing so these beliefs, according to Barker et al., (2018) have become ways of knowing that infuses our practices, and the “choices we make about how to act or about what steps to take” (p. 1).

The home economics profession includes specific content that is framed in educational contexts as family, food, textiles and financial studies. These content areas are both inter- and trans-disciplinary requiring the professional to utilise an integrative approach. There are also claims for practices to be transformative (Brown, 1985) in that individuals and families are able to engage in action within their everyday experience because they are empowered to do so (Hodelin, 2008). However, it is necessary to pause here to consider—does the profession need to concentrate on only pre-determined actions to produce specific outcomes? In part this is the case as some of the work is technical—financial planning, application of heat and cold or utilisation of particular techniques to transform food and fabric. Such knowings are not sufficient in and of themselves given that these technical practices can only be evaluated only in the light of their consequences—in terms of how things actually turn out. This positioning opens up possibilities for thinking about the skills and understandings (Williams, 1994) alongside considerations about how does such content and practice make for a better lived experience in the everyday.

Engaging in practices that enable quality of life requires a moral judgment. Such practices are definable as praxis according to Kemmis et al. (2014) in two ways. Firstly, that praxis is a morally committed practice informed by, in this case the home economics, profession (Kemmis & Smith, 2008); and secondly that praxis is both for the good of those involved in the practice as well as being for the good of mankind (sic). Home economics practice as education is therefore seen as action that is morally committed to and informed by the profession—to enable

living well. In doing so there is also possibilities for generating a history through transformative action (Kemmis & Smith, 2008; Kemmis et al., 2014).

Home economics professionals and practitioners explicitly position themselves as co-habitants of the classrooms and community settings where they work. The nature of the work creates relationships between those sharing the space. Identities are shaped and formed because of these relationships and through the practices that are being enacted (Barker et al., 2018; Kemmis et al., 2009). Coming to understand “what does it mean to live well?” leads us as professionals to think about whether or not we have done anything or enough to create inclusive and decolonized spaces where we practice.

### **Epistemological Positioning of the Profession**

The need to understand the world, to have knowledge of it is a fundamental human activity, what is called epistemology. What constitutes knowledge, understanding, to understand why something comes to be and the associated cognitive engagement (Baumberger et al., 2017; Barker et al., 2018; Bird, 2010) might be a universal human enquiry, how understanding is shaped and considered is very diverse. In this section I consider various ways that the home economics profession has been called to both view and justify itself. What follows is a consideration of four ways of viewing the world—scientific, patriarchal, colonial and indigenous. Each generates different knowings and understandings and thus everyday epistemologies. It is possible for there to be alignment across these and leaving other epistemologies and experiences to be ignored or even negated.

#### **Knowing Through a Science Perspective**

Ellen Swallow Richards is recognised as foundational to the development of the home economics field (McGregor, 2020; Meszaros, 2015). With a background in chemistry and experience in sanitary chemistry and provision of nutrition programs, Richards was driven by a “passion for bringing applied scientific knowledge into the home for the betterment of society” (McGregor, 2020, p. 37). According to Greene, science offers a way to think about and understand the world in way that changes “confusion to understanding ...[through] ... precise, predictive and reliable” methods (2008, as cited in Baumberger et al., 2017, p. 3).

The changes being wrought at the turn of the nineteenth into the twentieth century both positioned and utilised science through industrialisation and urbanisation (Meszaros, 2015; Williams, 1994). In a world undergoing significant social change due to factors such as immigration and industrialisation, the scientific approaches offered explanations (Baumberger et al., 2017) for how to live in this new world. Changing patterns of living and technologies inevitably flowed into the domestic sphere where Williams (1994) posits that the principles of science create the modern and efficient housewife and enable the management of relationships using technical rationality.

The use of science as a pivotal concept for home economics as a field emerges from a positionality evidenced within Richards’ efforts to “extend the science professions to women and to use science to improve the quality of home life” (Meszaros, 2015, p. 197). Smith (2009) notes that while Home Economics has been concerned with well-being and the quality of life for families the profession has given “emphasis to disseminating scientific knowledge and practical know-how” (p. 50). Thus, home life is equated with technical skills, standardised products, appropriate use of material resources and family management through rules (Williams, 1994).

#### **Knowing Through a Patriarchal Perspective**

According to Miller (2017) the term patriarchy is associated with social relations particularly those evidenced within the family. They are evident within Ancient Greece and Rome, during

the Renaissance and through to the Enlightenment and thus have been carried through two millennia of Western history. Patriarchal families locate men in ways that they have organisational and legal dominance over women and children and these frames can extend to men who are racially different. Such family and social relationships are seen as being self-evident and universal shaping understandings of our world and daily life and thus our epistemic lives. Patriarchal arrangements are assumed in ways that they pervade social and political thought and as Moreton-Robinson (2004a) remarks on how the investment in patriarchal White sovereignty is maintained through a possessive logic. Moreton-Robinson discusses the ways in which patriarchal White sovereignty is positioned on exclusion and how it actively “denies and refuses what it does not own—the sovereignty of the Indigenous other” (p. 4).

The ideas of Western scientific thought have been actively applied within the family. Pendergast (2001) comments on how Richards was able to engage in science, a male dominated area of study in ways that were conditional. Richards was forced to develop home economics as a new field and utilised “a masculine framework for legitimising women’s knowledge” (Pendergast, 2001, p. 4). According to Meszaros (2015) home economics provided the basis for women to engage with science as long as it was applied within the domestic sphere. Code (2014) observes how during the twentieth century epistemologists utilised the scientific perspective to determine if a knowledge existed was through empirical certainty and silencing the sceptic. She goes on to reason that any relative position such as gender or race would not be germane to understanding knowledge under such conditions as it would challenge assumptions about human homogeneity. Fricker describes this homogeneity as the “politics of epistemic practice” (2007, p. 7) since acknowledging the gender or race of the knower offers new possibilities for what knowledge is and a subjectivity that is undesirable.

Home economics has been described as a profession that has worked to maintain societal roles through sexist, racist and heteronormative activity (see Darling, 1995; Eyre, 1991; Pendergast & McGregor, 2007). Pendergast (2001) has argued that the field of home economics is inevitably in tension with patriarchal social contexts. The ongoing effort to define itself and be suitable for legitimation within gendered knowledge and epistemological practices inevitably leaves it to be considered as less. The profession’s focus on family and home is gendered because the patriarchal position cast it as women’s work while reinforcing family as the space for having children. The “insider” male, patriarchal gaze is inevitably White, different gendered and racial perspectives are “outsider” knowings. Thompson (1986, 1988) challenges ideas associated with male defined elitism. To do this Thompson utilises a metaphor for the two domains—Hestian/private and Hermean/public. Thompson maintains that these social spaces are inherently relational and argues for a relational analysis of social spaces as public and private. It is this relational aspect that leads Thompson to observe how the Hermean domain is associated with control has come to dominate and silence the Hestian domain. As a result, the activities associated with everyday life (and Home Economics) are viewed as being trivial and lesser.

### **Knowing Through a Colonial Perspective**

Within the Western context scientific discourse is framed around racial superiority (Cunneen et al., 2017; Foley, 2003). Scientific knowings are based on Eurocentric determinations of what knowledge is and which knowledges are legitimate (Alcoff, 2017). Foley (2003) argues that these knowledge’s have been about Indigenous people but without their input, without reference to Indigenous language and other socio-cultural practices but created for the non-Indigenous spectator (Barker et al., 2018). The dismissing of Indigenous knowledges as inferior and the determination to ignore an Indigenous standpoint are significant contributors to the destruction of Indigenous people both culturally and through colonial violence and genocide (Alcoff, 2017; Cunneen et al., 2017).

The approach used by Western scholars means that Indigenous philosophies are measured according to Eurocentric sensibilities expressed as “we cannot know what we cannot make sense of, nor do we need to know from new sources what we already know” (Alcoff, 2017, p. 397). This positioning is located within what is described by Grincheva as an epistemic tradition that recognises “science or scientific enquiry as the most trustful source of knowledge” (2013, p. 146) leading to criticisms such as Alcoff’s calling out those using Western philosophical stances to judge “whether other traditions are worthy, but not putting themselves in the position to be taught” (2017, p. 397). Counter to this is a growing body of work about Indigenous epistemology that is demanding and receiving philosophical space such that there is greater understanding about differences in knowledge generation particularly around understandings of place and knowledge (Grincheva, 2013).

In the Australian context place and knowledge has been in a reciprocal relationship for over 60,000 years. Knowing about Indigenous food, different plants and animals and seasonality was critical for health and wellbeing of Indigenous people (Fredericks & Anderson, 2013). The arrival of colonial invaders shifted Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders’ way of life limiting and eventually separating them from traditional food ways. The use of rations such as dried beef, sugar, flour, jams and tea offer little nutritional value and created a diet that was energy-dense (Fredericks & Anderson, 2013). Within home economics classes the relationship between food and health and the development of preventable disease is a familiar topic. When attention is given to the health of Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders it is too easy to teach about their health as deficient and to ignore how they were healthier than the White settler population. Given the health statistics highlighting “the degree of sicknesses and disadvantage faced by Indigenous Australians—including a lower life expectancy, elevated mortality rate, increased risk of cancer, and increased risk of chronic disease (including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, respiratory disease, and kidney disease)” (Fredericks & Anderson, 2013, p. 4). In their consideration of cookbooks developed for Indigenous Australians, Fredericks and Anderson consider how such resources are heavily subsidised by governmental agencies and continue what they call “possessive logic of patriarchal [W]hite sovereignty that continues to subjugate Indigenous peoples” (2013, p. 7). It is this application of scientific knowing to a problem caused by colonialism (Andreotti, 2021) that ignores Indigenous wisdom generated over 60 millennia of being on land and the associated knowledge of traditional food ways.

### **Knowing Through an Indigenous Perspective**

While not unique to Australia the disregard for traditional knowledges is evident within the attempts to eradicate Indigenous traditions, culture and laws (Cunneen et al., 2017; Keddie, 2014) over the past 250 years. Such efforts are positioned within the settlers’ world views of possession, oppression and superiority (Foley, 2003; Moreton-Robinson, 2004b) and as such are fundamentally different to Indigenous epistemology. Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders experience significant social disadvantage on their own country and Moreton-Robinson notes that Indigenous people are represented as subject or objects rather than as “knowers”. Yet Australian Aboriginal peoples continue to hold their Indigenous knowledge systems intact (Cunneen et al., 2017) and these continue to develop and adjust both in and through their relationships with kin and country. This is highlighted in Moreton-Robinson’s (2004b) description of Indigenous people as being “in relationship with the landscape ... capable of [new ways to understand traditional culture that are] expressive of our living traditions and changed circumstances” (p. 86). The Uluru Statement from the Heart reasserts the connection to land that has occurred over 60,000 years in Western terms and since Creation is Indigenous terms. The claiming of sovereignty by Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders

... is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or “mother nature”, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom,

remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. (*Uluru Statement From the Heart*, 2017, para. 3)

The discussion about Indigenous epistemologies is most obvious in an around approaches to research and criticism of the higher education experience for Indigenous students. Foley (2003) writes about the problems for Indigenous students undertaking higher education that demands a Western approach to research. This experience Foley argues, is in tension with an Aboriginal philosophy that is constructed around a sacred triangulation of “the Physical, the Human and the Sacred worlds” (2003, p. 47) and that life is not possible without land given that is the land that sustains all life in relationship. For Martin (2017) the importance of this philosophy lies in its clear standpoint where an Indigenous researcher acts according to their “space and place” (p. 49). This standpoint is not just grounded physically as the Indigenous researcher also needs to attend to being flexible across different Indigenous cultures; and most importantly the knowledge is recorded for the community as owners of the knowledge.

Building on Foley’s Indigenous philosophy particular knowings become evident. Martin (2017) argues that “in all Indigenous accounts Country, people, entities, kin and knowing is not passive” (p. 11). Again, there is reinforcement of how the people’s culture, spirit and land are in perpetual relation and interconnection. Thus, Indigenous knowing is not confined and held in stasis at the point of White settlement rather connections to land continue through memory and intergenerational story-telling (Foley, 2003; Keddie, 2014; Mylonas-Widdall, 1988). Drawing on these ideas leads Keddie to articulate Indigenous epistemology as a “focus on relationality where community, kinship and family networks are at the centre of all relations” (2014, p. 57). These are familiar areas of concern to home economics professionals and offer a possible insight for forward thinking the field.

Having considered three epistemologies that have been used to determine and manage the home economics field there is a need to keeping deliberating about how well these understandings of the world have served the profession. Over the history of the profession the dominant world views sourced from science, patriarchy and colonialist knowledges has kept the profession cloistered and restricted in ways that prevented home economics from being given the due consideration it deserves. Given the now widely accepted concerns for climate change (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022), home economics as a field has an opportunity to embrace its position for sustainable living and well-being for everyone and therefore compatible with an Indigenous epistemology. There is a need to be careful of commandeering an Indigenous epistemology and Vaines’ *Spheres of Influence* (Powell & Renwick, 2019; Vaines, 1994) advances a possibility to avoid this. For an Australian settler population, Vaines’ spheres offer a companionable position to Indigenous ways of knowing that offers possibilities for walking alongside, listening to and being with Indigenous peoples in respectful ways.

### **Does Home Economics Need Decolonising?**

Home Economics developed out of the Lake Placid Conferences 1899-1909. The focus of the conversations was around family welfare. At the time, issues of health, sanitation and nutrition were closely aligned with social improvement (Gentzler, 2012; McGregor, 2020; Stage, 1997; Williams, 1994). Through the conferences a number of materials and resources emerged that were intended to provide a unified approach. These included curricula materials and a definition that expressed both the intentions, scoping and context of home economics as a new field.

Home Economics in its most comprehensive sense is the study of the laws, conditions, principles and ideals which are concerned on the one hand man’s [sic] immediate physical environment and on the other hand with his [sic] nature as a

social being, and is the study speciality of the relations between these two factors.  
(as cited in Meszaros, 2015, p. 200)

To place the emergence of home economics in historical context it was only 34 years since the end of the Civil War. The end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century saw an influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe to America. Education at the beginning of the twentieth century was viewed as an extension of the liberal belief in opportunity and the potential for self-actualisation that in turn would drive social progress (Franklin et al., 1991; Urban et al., 2019). However, education was guided by insider sensibilities typified in White Euro-centric, Protestant and patriarchal worldviews. As outsider the “educational realities for African, Americans, native Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans were greatly affected by the racist and [W]hite supremacist values that were integral to mainstream American culture” (Franklin et al., 1991, p. 48).

In the Australian context, the centring of White Australian and colonial perspectives were similarly privileged. Legislation for compulsory schooling was introduced during the 1870s so by the end of the nineteenth century Australia children it was a widespread experience, as it intended to build a literate (Theobald, 1996) and productive society. Green and Cormack (2011) have commented about public education being influential in fostering and shaping a national identity that had to contend with its colonial status, its unique geography and isolation from Britain. Since the arrival of White settlers “Australia has always been deeply linked to Britain not just economically and politically but also *culturally*” (emphasis in original, Green & Cormack, 2011, p. 246).

In both the United States and Australia, the social values of the time were made explicit through both the intention and content of education. The experience of schooling invited in and supported those with the political and cultural power to be *insiders* while concurrently excluding and thereby disadvantaging those deemed to be *outsiders*. In Australia, this exclusion effectively prevented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from contributing to the production of knowledge and in doing so generated epistemic oppression (Barker et al., 2018). The generation of human systems is the result of relations that are sustained over time. It is these relationships that form what are called epistemic lives, as people build understandings of how they are dependent upon and contribute to their environment and are a part of society as a larger human system (Banathy & Jenlink, 2013; Barker et al., 2018). Such understandings highlight those relations that are worked and re-worked into a system while also excluding or ignoring other relations so that they remain outside the system.

Human systems are derived from human actors organising and engaging with collective actions towards a common goal or purpose. The Lake Placid conferences focused on education system practices in order to substantiate and shape the educative potential of the new field of home economics. The definition of home economics developed during the fourth Lake Placid conference invites conjecture about the insiders who are crafting the field based on their knowings, beliefs and understandings.

While Australian girls and young women were not excluded from schooling by the bureaucracy Theobald (1996) notes that their education of was explicitly linked to the private spaces of family and home in different ways depending on class and race. This association of gender with the private sphere continued as possibilities for further education and moving into employment in the public sphere (Darian-Smith, 2016). Women were permitted to work in what were defined as caring professions such as continuing their work with children as teachers (Theobald, 1996) which became “the largest and most visible group of women in professional employment” (Whitehead, 2007, p. 7). The fusing of women to domestic work and family related employment

is and continues to be an ongoing position within the patriarchal ideology in Western societies (Pendergast, 2001; Pendergast & McGregor, 2007).

Dermer (2018) writes how Australia's alignment with Britain constructed a public education system around "growing good, moral citizens, culturally aligned to the motherland which viewed Australia as both an extension of itself and essential to its future" (p. 30). Familiar discourses around race purity and health were evidenced in public intentions to create a White Australia (Ravenscroft, 2016). Education was also utilised to extend worldviews emanating from a distant Britain that was White, protestant and patriarchal. In doing so there were those who were left outside such as those immigrants who were defined as non-White Europeans, those from Asia and the Pacific region and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Setting aside what we would now see as sexist language within the original definition of home economics there is another aspect to explore. What collective action is being developed and for what purpose? Since the definition argues that home economics, is in part, a study of laws then the question that needs to be asked is "whose law?"

Within context of the Lake Placid conferences the family and home were perceived as the place to nurture citizens who were able to both contribute to and benefit from engagement in society. Inevitably social niceties and customs develop as does a need for citizens to be willing to abide by the rules and laws. In writing about the application of English law, Mylonas-Widdall (1988) posits that "colonisers began with their own image of customary society as, above all, unchanging and hierarchical" (p. 380) and that "the introduction of English law carried with it the power to define the scope of customary law" (p. 382). While there was initial recognition of Indigenous people having laws within context of their customary society there has been a preparedness to adjust, re-interpret and change settler laws to override customary laws.

In the Australia context Moreton-Robinson (2004a) writes about the Yorta Yorta people's case to determine native title over their homelands. The need to make a case, stems from the act of Britain claiming sovereignty and occupation of the Yorta Yorta homelands and has been argued that it negates pre-existing traditional laws and customs that has previously identified "entitlement and territory, allocate rights, interests and responsibilities within communal possession and regulate their exercise by community members" (Moreton-Robinson, 2004a, para. 20). The legal rights of Indigenous people are defined in ways that any pre-existing traditional law, continuity and connection to that land are wilfully ignored. Moreton-Robinson's account amongst others (see for example Buchan, 2002; Keenan, 2014; Pearson, 2003) provides an example of how patriarchal White sovereignty operates in ways that claim it is race blind while simultaneously setting judicial and legal blocks.

It is through these different epistemological positions that any references to law, living conditions and ideals in the definition of home economics are argued as being through a White, settler perspective.

In their discussion about home economics and its history Pendergast and McGregor (2007) acknowledge the critique that home economics has been implicated in the reinforcing gender stereotypes and status quo. The intention for this historical context is not to make any claims or assertions that home economics was set up as a colonial or racist project as such. However, the profession cannot ignore the historical context in which it was established. As Pendergast notes "our history can never change, however our understanding of the social contexts of that history can" (2001, p. 9). To do otherwise enables a form of ignorance or amnesia where possibilities for contributing to racist positions cannot be set aside whether through a lack of malice or informed by insider thinking, rather than outsider experience. However, for people whose culture and epistemological positions are not represented, for whatever the reason, will

experience a silencing, an othering that diminishes and trivialises their experience, knowledges and understandings.

### **Epistemic Lives**

Understanding how we come to know and how we learn to live well are the culminations of social interactions. Our epistemic positions arise and evolve because of our everyday lives and engagement with others. How we come to understand our world is inherently personal and connected to our social context and it is these knowings that create and shape our epistemic lives (Barker et al., 2018; Johnson, 2019). Everyday life is according to Vaines (1996), replete with complexities not the least when making judgments about praxial action that is morally informed and attends to the greater 'good' (Kemmis et al., 2014). The engagement in praxis requires a level of expertise to function under taxing situations while also holding to a high standard (Stichter, 2018). Engaging with praxis is something that is learnt (Kemmis & Smith, 2007) and as Stichter observes we learn by doing, and that we become better when we keep practicing.

Such practice orientated work with intention is not new thinking for home economics professionals. Within the profession responding to (Kemmis et al.'s (2009) question of "how do we live well?" would be seen as obvious and central to its aims. Living well requires a relational stance within families and between family members, accessing food, clothing and shelter as resources to ensure living well. These relations are in turn linked to living on and because of the land through everyday acts. However, it is the attention to those knowings and how they are used that determines which practices and positions are privileged. What we chose to do in our day-to-day activities, what we gain from our experiences and how we know what we do and why we do particular things can be described as our epistemic lives (Barker et al., 2018).

The idea of an epistemic life is a concept that warrants exploration by the home economics profession. An epistemic life is guided by values that guide what we do and the choices we make in deciding how to act or problem solve. In the IFHE Position Statement (n.d.-b) the definition of the field focuses on achieving "optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities" (p. 1). In order to work towards and achieve such an outcome the profession needs to consider what underpin these ideas. Specific values that could be referenced include peace, trustworthiness, respect, justice, responsibility and fairness come to mind.

Barker et al. point out that epistemic lives also can be guided by vices such that "people are often harmed or wronged in various aspects of their lives" (2018, p. 2). Drawing from epistemological positions discussed earlier in this paper two examples are offered. Firstly, patriarchal knowings have resulted in a disregard for the domestic space and therefore home economics as a field is readily ignored; and secondly White Eurocentric, colonialist ideas that have wilfully ignored 60,000 years of living on land by Indigenous people in Australia. In both examples it is possible to extrapolate to not only epistemological harm but also as social, moral and political harm (Barker et al., 2018).

Epistemic ignorance is an example of practice where there is not only a lack of knowledge but also the result of an active and determined intention to believe otherwise (Barker et al., 2018; Mills, 2007). Some epistemic ignorance might be a deliberate choice due to a lack of interest or motivation to engage. However, another reason relates to a hegemonic understanding in that some knowledge is simply taken for granted based on assumption about something always having been or because a lack of understanding or attention to be able to imagine differently. Renwick (2017) discusses how ignorance about home economics has resulted in the field being disadvantaged in a number of different ways. The public sphere in Australia is dominated by a patriarchal and colonialists' perspectives. Thus, home economics is written out of hegemonic

consciousness and Indigenous knowledges and understandings have been deliberately oppressed and excluded. Further where home economics exists within Australian classrooms it is unlikely to have any nuanced engagement with Indigenous knowledges and understandings.

### **A Different View of the World and Knowledge**

If the home economics field is to claim wellbeing and concern for all families (IFHE, n.d.-b) then there is a need to rethink the profession's epistemological positioning if it is to truly engage with transformative practices (Smith, 2004; Vaines, 1994, 2004). Given the field's history then any transformation is only likely to come from altered understanding about how it has consistently been an outsider profession because of the patriarchal and colonial epistemologies. The history of the profession has been about accommodating, adjusting and tweaking according to external pressures trying to be accepted but without attention towards oppressive practices. The impact of all of this effort has forced the field to adjust and accommodate rather than contributing to changing the circumstances that is causing the profession to be oppressed (Cunneen et al., 2017).

To think how we come to understand our world and know in new ways requires something substantially more than personal and professional introspection. While such introspection is necessary there is also a need to identify the values that a profession that claims to have while in service of others. The IFHE Position Statement (n.d.-b) asserts that "Home economics professionals are advocates for individuals, families and communities" (p. 1). Such positioning means that home economics as a profession cannot claim to work for only some people. A view of family and everyday living that only reflects what the profession knows and defines invariably excludes. Where the profession normalises what we know and denies different life experience and diversity then our claims for advocacy can only function for us as insiders.

The difference between Western epistemology and Indigenous epistemology warrants some consideration. Foley (2003) posits that a part of the difference is that "Indigenous Australians already know the origin, nature, methods and limits of their knowledge systems" (p. 47). Given the interdisciplinary nature of home economics is it reasonable to claim relational knowledges and understandings. It is this epistemology that seems to lie closest to what the home economics profession has claimed as a central tenant of its profession and practice. It seems that the profession has something to learn from and in relationship with Indigenous people that offers genuine possibilities for inclusive practices.

To come to terms with a need for epistemic change and to begin the process one approach is to look at ways to decolonise the profession. Decolonising work is necessary but it is not necessarily easy work. Bringing in the relational world view of Indigenous peoples is a decolonial act. As Manathunga et al. (2020) posit "Working on decolonisation requires a high level of reflexivity, self-critique, generosity and openness" (p. 4). The need to speak truth before any reconciliation in colonised countries such as Australia and Canada is necessary given the experiences of cultural and racial genocide in both countries and others because of colonisation. In 2007 the United Nations released Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It recognises that Indigenous people have inherent rights based on their social, cultural and political structures and that these should be both respected and promoted. This process is guided by an intent for reconciliation a process for looking forward and anticipation decolonised relationships (Rigby, 2001). In order to create new relations, there is a need for recognition of truth about power imbalances (Rigby, 2001) and the perpetrations of and complicity in violence and evil deeds (Corntassel & Holder, 2008) as Little and Maddison (2017) points out that this is not about ignoring or erasing the past rather generating a shared truth as a basis for reconciliation and moving towards a collective future.

Within home economics there has been minimal reflection of what decolonial work might look like. In the absence of any research in Australia it is useful to draw from the Canadian context and two scholars have begun the conversation to consider ways that the profession can begin to decolonise. de Zwart (2005) in her review of domestic science manuals used across Canada offered ways to understand both “race and class conflicts in colonial settings” (p. 130) offers a first step in telling a truth. de Zwart’s treatise argues that “The recipes used in the domestic manuals contributed to colonialism and the belief in White (British) cultural superiority” (2005, p. 141). Smith (2019a) echoes de Zwart’s findings when she reviewed a community cookbook developed in 1941. In her review Smith comments about an uncomfortable reality evident within the cookbook’s pages of being “complicit in colonialism” (p. 126).

If such cook books and recipes used within the Canadian context offer some ways to look for “truths” within home economics practice then there are possibilities for beginning to consider ways to move forward in reconciliation. Smith (2019b) in her framing of decolonial practice highlights three practices—self work, decolonise content and decolonise our research. By undertaking each of these steps there is opportunity to consider epistemological basis of the home economics field and profession. There is a challenge to engage in reflexive practice, rethink content and pedagogical practices with and facilitates research that genuinely aims to improve the quality of people’s lives. To draw in such practices would result in different epistemic lives informed by understandings of the world that move the profession closer to its aim of being morally committed to transformative action towards living well—for everyone.

The need to understand the complexities of everyday life is the basis of the work of Elenore Vaines (1994, 1996, 2004). She has argued that “there is a wholeness to everyday life that can be learned, identified and communicate” (Vaines, 2004, p. 133). In order to make sense of the complexities Vaines developed a series of maps that considered epistemological positions including ways of knowing and ecology as a unifying theme for home economics. The ideas, maps and metaphors developed by Vaines offer ways to transform the profession’s practice that leads to “an ecologically desirable and socially just society” (Vaines, 2004, p. 135) that align with the relational world view of Indigenous people.

## **Conclusion**

In her contemplation of both the visibility and relevance of home economics Gentzler (2012) wonders why a profession “dedicated to improving the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities is (considered to be) unrealistic, oversimplified, naïve, outdated” (p. 6). Gentzler offers an easy point to argue when the field is seen as being irrelevant. However, there is an opportunity if home economics professionals can engage with an epistemological position such as those offered by Vaines that informs the field in ways that are both ecological and inclusive (Smith, 2019c).

Home economics needs to move on from a patriarchal and colonial world view that is causing ecological systems to break down (Andreotti, 2021). Vaines’ position that “the world is our home” creates possibilities for aligning alongside Indigenous world views. There is an opportunity to understand everyday practices that work within ecological limits as Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders have done for over 60,000 years. Such insights would offer the potential to create new practices that are sustainable and desperately needed. In order to do this home economics needs to explore the ways in which professional practices have contributed to colonisation.

Our epistemic lives are the result of our interactions with others especially our colleagues in the profession. For the profession to make claim for morally committed practice that is in the interests of every family there is a need to consider how there was a focus of some families at

the expense of others. To engage with transformative practice the profession needs to look to possibilities for cultural healing in relationship with Indigenous people.

## Biography

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## Tackling an Uncomfortable Reality: Exploring Decolonising in Home Economics Education

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### Abstract

*In this paper I explore the premise that colonialism, racism and microaggressions are forms of structural violence that are deeply embedded in the fabric of society particularly evident in our language and actions and addressing them is a start toward decolonisation. I argue that the only way to decolonise is to consistently visible, identify and describe structural violences and then work to dismantle them. I discuss how home economics educators can do this being mindful that this is a long process and there is no quick fix.*

**KEYWORDS:** DECOLONISATION, STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE, COLONISATION, RACISM, MICROAGGRESSIONS

### Preamble

I am a fourth generation White, settler colonist, old aged, middle class, able-bodied, married, childless female. I am grateful to live and write in unceded ancestral Coast Salish territory, specifically the lands of the Quw'utsun' and Malahat peoples of Canada. I have lived most my life under a *White gaze*—the power, privilege and mentality of settler colonialism that has produced language and actions that “evoke and enforce hidden signs of racial superiority, cultural hegemony, and dismissive ‘othering’ of people” (Morrison, 1992, p. x-xi) and where “official versions of history, which begin as cultural and contextual interpretations of events, morph into hegemonic expressions of existing value structures and worldviews of dominant groups in a society” (Donald, 2009, p. 3). I recognise that I am never totally free from the hegemony of the White gaze dominating how I think and operate within society and the privileges it has afforded me as a White person.

### Introduction

Language is a powerful tool. Different discourses start from different premises, use different data, have different ideological bases informed by different value systems, and have different purposes. The cultural coding in our languages shapes our taken-for-granted assumptions and patterns of thought and behaviour influencing what is silenced and what is marginalised. Combined with gestures and actions, language can affect how we perceive reality and, in the process, it can alter the nature of reality itself. In order to make sensible choices for action we need to be able to understand these different languages and discourses. We need to be prepared to challenge the language and discourses we use as well as that used by others in reference to us. particularly if they are antithetical to our cause.

Marjorie Brown (1993) wrote a book with the subheading *Basic Ideas by which home economists understand themselves*. On reading the book, you may conclude, as I have, that it is really

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about how we misunderstand ourselves. If we do not sufficiently explain and articulate the terms we use to determine whether they suit our intentions we risk taking actions contrary to our espoused mission. As Brown says, “the [terms] create illusions by which home economists deceive themselves: the ideas and the professional activities based on those ideas are contrary to the real intentions of home economics” (p. 484). In other words, to get out from the White gaze I need to recognise how uncritically accepted and unjust dominant colonial ideologies are embedded in everyday situations and practices of which I am involved. It means challenging guiding assumptions, unequal relations of power in the larger society, and the realities of dominance and subordination. In particular this involves philosophical inquiry to: identify structural violence as a theoretical frame; demonstrate that colonialism, racisms and microaggressions are pervasive, institutionalised social structures of violence; and argue that decolonisation involves exposing and dismantling them.

### **Mode of Inquiry**

The call for papers for this special issue outlined the topic of investigation as decolonisation making problematic the relationship between home economics and colonialism. The broad question, I am addressing is “in what ways can we decolonise our educational practices?” To explore this question, I use philosophical inquiry “to theorize, to analyze, to critique, to raise questions about, and/or to pose as problematic that which we are investigating” (Koetting & Malisa, 2008, p. 1009). A theoretical framework refers to the theory that a researcher chooses to guide their research and to offer an explanation of an event, or shed some light on a particular phenomenon or research problem (Imenda, 2014). In this case, I reference the theory of structural violence first introduced by Galtung (1969).

### **Structural Violence as a Theoretical Frame**

A review the literature reveals that the theory of structural violence was first introduced by peace scholar Galtung (1969), who used the term to distinguish it from the typical physical violence of war or crime. According to Galtung (1969) structural violence is a form of violence that is built into social structures, such as the language used, or social institutions, such as education or health care. It harms people by preventing them from meeting their basic physical, social, and emotional needs. Edling (2015) explains that structural violence is difficult to spot because it is “produced as a recurring beat through endorsed ideals, speech, gestures, choice of focus and solutions to world problems” (p. 404) often appearing “to be normal, harmless and sometimes have the ambition to do good, whereas in reality, they make life difficult for certain groups of people” (p. 405). The use of structural violence or “everyday violence” (Scheper-Hughes, 1995, p. 143) compels us to ask what factors uphold inequality, unfair treatment and injury to people (Farmer, 2004; Galtung, 1969). It creates the opportunity to consider the different types of marginalisation, oppression and discrimination that shape inequality and suffering and how they can be addressed. In that way, concern about structural violence is often considered synonymous with concern for social justice (Evans, 2016).

The use of structural violence as a theoretical frame is common in peace studies (Bentley et al., 2017; Evans, 2016; Galtung, 1969; Vorobej, 2008), political science (Dilts et al., 2012), and anthropology (Farmer, 2004; Rylko-Bauer & Farmer, 2016; Scheper-Hughes, 1993). Increasingly it is used by health researchers (Farmer et al., 2006; Hamed et al., 2020; Herrick & Bell, 2020; Macassa et al., 2021), sociologists (Hamer & Lang, 2015), and women’s studies (Mukherjee et al., 2011; Price, 2012). It is beginning to appear in education (Edling, 2015). McGregor (2003) used it in reference to consumerism which is significant since some home economics programs are known as Family and Consumer Science. Home economists work in various fields (e.g., academia, education, health care, social work, international development, etc.) many of which have perpetrated or been party to structural violence one way or another.

In this article, I use structural violence as a theoretical tool and descriptor to understand how colonialism, racisms and microaggressions are social structures that are frequently rendered invisible because they are enacted in subtle, taken-for-granted ways and become hegemonic. I chose structural *violence* to emphasise the resulting hurt, trauma and harm.

## Colonialism as Structural Violence

Colonialism is a broad concept referring to the project of European political domination often achieved with significant permanent European settlement (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). Often referred to as settler colonialism, it seeks to replace the original population of the colonised territory with a new society of settlers (Tuck et al., 2014). Settler colonialism is a structure rather than an event (Wolfe, 1999). While colonialism is primarily about conquest, exploitation and extraction of resources, settler colonialism is premised on occupation and the elimination of the Indigenous population (Tuck, 2016; Wolfe, 2006) using biopolitical and geopolitical structural methods to ensure the primacy of colonial power and control. Settler colonialism involves actions such as removing Indigenous people from their land and establishing reserves or reservations; forcing Indigenous children into schools that were far from their homes, thus removing them from their culture and familial connections; removing children from their homes altogether and adopting children out to colonial families; banning Indigenous ceremonies; claiming and renaming Indigenous territories; imposing colonial systems of governing; to name just a few (Battiste, 2013; Battiste et al., 2002; Burow et al., 2018; Maddison, 2013). Every effort sought the continued disconnection of Indigenous people from: their histories, landscapes, language, social relations; their own ways of thinking, feeling, and interacting with the world; their existing cultural structures and social support systems; and their systems of laws and governance. It was not just Indigenous people who were treated this way, immigrants with cultural backgrounds other than the colonisers and especially visible minorities, also experienced similar forms of structural violence and discrimination.

By imposing new colonial social, economic, and political structures many of which continue to this day, settler colonialism seeks to erase all evidence of indigeneity and difference (Ball, 1983; Maddison, 2013). These structures are violent because: a) “the violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances” (Galtung, 1969, p. 170-1); and b) “social, political or economic structures stand in violation of another layer of cultural norms with the effect of systematic harm to individuals and communities” (Vaidya, 2018, p. 317).

Colonial institutions have historically functioned as mechanisms to serve the purposes of the coloniser (Ball, 1983; Khalifa et al., 2019; Tuck, 2016). Education whether it be formal or informal, as a colonial institution has, and continues to use, colonial strategies such as: normalising Western Eurocentric empiricist knowledge ignoring Indigenous many ways of knowing; using only the language of the colonist; only accepting written colonial histories as legitimate, devaluing or dismissing Indigenous oral histories (Khalifa et al., 2019; Mbembe, 2016; Tuck, 2016); and imposing a culture of schooling as opposed to a culture of learning (Khamasi et al., 2021).

Education, social work, and health, all of the so called “helping” professions, including home economics, often did just the opposite of helping by serving as agents of erasure, creating profound ruptures in Indigenous families and communities by wiping out languages, cultures, knowledge, norms, value systems, histories, kinship and relationships (Battiste, 2012). Early advocates for home economics/domestic science (or any of the various terms that have been used) believed that interventions in the family, whether in the realm of hygiene, cooking, child rearing, or satisfying other basic needs, were ways to address evolving social and public health issues and improve both society and nation. By emphasising standard procedures on how to conduct a home that were based on Eurocentric values, they were unwittingly complicit in

settler colonisation. I say unwittingly because I think many home economists could be categorised as either colonists in the sense they are from countries that established colonies around the world, or settler colonists those who live in former colonies or countries that are still closely linked to a colonial home country, or those who are Indigenous but have been raised in colonial states. There is a good chance that they have taken for granted the hegemony of colonialism.

Fundamentally, hegemony is the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all. Domination is thus exerted not by force, nor even necessarily by active persuasion, but by a more subtle and inclusive power over the economy, and over state apparatuses such as education and the media, by which the ruling class's interest is presented as the common interest and thus comes to be taken for granted. (Ashcroft et al., 2013, p. 106-107)

European, western, imperial knowledge, morality, cultural practices and mores, become dominant undermining and trivialising any other thought or behaviour, reinforcing White privilege. Matthews (1987) suggested that home economics had never reached its full potential because it was impossible to help people while systematically disparaging their life experience.

A few examples from my own practice: in my second year of teaching in the late 1960s I accepted position teaching elementary school in a rural amalgamated school where 75% of the enrolment were Indigenous students. I never once questioned the prescribed curriculum that consisted of basal readers in English, social studies of the great explorers, Western scientific methods, and so on. I had a similar experience when 12 years later I took a position teaching home economics. That year a new mandated curriculum for that subject had been issued that even included a scope and sequence of the recipes students should prepare in Foods and Nutrition: trifle, scones, Yorkshire pudding, beef Wellington, along with a few "ethnic" and "foreign" suggestions but no mention of local or Indigenous foods. Again, I never once questioned what was prescribed. I simply set about determining how to implement it, accepting the authority of government. de Zwart (2005) uses the metaphor of "white sauce" to explain how the home economics curriculum served the colonial function of assimilation and social control. Smith (2019c) describes it as keeping the "British" in "British Columbia". It could also be referred to as a "white racial frame" that leads to stereotypes and discriminatory actions (Toure & Dorsey, 2018).

My teacher education up to that point had consisted of courses that focused mainly on how to implement (not question) the mandated curriculum and how to manage a classroom. It was not until I was introduced to critical theory in the 1980s, first by the work of Brown (1980, 1985, 1993) and then by various applications of critical theory such as critical race, critical feminist, and postcolonial scholarship that I was able to recognise the limitations and structural violence of my thinking, language and actions related to professional practice and to begin to think about questions such as whose knowledge, whose culture, what is to be taught, to whom and how.

## Decolonising

If we agree that colonialism is structurally violent then the way to address it is to decolonise. There is great diversity and depth in decolonial practice. Stirling (2015) notes it can be "a state of being, an analytical tool, a body of theory, a process of recovery, a system of praxis, and the expression of activism" (p. 80). However, there is fairly common agreement that the purpose of decolonisation is "the process of revealing and dismantling colonialist power in all its forms" (Ashcroft et al., 2013, p. 56). It involves recovering "the history that has been hidden or suppressed unintentionally and intentionally" (Battiste, 2013, p. 107) and identifying colonial ideologies that normalise the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches.

There has been a lot of attention given to Indigenising curriculum but similar to Hill (2012) I contend that before you can indigenise professional practice, one must decolonise both the person and the curriculum (Smith, 2019a, 2019b). Otherwise, there is a chance of recolonising, which “resettles [W]hiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3). Recolonising occurs when educational professionals, often well intentioned, teach “about” Indigenous people or various cultural groups but often transmit stereotypical views, fixed in time, decontextualised, and unconscious of the enormous diversity within and between cultures. Or, they just do a few activities as a “token” to be able to claim that they are including Indigenous perspectives and honouring cultural diversity for example, have students make an “Indigenous” or “cultural” recipe or create a textile object with a “native” or cultural motif or participate in a single event, for example, the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples or World Peace Day.

Decolonisation thus has implications for the home economics profession. It requires: decolonising ourselves; decolonising curriculum; and decolonising our research (Smith, 2019a, 2019b). I will briefly review these and then discuss two specific actions, addressing racism and microaggressions.

### **Decolonising Ourselves**

Decolonising means being willing to learn as much as we can about colonisation so we can adequately reflect Indigenous cultures and traditions as recommended by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2007). Being willing to unlearn all that we learned in most current systems of education-based Eurocentric frameworks that are structurally violent (Battiste, 2013; Smith, 2016). It means taking

... responsibility to look at ourselves first as members of colonising cultures, turning the analytic lens and the transformational actions on those discursive structures and patterns, identities and practices that originate within and benefit those with privilege in the dominant culture. (Edmundson & Martusewicz, 2013, pp. 179-180)

This is “an intensely political transformative process” (Battell Lowman & Barker., 2016, p. 111) that seeks to:

- a. overcome ignorance and to understand the impact of settler colonialism and dismantle the colonial structures that perpetuate the status quo;
- b. value and revitalise Indigenous knowledge and approaches and weed out settler biases or assumptions that have impacted Indigenous ways of being; and
- c. avoid tokenism and recolonisation (Antoine et al., 2018).

### **Decolonising Home Economics Curriculum**

For many the word curriculum refers to the official formal document that mandates what should be taught in a certain jurisdiction. A common synonym is the syllabus or outline of the course content. Since so much of typical home economics content is based on Western empiricist knowledge and values, we need to interrogate and decolonise it. Our understandings of food and diet (Bodirsky & Johnson, 2008; Bradley & Herrera, 2016; Rueda Esquibel, 2016; Wilson & Shukla, 2020), of health and wellbeing (Büyüm et al., 2020; Herrick & Bell, 2020; Macassa et al., 2021; Narasimhan & Chandanabhumma, 2021), of consumerism (McGregor, 2003), of fashion and clothing (Jansen, 2020); family science (Bermúdez et al., 2016), and so on, all need to be revisited and diversified.

Another meaning of curriculum that is much broader is everything that goes on in educational settings that contributes to what students learn (Battiste, 2012; Egan, 1978; Posner, 2004). This meaning includes such aspects as the hidden curriculum and null curriculum. The hidden or

covert curriculum refers messages students receive about knowledge, norms, values, behaviour that are implied by the educational environment such as the arrangement of seating in classroom, the bulletin boards and displays, timetables and bells, class and school rules and rituals, what is celebrated, and so on. The null curriculum refers to subject matter that is not taught and therefore students learn that it is not important, not valued for example, the historical, philosophical, economic and cultural contributions of Indigenous people and any people who are not of the dominant culture.

To decolonise our curriculum, we can closely examine educational settings, resources, materials and pedagogical practices for evidence of colonialism. We can ask “what is taken-for-granted?” “What perspective dominates?” “What is missing?” “Is this (setting, resource, teaching strategy) empowering all students?” For example, Wong (2013) examined two home economics textbooks published 20 years apart to see if any progress had been made given the rise of critical theory, critical postmodern feminist theories and critical race theory. She found some improvement but on the whole the representation of gender, race, class, age were still problematic as there was evidence of tokenism, othering, and stigmatisation. She recommended that curricular materials be evaluated in order to determine whether adaptations and supplementary materials will be required or whether the materials should be used at all. She suggested that students should be taught to think critically about the material in textbooks rather than passively accepting the information. Having an open dialogue about the way gender, race and socioeconomic status are portrayed will encourage student learning and develop critical literacy.

### **Decolonise Home Economics Research**

The way we research and write research reports is subject to colonisation. We are often bound by Eurocentric academic conventions (Held, 2019). For Indigenous people, research has been a negative experience, a metaphor for colonialism (Smith, 1999/2013). *Decolonizing Methodologies*, (originally published by L. T. Smith in 1999) initiated a movement away from typical empiricist research on people toward more participatory power with research. We need to learn to conduct research “in ways that meet the needs of Indigenous communities and are nonexploitative, culturally appropriate and inclusive, or we need to relinquish our roles as researchers within Indigenous contexts and make way for Indigenous researchers” (Aveling, 2013, p. 204). Thambinathan and Kinsella (2021) content that if the research involves vulnerable people who are “oppressed by colonial legacies” decolonising research as a “moral imperative” (p. 1). They outline four practices that can be used to decolonise qualitative researcher: (1) exercising critical reflexivity, (2) reciprocity and respect for self-determination, (3) embracing *Other(ed)* ways of knowing, and (4) embodying a transformative praxis.

Only when we adopt a decolonising stance can begin to revise and transform the imperialist and assimilative frameworks that have grounded our work. In home economics education two areas in particular deserve close attention; the structural violence of racism and microaggressions.

### **Addressing Racism**

The structural violence of racism is often but not always invisible because racism is an ingrained, pervasive element of our society (Ladson-Billings, 2013). It causes dehumanisation, humiliation, silencing, alienation, exclusion, economic dispossession, shame, grief, and trauma. While *racism* has the root word race, the term racism has expanded to include all forms of discrimination and oppression. “All oppressions have certain things in common. They operate within structures, are intended to establish material advantage, and create an “Othering” process between the self and the other” (Dei, 2003, p. 4). For home economists addressing racism as part of decolonisation is important as our professional practice often involves working

with institutions that have routinely produced racially inequitable outcomes for people of colour and advantages for White people.

Anti-racist education is a “proactive educational practice intended to address all forms of racism and the intersections of social difference (race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability)” (Dei, 2003, p. 2). Anti-racist approaches are informed by Foucault’s notions of biopower and governmentality, where prejudice, discrimination, bias and so on, are manifestations of racism and the intent is to negate the value of *the other* in order to gain power and to dominate and control, biopower; and/or a way for the state to maintain power and regulate and control subjects, governmentality (Fiaccadori, 2015; Su Rasmussen, 2011). In this interpretation, racism is seen as a tool or device of repression and power and it has played/continues to play a role in securing the acceptability of and legitimisation of state actions (Feldman, 2018). Anti-racist education is a commitment to educate students in ways that make racialised power relations explicit, deconstruct the social construction of race, and analyse interlocking systems of oppression that serve to marginalise and exclude some groups while privileging others (Lynch et al., 2017). Three common goals of anti-racist education are:

- **visibilising**—identifying or making visible (all forms of systemic oppression, bias, discrimination, stereotypes, prejudice, racial slurs, naming, etc.);
- **recognising**—becoming aware of the roots, and current manifestations of all forms of racism, (e.g., assimilation, colour evasiveness, discrimination, oppression; marginalisation,), identifying personal complicity and consequences;
- **strategising**—how to address and dismantle to transform yourself and society. (Lynch et al., 2017).

Visibilising and recognising involves developing a shared accurate racial vocabulary (Thomas, 2019) in order to understand the social, cultural, economic, political conditions and power relations that have contributed to each form of oppression, how they operate in society, the purposes and consequences and how to make changes (Kernahan, 2019). The underlying assumption is that if we can name it, we can understand it, and we can change it.

### Addressing Microaggressions

Racism through subtle microaggressions are just as harmful as blatant acts of racism and discrimination. Popularised largely through the work of Sue (2010), microaggressions are the everyday, commonplace verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalised group membership. They are insidious because they tend to happen casually and frequently, often with no explicit harm intended. While originally Sue’s work focussed on race and gender, microaggressions cut across all social identities including race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability status, socio-economic class, and other important social dimensions. Microaggressions although subtle, can be more potent than active discrimination and far more detrimental because the slights are hard to address and not as easy to identify as active racism or sexism. The cumulative results are often referred to a death by a thousand paper cuts (Sue, 2010). We all participate in microaggressive behaviour but what is important is how we respond to that behaviour when we recognise it or someone else points it out to us and to be vigilant about our own use. Sue (2010) identified three types of microaggressions:

- **microassaults**—discriminatory actions. For example, using racial epithets, displaying racist symbols, streaming students on the basis of race, gender, or perceived ability, expecting students of any particular group to “represent” the perspectives of others of their group, racial profiling.

- **microinsults**—verbal, nonverbal, and environmental communications that subtly convey rudeness and insensitivity and that demean or show disrespect for some aspect of a person’s identity. A few home economics examples; a student to a home economics teacher—“you have to go to university to teach this!”; a colleague to a home economics graduate student—“they have a masters in that? What do you do cook and sew all day?”; a counsellor to a home economics teacher, “can you let (name of student) into your class. They need an easy course”.
- **microinvalidations**—communications that subtly exclude negate or nullify the thoughts, feelings or reality of a person. For example, “you have a disability? You look pretty normal to me;” assigning impossible home labs or projects to students living in poverty; “I don’t care if you are a vegetarian you have to learn to cook meat”; repeatedly using the wrong pronouns for a transgender person or mispronouncing a person’s name.

To address microaggressions we can decide what action is appropriate while trying to avoid doing nothing or becoming defensive (Sue et al., 2019). We can use a microaggression as a *teachable moment* or we can address it privately. Sue et al. (2019) suggest using microinterventions that (a) making the invisible visible; (b) disarm the microaggression, and (c) educate the perpetrator. Micro aggressions can be addressed privately or as teachable moments depending on the circumstance. It is important that the perpetrator does not become defensive (Goodman, 2011). Addressing microaggressions may at first feel overwhelming, but even small steps may be key in changing school or work culture (Casanova et al., 2018).

## Intersectionality

One last comment on colonialism, racism and discrimination, and microaggressions. While it is important to examine them as they are experienced, it is also important to acknowledge that an individual’s group status is not monolithic, it is intersectional. The term intersectionality is used metaphorically to evoke two (or more) roads crossing and was first described by Crenshaw (1989), a lawyer, as a way to explain how the convergence of multiple categories often leaves those at the intersection unprotected and open to harm by the legal system. Many find the concept useful in other contexts, as it enables professionals to recognise the fact that perceived group membership can make people vulnerable to various forms of bias and because they are simultaneously members of many groups, their complex identities can shape the specific way they each experience that bias (Gillborn, 2015; Harris & Leonardo, 2018; Tefera et al., 2019). Intersectionality identifies advantages and disadvantages that are felt by people due to a combination of factors. As home economists and educators, we need to consider what shapes our identities, what shapes the dynamics of our workplaces, and have we considered the multiple identities of the people we work with.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I have suggested that in order to decolonise (ourselves, our curriculum and pedagogy, our research) we need to understand colonisation as structurally violent and often perpetuated through racism and microaggressions. The main message is to recognise that there are no quick fixes in overcoming oppressive structures in home economics education. Decolonisation is not a checklist where you can tick off the boxes (Pidgeon, 2016). It is a long-term process. The only way to decolonise is to visibilise, identify and describe the structural violence of colonialism and all forms of racism, discrimination and microaggressions and then work toward dismantling them (Kendi, 2019) all the while acknowledging and anticipating the complexity of this work as how people experience these forms of oppression (and privilege) will be influenced by intersectionality. Also taking into consideration that complexity and

complicity have the same etymological roots and it is only when we see the complexity of colonisation, we see our complicity in creating and recreating it (Farrell, 1992).

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

## A Caveat

We must recognise that while we are committed to decolonise, working in a colonial or colonised system makes this problematic. We are often required to use the hierarchical methods that we seek to disrupt. Thus, it is questionable whether colonial system be used to remedy colonialism (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Or as Asher (2009) puts it “How then do we break out of recreating/recirculating/ transmitting colonising educational structures and practices when we ourselves are enmeshed in the same?” (p. 8). We must be wary of decolonisation that becomes no more than “hollow academic rebranding” (Appleton, 2019).

## Biography

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Mary Gale Smith is a lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia. She has a long history in Home Economics Education with experience teaching home economics in high schools and working in the home economics teacher education program at UBC. She currently is involved with the HEEL program, an online master’s program at UBC.

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## Decolonisation of Home Economics Curriculum in Eswatini at High School and Tertiary Education

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### Abstract

*Decolonising the Home Economics curriculum has gained increased attention in the high school and tertiary sector since attainment of independence in African countries. Studies have highlighted that the inherited Home Economics curriculum from colonisers has not addressed African developmental needs and challenges. However, there are also other areas of the curriculum that are still useful regardless of having been introduced by the colonisers. The aim of the paper is to state the current state of Home Economics curriculum in high school and tertiary level and some mitigation measures employed to make the curriculum content, pedagogy and reference materials relevant to the needs of locals in the education system. From the literature search, both high school and tertiary level curricula emphasize on the impartation of entrepreneurial skills to students and graduates and on the inclusion of Indigenous African food items in recipes and Afrocentric designs on apparel. Areas of improvement include: authorship of books and reference materials with locals, using Indigenous foods; forging partnerships with industry for purposes of relevance in research and course content. Some ground has been covered so far in decolonising the Home Economics curriculum; however, it is an extensive and lengthy process which cannot be fully accomplished within a short space of time.*

**KEYWORDS:** DECOLONISATION, PEDAGOGY, CURRICULUM CONTENT, REFERENCE MATERIALS, HOME ECONOMICS (HE), ESWATINI

### Introduction

Colonisation is defined as the influence of practices and legacies of European colonialism in social behaviour and forms of knowledge (Mignolo, 2000). Decolonisation involves removing the barriers and combatting the epistemic injustices of a system dominated by Western thought (Ashu, 2020). Thus, decolonisation is about a democratic open-endedness to knowledge and social constructs without being restricted and governed by secretive injustices that serve as the basis for marginalising other peoples (Manthalu & Waghid, 2019). Decolonisation has been one of the crucial components of concern in postcolonial discourse aimed at redressing the colonial imbalances that favoured the minority (Matemba, 2021). It is a perennial political and paradigm shift directed at the liberation of way of thinking, knowing, and acting to restore the dignity, identity and Indigenous knowledge of local people who were previously colonised.

Although colonialism in the classic sense is not physically present, colonial hegemonic influence is still indirectly present in formerly colonised countries. This hegemony exists through

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economics, politics, education and other global forces that continue to influence former colonial powers on formerly colonised people and places (Spivak, 1991). A condition which although nations are supposedly “free”; religious, political and other elitist thinking continue to work as “agents” of the colonial project (wilfully or not) by their actions (Kaoma, 2012; Matemba, 2021). This begs the question how Africa, in particular Eswatini, is responding on the educational front to ensure that the education system influences locals meaningfully to bring about the needed developments that will benefit the country and its people? An Internet search was done to gather information that was used to write this paper with the following subtopics: background information on education in Eswatini, history of Home Economics in Eswatini, theoretical perspectives, focus areas for decolonisation of Home Economics in Eswatini, high school scenario, tertiary level scenario, and areas of improvement for both high school and tertiary.

### **Background Information on Education in Eswatini**

Swaziland, the former name of Eswatini, was a British Protectorate, meaning it was governed by the British from 1871 until it gained independence in 1968. King Sobhuza II was inaugurated during independence celebrations and subsequently led the country. He realised with time that he had to suspend the constitution of the colonial ruler in 1973 because he believed that it did not serve the interests and will of the Indigenous Swazi people (Kuper, 1978). Even with the concessions made for the country to gain its independence, Swazis were disadvantaged because they did not understand the signed documents including those related to the vast amounts of land taken by the British and under their jurisdiction. It became necessary for the Swazis to be educated to chart their own destiny because the British were less interested (Kuper, 1978).

Initially, there were no local government schools, hence missionaries from Britain were sent to educate Swazis with the intention of converting them to the coloniser’s mind set and so that they would not be influenced by enlightened natives who had divergent views from the colonisers. Furthermore, the education of British children was free and compulsory yet for Swazi children, it had to be paid for by the Swazi Government that had not amassed enough financial resources post-independence and so education was not mandatory (Mthethwa, 2003). That acted as a barrier in educating many locals. In the absence of qualified Swazis to teach in government schools, South Africans (Zulus and Xhosas) were hired to teach in schools while Indigenous Swazis went to South Africa for formal training. British administrators did not bother themselves to avail positions for hiring locals but relied on expatriates from South Africa and Britain. It seemed like British were perpetuating apartheid in Swaziland (Mthethwa, 2003). It is against this backdrop that education had to be contextualised to the local needs and favour the development of Swazi people. As a way of addressing that imbalance, scholarships were provided by the local government to train Indigenous people in different professions in order to craft a meaningful destiny of emaSwati (Mthethwa, 2003).

### **Brief History of Home Economics in Eswatini**

Home Economics as defined by the International Federation of Home Economics (IFHE, 2008) is a field of study and a profession, situated in the human sciences that draws from a range of disciplines to achieve optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities. The aims of Home Economics today differ from the ones during the colonial era. The differences are including Indigenous food choices in menu planning and teaching and utilising Swazi art signs and symbols in clothing and interior designs for our households. This means there is a need to decolonise the curriculum so as to promote African eating cuisine, lifestyles and dressing styles for preservation and improvement of Africanisation, an attempt to decolonise.

Home Economics in Africa was generally brought by missionaries through the colonisation by some industrialised nations (Mberengwa & Mthombeni, 2012), such as Britain and Portugal. The intention of introducing the discipline or subject area in schools was mainly to provide trained

personnel to serve the colonisers in food preparation, home management which included sewing and mending garments, and child care services (Richards, 2017).

The introduction of Home Economics in Eswatini was by British missionaries in the 1930s in two missionary schools in the Shiselweni region (Mahamba and Mhlosheni schools), and was called Domestic Science then. The purpose of education by missionaries was to make students aware of the western culture and prepare them to effectively participate in the market economy (Hay, 1989). By the time of independence in 1968, education for the Swazi industry and commerce was not a priority during the colonial era, and that resulted in an educational system that was at its rudimentary stages by that time (Mthethwa, 2003).

Through the Fourth National Development Plan of 1983/84, the focus was to increase the pool of trained Indigenous Swazis who would take over administrative and teaching responsibilities from the expatriates. The key objectives of the Development Plan were to: work towards universal primary education by 1985; offer products of primary education system to further education and training associated with individual and personnel needs of the country; and coordinate all institutions in education and training to improve the quality of education at all levels and cope with diversified demand for education (Mthethwa, 2003; Government of Swaziland, 1983-84).

Later on, British expatriates were involved in curriculum design for primary and secondary school levels in 1936 and 1955 (Myeni, 1992). Subsequent curriculum reforms were spearheaded by donor agencies including United States of America International Development (USAID), United Nations (UN), and the Swedish International Development Corporation (SIDC). Few educated women existed at the time. Among the first native women to be educated abroad in the Home Economics profession was Makholwa Dlamini, who was placed in charge of the Home Economics in the Ministry of Education and was instrumental in starting a Home Economics Association (Mthethwa, 2003). From 2007 to 2009, Home Economics was examined under the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) a British examining board. Later in 2009, the high school examinations were localised to Swaziland General Certificate of Secondary Education (SGCSE). However, no significant changes were made to the curriculum content except for the examinations being marked locally. What remained in existence were some aspects of the western influence in the curriculum that were inappropriate to the African professional who had to address African developmental needs and challenges (Mberengwa & Mthombeni, 2012). An example was the inclusion of mostly cultivated food items from western cultures and omission of Indigenous foods with pharmaceutical benefits in meal planning and food preparation.

## **Theoretical Perspective**

Contextualisation and adaptation of curriculum in response to social and cultural dynamics in a country or community is crucial in ensuring that a profession is relevant and sustainable in the future. To ensure that different population groups are well nourished, obesity has been realised as a challenge (Vail, 2017), especially with less physical activity required in the home front from using more labour-saving devices. Energy expended during physical activities served as a form of exercise for all segments of the population. Relieving women of tedious house chores created a problem of inactivity resulting in obesity as these women could not afford paying to exercise at the gym. Hence, there is an urgent call for transdisciplinary approach to be embraced going forward as the most relevant and suitable approach for the current post-normal and disruptive era we are living in (McGregor, 2009). There is need for scientists trained in different disciplines to work together with the goal of systematically pursuing a problem and overlooking the side effects of specialisation, thereby making research more socially relevant; the objective would be to develop new theoretical frameworks of our world view (Kocklemans, 1979). As cited by McGregor (2009), even Brown (1993) proposed that transdisciplinarity can be conceived as a vehicle for understanding real human problems with modes of inquiry that would

seek solutions for humanity. Brown (1993) identified these problems as: a loss of meaning when cultural traditions are disturbed; a loss of community, fragmentation of knowledge; and domination of thought and action by technical rationality. Problems of humanity do not exist within isolated disciplines but need solutions that are transdisciplinary in nature (McGregor, 2011).

A number of universities have experienced a decline in student enrolment in Home Economics programmes (Mberengwa & Mthombeni, 2012). This situation in African universities has been also due to the fragmentation of subdisciplines in the Home Economics profession (Dupius, 2020). Furthermore, there is saturation of job opportunities in the teaching profession because the curriculum was meant to produce only teachers. From as early as 2004, graduates who were trained to be high school teachers were employed as primary school teachers. This situation calls for reflecting and assessing teaching and research methodology approaches used and also responding in a meaningful way to local needs for better impact to be felt and appreciated (McGregor, 2011). Specialisations in other countries were born from adaptation, and being responsive to the developmental needs of the country. Introduced specialisations help to widen competencies of the graduates that made them more marketable, which had a positive effect on the enrolment of students in the programmes.

The African education system should incorporate the transdisciplinary approach in curriculum design, and offer enough content to the educator or professional in the discipline to make a meaningful contribution in training students using culturally available resources and in conducting research that will yield appropriate and relevant solutions to communities with different cultural backgrounds. Of importance is the appreciation and preservation of values that will sustain families while improving their quality of life. The next section states the areas of focus to be discussed in decolonising the Home Economics curriculum.

### **Decolonisation of the Home Economics Curriculum in the Education Sector**

It is not everything in the curriculum that has to be decolonised as some concepts are still relevant regardless of having been introduced during the colonial era (Arshad, 2019). Bajaj (2022) advances that there is need for teaching staff that are committed to developing teaching and learning materials which support decolonisation of the curriculum. In light of this, Bajaj developed a model called *Patterns Beyond Labels* that supports staff to implement practical and sustainable approaches to decolonising the curriculum using physical, cultural and cognitive lenses to frame their practice. The physical approach refers to the learning environment and access to learning; for example, a ramp to access a building or access to lesson/lecture recordings. The cultural approach focuses in the content taught and the local examples used, while cognitive refers to how students assimilate, process, recall and synthesise the knowledge imparted.

In education, decolonisation involves acknowledging and critically examining the influence of colonial legacies on education systems as a whole, and its various subcomponents such as knowledge and the curriculum (Johnson & Mouthaan, 2020). This paper is therefore going to focus on the decolonisation of some aspects of curriculum content, pedagogies and reference materials.

Decolonisation of the curriculum content entails incorporating diverse perspectives and experiences of every culture in the teaching. This includes promoting African development agenda and a hybrid of ideas targeted towards African development and advancement (Nyoni, 2019). In decolonising pedagogies, educationalists should use techniques and methods that facilitate academic achievement of learners from diverse racial, ethnic and social class groups. This entails equity pedagogy which infers fairness in using a wide variety of educational models and strategies to enhance learning (Nyoni, 2019). For decolonisation of reference materials, African scholars should develop through their own endeavour to produce pan-African graduates able to creatively, innovatively and originally respond to African development challenges

(Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). While the decolonisation debate has been particularly prominent in institutions of higher education, decolonising education is relevant at all education levels and this paper next looks at the high school and tertiary scenarios respectively.

### High School Scenario

The aims of Home Economics curriculum in schools today are far different from the ones during the colonial era. According to Du Toit et al., (2020) on *curriculum analysis* and benchmarking of Consumer Sciences and comparable subjects, the general aims of Consumer Studies and Home Economics in high schools across the countries that were under study (Botswana, ESwatini, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe), were to develop personal 21st century entrepreneurial skills through combining school learning with application in the real world to generate income, employment and prepare learners to be able to work with consumers to solve societal problems. In the past, the aims were to impart skills for domestic work. Thus, schools have been used for colonial purposes of forced assimilation (Tikly, 2021). The differences are a result of the effort to decolonise the curriculum that would benefit the non-Western populace. Decolonisation of a particular curriculum in schools entails broadening its scope to include other pieces of knowledge and new ways to cross-examine and validate knowledge, including non-traditional approaches in Home Economics from both the global and national level (Arday & Mirza, 2018). Decolonising the curriculum is about being prepared to reconnect, reorder and reclaim knowledges and teaching methodologies that have been submerged, hidden or marginalised (Keval, 2020). In this regard, the focus is to further decolonise the high school Home Economics curriculum for relevance to the learners and the society at large.

In an effort to decolonise Home Economics curriculum the government of Eswatini through the Ministry of education formed the National Education Review Commission (NECORM) of 1985 (Mndebele & Dlamini, 2008). NECORM recommended the introduction of Pre-Vocational Educational (PVE) in schools as a means of equipping students with marketable skills for easy transition from school and for entry into further vocational education training programmes (Jawarneh, 2013). According to Mndebele and Dlamini (2008), PVE was initiated on the assumption that the programme would contribute to the economic development of the country and primarily to acquaint secondary school going students with material, tools and skills related to a range of occupations, and to prepare them for choosing an occupational field or line of training (Majumdar, 2012). That cadre of skilled manpower would provide the needed artisans for the Swazi economy.

In addition, the enrolment into Home Economics is no longer for those less academically inclined but is all inclusive, based on scientific principles to support learnt concepts. The Home Economics discipline has been separated into specialised areas of Fashion and Fabrics, Food and Nutrition, Home Management at high school and tertiary levels to mention.

### Decolonising Pedagogies in a Home Economics Curriculum

The Home Economics curriculum has undergone a lot of changes in pedagogy as reflected in literature from different countries and Eswatini included. The first stage was to remove the stigmatisation that was attached to taking the subject as it was considered as a subject for the relatively low academically inclined and specifically for girls. All learners of different abilities including boys can now enrol in Home Economics and girls also enrol in Agriculture. The teaching methods in Home Economics have seen the divergence from only cooking and sewing to scientific experiments, designing, pattern making and garment construction (Du Toit & Booysse, 2015). Pedagogy demands class interactions between the teacher and students which create a significant impact on the learner's mind without excluding anyone due to skin colour, race and ethnicity.

Globally, the pedagogies that have been commonly adopted in the area of teaching and learning of Home Economics and consequently contributed towards the decolonisation of the HE curriculum are informed by theories of constructivism, social constructivism, behaviourism and liberationism. Constructivism is a learning theory which suggests that humans construct knowledge and meaning from their experiences (Bada & Olusegun, 2015). Dembo (1994) states that behaviourism is learning that involves the formation of a connection between stimulus and response. Social constructivism perspectives focus on the interdependence of social and individual processes in the co-construction of knowledge (Palincsar, 1998). Liberationism is all about liberating learners through education where students are at the centre of the classroom instead of the teacher (Freire, 2017).

The project-based learning approach creates a constructivist learning environment in which students construct their own knowledge. The constructivism approach has been achieved through projects, experience and inquiry-based learning. This approach encourages critical thinking among the learners and gives a learning atmosphere in which they can connect with what they are learning. Thus, the relationship of the teacher and learner has been improved such that the educators are expected to not just answer the queries of the students, but also build a culture where their ideas are explored, challenged, improved, and refined (Mahabeer, 2018). In the same vein, Arshad (2019) contends that decolonising the curriculum involves a critical analysis of how colonial forms of knowledge, pedagogical strategies and research methodologies have shaped what people know, what they recognise and how they reward such knowledge accordingly.

Within the colonial model the teacher was the task master, whereas with the current model the teacher becomes the facilitator (Du Toit, 2014). A lot has been achieved in decolonising approaches using project-based learning. As evidenced by the Eswatini HE Ordinary and Advanced level syllabi, the learners are involved in community projects such as catering for community functions (Du Toit et al., 2020). Students are required to design, prepare patterns and make coursework garments in Fashion and Fabrics. In Food and Nutrition, they are required to do planning, preparing and serving of meals. They also do experimental projects in the different subdisciplines in Home Economics. Learners may be asked to design a garment for differently abled person and come up with a write up to justify their designs, thus showing their understanding of concepts learnt, in the form of a project. Project based learning focuses on student-centred inquiry and group learning with the teacher acting as a facilitator, as opposed to the one in charge (Maitra & Guo, 2019).

Another teaching method that has been adopted is teamwork or group work where groups of learners are formed in order for them to learn together and work to solve a problem, build strategies, explore ideas, create products or complete a task (Joseph, 2009). This is a joint intellectual effort by the students among themselves with the help of the teachers. This style is supported by the social constructivism theory which advocates for learner engagement, group centred learning and teamwork (Bada & Olusegun, 2015).

The other approach is based on teachers, modelling and demonstration of procedures and experiments. They fall under the behaviourism theory by John Watson which emphasises that learning is through interaction with the environment and concerned with observable-stimulus response (Mahabeer, 2018). As a curriculum area, Home Economics facilitates students to discover and further develop their own resources and capabilities to be used in their personal life (IFHE, 2008). This helps students to develop cognitive skills using evaluation, detailed analysis, comprehension, and application of the content learnt.

The student-centred approach is where the students take responsibility for learning in their own ways (Bada & Olusegun, 2015). This has been achieved through presentations, fashion shows and activity-based learning. This is an anti-oppressive educational approach designed to liberate minds and level the playing fields between the teachers and students (Freire, 2017). Freire named it as liberationism. Teachers also evaluate the students regularly to see if they

are improving and moving towards their target outcomes through continuous assessment of coursework. When students are taught in a liberatory manner, the lessons they learn carry over into their lives outside of the classroom as well.

The use of local and Indigenous Home Economics practices have to a certain extent been established in the school curriculum; for example, the inclusion of a section on Indigenous foods in the Food and Nutrition syllabus. Text books written by local teachers have been produced, but have recipes that have western food items that do not help in any way when the food stuffs are not available and the learner does not have any access to them. Expenses for practical lessons are minimised due to the use of locally available ingredients and fabrics. Another example is the inclusion of African dress in Fashion and Fabrics. The establishment of an indigenising curriculum is beyond the simple addition of Indigenous local, national and international content but a complete overhaul of the curriculum in order to make sense to the end user.

### **Tertiary Level Scenario**

The national University of Eswatini (UNESWA) offers undergraduate degrees to PhD degrees, the latter through course work and through research only. Content specialisation in the Faculty of Consumer Sciences is based on two areas (Foods and Textiles), introduced in response to industry needs. The Food Science and Technology curriculum has more scientific content in order to deal with food processing operations that require the application of physics, chemistry and biochemistry principles. The contents of the above programme have necessitated higher entrance requirements for students to successfully handle course content underpinned by scientific principles. In mounting the specialisation, stakeholder engagement was carried out to determine course content and get their endorsement of the programme (University of Swaziland, 2018). There is allying through cooperation and partnership with industry to train students. Students are attached to industry for Internship or Field attachment for hands-on training.

For the clothing and textiles programme, apparel firms were importing skills from South Africa on computer aided design (CAD). The inclusion of Gerber CAD software required tweaking the curriculum in the Textiles, Apparel Design and Management programme to provide skilled manpower and assist apparel firms in their apparel production operations. By extension, CAD in the production of textile prints was introduced to improve the textile design capability of Afrocentric textile prints. Partnerships with the National Arts and Culture Association were forged in the commemoration of 50 years of the country's independence through incorporating historical artefacts in contemporary designs (University of Eswatini, 2019).

All programmes that are offered in the Faculty of Consumer Sciences require enrolled students to take an Entrepreneurship course, where students are skilled in writing business proposals involving planning and executing business plans on miniature scale for one academic year. This approach has encouraged students to think and explore business initiatives to make them entrepreneurs instead of seeking jobs upon graduation. To cement the entrepreneurial mindset to students, the faculty was successful in securing a grant to establish an entrepreneurial hub at UNESWA, where students initiate business projects and make them operate commercially through applying Consumer Science and Agricultural related skills in the value chain of a consumable product.

Home Economics researchers tend to utilise more action research approaches, where they endeavour to provide solutions to existing challenges in the food industry. Researchers in the Foods Department have won research grants sponsored by food companies seeking innovative products to be introduced in the market. Collaborative work is being done by researchers from Food Science and Biochemists at the Eswatini Institute for Research in Traditional Medicine, Medicinal and Indigenous Food Plants (EIRMIP) at UNESWA to produce marketable innovative products. Due to lack of research facilities, researchers have worked with industry focusing on

product development using Indigenous foods that are easily available to Swazi communities for commercialisation of diversified end uses. With the absence of an Intellectual Property (IP) policy within the Institution, protection of those innovations was not guaranteed. But with the existence of the University of Eswatini (UNESWA) Intellectual Property Policy (2021), departments can now engage industry on contracts for mutual benefit on innovative projects.

In the Textiles and Apparel Design (TAD) Department, ground breaking work was published by Zwane and Magagula (2006), where the triangular body shape of Eswatini women was profiled as being prevalent. More research in profiling body shapes followed in Southern Africa. Other researchers have endeavoured to provide solutions to textile waste that pollutes the environment (Moyo et al., 2020). Partnerships with textile firms in providing solution to their challenges have been weak. Efforts have been made to explore the use of natural dyes from locally available dye plants and testing their colourfastness on fabrics (Gamedze et al., 2019).

On utilised pedagogical approaches, staff have limited practical skills in the different subject areas because they were recruited based on their Bachelor degrees and then sent for further training overseas in order to qualify with higher degrees to teach at UNESWA. There is over reliance on teaching approaches from the west in teaching content and the use of reference materials from the west. Next are the proposed mitigation measures.

### **Areas of improvement for High School and Tertiary Levels**

Any African university should pride itself on homegrown knowledge that promotes Indigenous knowledge production that has been pushed to the margins of society by western influence. It should be a generator of knowledge rather than a mere consumer of global knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). On possible areas of improvement in the foods area, development of recipe books with specifically Indigenous foods has been noticed in other countries and this should be done in every country since availability and Indigenous recipes differ from country to country. Participation in countrywide culinary competitions is another approach to use for visibility and to display the capability of the Food Science Department. In food and nutrition, learners may be encouraged to have kitchen gardens where they would plant Indigenous vegetables and herbs for use in their practical lessons rather than having to buy them.

In TAD, Afrocentric designs should be adopted with styles that are culturally acceptable for example evening wear can be made in a style that factor the cultural norms for all segments of the population. Furthermore, the TAD Department should provide tailor-made short courses for the apparel industry to meet its needs or enhance the performance of the companies. Cultural fashion shows may also be included in the curriculum in order to showcase Afrocentric designs. In cases where experiments may need materials like linen which is not easy to access, locally available materials can be used for burning tests in fabric identification. Another example is using the sheep fleece instead of the woollen fabrics itself since sheep are available locally and the fleece can be easily extracted and used.

The teaching of curriculum content and implementation of entrepreneurial and research projects all require a transdisciplinary approach. The approach involves other disciplines like commerce and the sciences (biochemists) in delivering effective and sound projects. It also assists researchers in sharing research facilities which may not be available in Consumer Sciences Faculty but may be available in Faculty of Science and Engineering.

Delivery on product development of innovative products is a must to gain credibility and integrity of researchers in the foods area. This can result in industry supported infrastructure development and equipping research laboratories. It can also result in revenue generation for the department to sustain the research and development (R&D) initiatives or plough back in the teaching of content that has high financial demands on purchasing consumables. In the TAD Department, there is need to establish strong partnerships with industry to deliver on action research that provides solutions to challenges of the private sector.

On decolonisation of pedagogies when teaching beadwork, students or learners can be taken to the village where women who are skilled in beadwork can demonstrate to the students how it is done. In Eswatini, the cultural attire for men is made from a loin cloth which has fabric characteristics that allows the edges to be finished without sewing the hems, and it lasts for a long time.

For meaningful learning to happen scholars need to author books and reference materials and examples that are relevant to the local and cultural context. The reference materials that have been used since colonisation are centred on western culture, which requires disruption. Furthermore, professionals in the discipline need to publish magazines, including recipe books, to market and promote our living environments, foods and textiles.

## Conclusion

Colonial practices were established during times when nations maintained supremacy over dependent territories. Post-independence, the native government embarked on an aggressive skills training programmes of locals to empower the natives to govern and develop the country. They introduced an education system with different subjects including Home Economics, at both high school and tertiary levels. Some efforts were made to reduce the influence of the western culture in the Home Economics curriculum at high school and tertiary level in curriculum content, pedagogical approaches and use of reference materials, but it is an extensive and lengthy process which cannot be fully accomplished within a short space of time. Proposed improvements to benefit the local communities in the identified areas to decolonise the discipline include promotion of Indigenous knowledge in the curriculum in consideration of cultural factors, the generation of knowledge suitable for the local context through research and provision of solutions to problems in Eswatini with the participation of all parties. The gathered information would be beneficial to policy makers and Home Economics teaching fraternity to raise awareness in making sure that pedagogical approaches respond to the local context. Efforts are made to publish reference materials with a local flair and to cement the identity and uniqueness of the local people and their needs. It is recommended that decolonisation of Home Economics curriculum has to be further interrogated by other African nations for a meaningful contribution on this topic.

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# Decolonising and Indigenising Home Economics Pedagogies to Advance Gender Roles in UAE

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## Abstract

*There is an increasing call for the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the world at large to advance gender parity in gender roles as a way to improve the visibility of the female gender and ensure that human dignity, respect, and equality are withheld. In this literature review paper, I examine Home Economics as a conceivable curriculum-based approach to advancing gender roles. The study is aimed at recognising how Indigenous and decolonised Home Economics pedagogies can contribute to the realisation of gender parity in the UAE. Although there is scanty literature to directly address the topic, an extensive literature review on the subject shows a correlation between Home Economics and advanced gender roles and gender parity in both domestic and public spheres. However, the correlation is thwarted by colonised and universalised approaches to the curriculum. Various resources recommend that decolonising Home Economics and ensuring that it meets Indigenous needs can generate greater impact especially in advancing gender roles when compared to conventional pedagogies.*

**KEYWORDS:** HOME ECONOMICS, DECOLONISE, INDIGENISE, PEDAGOGIES, GENDER ROLES

## Introduction

### Scope of the Review

This paper entails detailed research on the application of Indigenous and decolonised Home Economics pedagogies in advancing gender roles in the UAE. It focuses on the narrow and broad history of gender roles while focusing on the position of women in the UAE. Moreover, the study discusses how Home Economics pedagogy is a possible solution to advancing gender roles in UAE. The study also includes research on the possible gender bias in the education system.

The study is structured into three sections; background of the study, literature review, and the conclusion. The background of the study focuses on the statement of the problem. It also shows the significance of the study and identifies the gaps in the education system concerning Indigenous and decolonised Home Economics. The second section is a review of literature pertaining to the area of study. The literature review includes analysis of the existing literature in various fields, such as the definition of Home Economics, Indigenous practices in Home Economics, colonised Home Economics, decolonising Home Economics, and the benefits of Home Economics for male and female learners. The literature review also entails the impacts of decolonised Home Economics and the impacts of declassifying Home Economics as a feminine subject in advancing gender roles in the UAE. Lastly, it includes a review of literature on the roles of educators, parents, and society in advancing the Home Economics curriculum. The last section is the conclusion, which summarises the important aspects of the existing body of

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literature, identifies the significant gaps, evaluates the current state of the literature reviewed, outlines future areas of study, and links the research to the existing knowledge. The objectives for this research are to establish ways to decolonise and indigenise Home Economics and to identify ways in which Indigenous and decolonised Home Economics pedagogies can contribute to the emancipation of Emirati women.

## Background of the Study

A major premise of feminism/masculinism is that, throughout history, women have been defined as *the other*, with men being in the frontline of almost every aspect of society. Consequentially, they are still struggling to build their visibility and vocalisation. Since the 1920s, when the issue of gender roles arose, men have always been not only the primary breadwinners but also the pacesetters of purpose, achievements, and success. Traditionally, women are expected to limit their capabilities to domestic responsibilities, behave politely and softly, and be answerable and respectful to the male gender (Daleure, 2017). As part of their responsibilities, women have traditionally been expected to teach their girl children that the male child is always superlative and that they grow up to such an expectation (Dodson & Borders, 2006). Women have played a key role in teaching and transmitting knowledge and expectations around morals and running a household to future generations. The UAE is not exclusive to these sexism trends. Research on the history of gender roles shows that although gender equity was highly appreciated in domestic and economic spheres, specifically in the pre-oil era, gender parity has worsened within the past few decades (Al Fardan & Maroch, 2021). Since the 1950s, the role of women in the UAE and the Gulf region at large has mainly been relegated to domestic spheres. The advance in the economic system in the UAE has precipitated changes in gender roles (Giménez-Nadal et al., 2019).

Data retrieved from the United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs (UNDESA) exhibit that the UAE's population stood at 9.89 million as of 2020, with 69% of the population being males and the remaining 31% being females (Dubai Online, 2021). Located along the south-eastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula of the Arabian Gulf region, UAE has the highest population rate among the Arab nations due to the high birth rate, low death rate, and better health due to good healthcare services (Khansaheb, 2021). Additionally, according to Raftery and Valiulis (2008), the ongoing migration of the expatriates to the UAE is significantly contributing to the high population growth in Arab countries. To be precise, a whopping 87.9% of UAE residents are expatriates, with the local Emiratis being the minority in their own country at 12.1% (Bindhulakshmi, 2020). This is due to the many job opportunities offered by Arabian countries. The country's population has increased by more than 35 folds since it was founded in 1971 when the population was 277,463 (Dubai Online, 2021). The small male-to-female ratio confirms that despite the exceptional increase in population size, the UAE is yet to attain gender parity, which is evident across all age brackets.

## Gender Disparity in Education System in UAE

The high gender parity in the UAE also extends to how gender roles are designated and structured. Gender bias in the UAE is evident even though they are ranked first in secondary and tertiary education. Gender parity is attributed to the tremendous strides Emirati women have made regarding education (Jones et al., 2021). Nonetheless, the first-place ranking gender parity in education in UAE is misleading as it does not consider the gender gap that exists where the males perform poorly compared to females (Dariel et al., 2017). Men in the UAE have not been making significant gains from education compared to Emirati women (Thasniya, 2022). Even though there seems to be gender parity in the enrolment of boys and girls in the UAE, there is a growing inequality between Emirati women and men. To exemplify this, Abdulla (2007) did research that uncovered incongruence between educational attainment and labour force participation for Emirati women. According to the study, Emirati women have greater

academic achievements and occupational aspirations compared to Emirati men. The study went further to establish that despite these, the role of women in Emirati society remains ambiguous, given the controversy between what young women believed they would attain after completing their education and what the society expected of them as daughters, wives, and mothers. Despite their education, women found it difficult to find spaces in the formal labour market. Besides, as the study showed, such spaces were primarily occupiable by women through social networks and rarely through educational milestones, which placed the women in a disadvantaged position. The findings of Abdulla (2007) are still traceable and intact in the UAE labour market. Statistics show that 77% of Emirati women enrol in various courses in higher education and constitute at least 70% of all university graduates in the country (Embassy of the UAE Washington DC, 2022). Nonetheless, females constitute only 17.71% of the UAE's total labour force, according to 2020 statistics (The World Bank, 2020). This is to signify that gender roles and gender parity in UAE still have a wide berth.

Similarly, gender bias in the UAE also manifests itself in stereotyped roles, actions, and characteristics attributed to males or females (Park & Jun, 2020). Gender bias can also display if prejudgments occur, leading to gender separation, which occurs in a way that favours one gender over the other (Baumvol, 2019). Such cases lead to discrimination and inhibit impartiality. Still, some subjects in the education sector are considered male or female-oriented, hence favouring one gender. For instance, Home Economics and related subjects such as Family Education, Culinary Science, and Home Science, are usually regarded as female-only subjects, while the technical subjects are considered male-oriented subjects (Pendergast, 2009).

Gender bias is evident in teachers' values and beliefs which affect their pedagogical choices and is also permeated throughout all levels of schooling (Herr et al., 2020). However, the National Minimum Curriculum in UAE has tried to promote gender parity and reduce gender bias in schools by ensuring that both girls and boys follow the same curriculum (Jones et al., 2021). The great gender bias and disparity experienced in UAE demands the need to increase women's visibility in private and public spheres. In this study, I review Indigenous and decolonised Homed Economics pedagogies as opportunities to redress bias against Emirati women.

### **Home Economics Pedagogy as a Possible Solution in Advancing Gender Roles**

Home Economics Pedagogy aims at fostering the well-being of families and individuals. Home Economics teaches about relationships, and it introduces and promotes gender parity. Students may realise that they can achieve what they want to achieve despite their gender, as Home Economics encourages equality between boys and girls (Khansaheb, 2021). While teaching gender roles and responsibilities in schools of individuals forming part of a family, using equal numbers of females and males involved in the family activities will encourage the learners, especially boys, to help and share housework and learn to share social and economic responsibilities as well. Although Home Economics has traditionally been considered a subject for females, current studies tend to affirm that including an equal share of boys and girls in the subject leads to extensive benefits as far as gender parity is concerned.

Decolonised Home Economics pedagogy eliminates the primary assumption that childcare is a woman's responsibility through images and pictures that portray men doing the women's assumed roles such as feeding a newborn and changing diapers and nappies (Schulz, 2013). Current Home Economics approaches discourage children's socialisation and gender identity formation in ways that previously were the norm, that girls should play with dolls and boys play with cars (Kim & Lee, 2017). By not reinforcing traditional gender roles and expectations, there is a possibility of shifting the way society and individuals define and make space for gender equity in all spaces, including at home, schools, and the workplace. Similarly, practical Home

Economics sessions help the boys, as well as girls, experience housekeeping roles. Home Economics instructors should guide the learners in performing those roles to learn how to cope with new situations independently. When teaching about diet-related diseases, images and photographs portraying those disorders should be used to show both male and female genders of various races (Park & Jun, 2020). Also, discussions concerning students' roles should be carried out during the lessons to enhance critical thinking on various social issues such as housekeeping, cooking, and childcaring to change the notions of these issues as female-oriented activities.

Home Economics Pedagogy is an important subject. It helps decrease gender stereotypes and bias in the learning institutions while at the same time building core skills that extends far beyond home management and home-related responsibilities as its syllabus has been broadened to cater to all genders' needs and myriad skillsets. Nevertheless, the subject matter only cannot eliminate gender bias. Still, the changes can be affected by changes in the teaching styles, curriculum, and educational resources, which will help reduce gender favouritism over time (Hanna, 2019).

## Literature Review

### Putting Decolonised Home Economics and Emancipation of Emirati Women into Perspective

Putting decolonised Home Economics into contexts demands an understanding of colonialism and its contexts. Colonialism is one of the widely researched topics in the study of history. Although there is no single universally accepted definition, there is a consensus that colonisation constitutes the imperialistic influence of one country over another country or territory (Fallace, 2012; Kim, 2015; Mangan, 2012; Sun & Roumell, 2017). The terms colonisation and imperialism have since been used in tandem to denote how colonisers imposed, and continue to impose their influence on the colonised. Writing on this topic, Said (1978) conveyed that the mindset of the coloniser always characterises the colonised as primitive, exotic, and inferior and that such a mindset continues to allow the coloniser to perpetuate imperial conquest.

The colonised, currently primarily expressed as the Indigenous population, continue to be faced with a world where the westernised perspectives and ideologies dwarf the eastern and oriental perspectives on almost all social, economic, and political fronts (Battiste, 2011; Said, 1978). Smith (2019a) reiterates the perspectives of Vaines (1997) in positing that the colonial educational system continues to normalise western epistemologies and, in the process, erases the Indigenous ways and contexts. An example is Griffiths' experience in Canada. Griffith (2018) writes "Education in Canada is riddled with ideologies and social constructions that extend the project of imperialism and white supremacy. As a consequence, Indigenous knowledge has been eliminated" (p. 29).

According to Griffith (2018), Canadian education continues to thrive on Eurocentric knowledge, which further encourages teachers and students to negate the values of Indigenous knowledge. Consistent with this example, numerous education systems across countries continue to thrive on eurocentrism. Hall and Tandon (2017) and Hall (2016) call this epistemicide referring to the killing of the Indigenous knowledge system in favour of neo-colonial imperialism. In the process, the epistemologies derived from the coloniser become normal while the Indigenous knowledge becomes the other and therefore becomes invisible.

The dominance of imperialised education systems has seen the emergence of efforts towards the decolonisation of different educational programmes as well as the holistic educational system (Mizzi, 2020; Mooney, 2021; Qin, 2021, Smith, 2019b; Torres, 2019). Battell Lowman and Barker (2016, p. 111) defined decolonisation as "an intensely political transformative

process with the goal of regenerating Indigenous nationhood and place-relationship while dismantling structures of settler colonialism". Researchers such as de Zwart (2005), Bermúdez et al. (2016), and McDowell and Hernández (2010) have called for the decolonisation of Home Economics and related fields such as Family Science and Family Therapy. Despite this, it is important to note that there is very little evidence that much if any decolonisation of Home Economics has concerned. Vaines (1990), one of the few researchers who have extensively explored the concept of Home Economics, denotes that Home Economists should be transforming actors concerned with improving social conditions. When revising Vaines' perspectives, Smith (2019a) is convinced that although Vaines did not directly write about decolonisation of Home Economics, she called for a form of deconstruction and reconstruction of the subject in a manner that eschews dominant ways of knowing and being.

The Indigenous approach to education holds that learning can only be complete if it starts from the beginning and then expands progressively (Battiste, 2009). In other words, Indigenous education aims at transmitting knowledge and worldviews using epistemologies and pedagogies that are respectful to the Indigenous traditions, skills, and cultures. Indigeneity allows learners to instil a sense of community, advance interracial acceptance, and advance practical solutions to local problems. Ahenakew (2017) contends that current educational spaces should interrupt modernity such that Indigenous knowledge should not be subsumed by westernised epistemologies but rather should establish the foundation on which any other form of knowledge is based. Consistent with this perspective, numerous other researchers have argued for positioning Indigenous and decolonised epistemologies at the core of education (Haig-Brown, 2018; Fleuri & Fleuri, 2017; Smith et al., 2019).

Indigenising teaching and learning practices demand a paradigm shift from a purely westernised view to a more inclusive approach where the classroom is perceived as a gathering place for learners to share their experiences and insights about local and global issues through an interactive and open dialogue (Shahjahan et al., 2021). Such dialogues should be undertaken in honour of Indigenous stories, histories, and worldviews and should be consistent with terminologies and behaviours perceived to be acceptable by the Indigenous populations.

Holding to the perspectives of decolonisation and indigeneity, the need to shift epistemologies and pedagogies from a Eurocentric orientation to an Indigenous orientation should be encouraged. As argued by Akena (2012), the dominance of Eurocentric knowledge over Indigenous perspectives undoubtedly precipitates inequalities that trigger the conflict and failure of the education system, especially due to the fact that the Indigenous ways of knowing are seen as primitive and uncivilised. Students should be in a position to gain new knowledge based on resources and experiences that they can easily identify and access.

One of the key topics in the deconstruction and reconstruction of colonialism to de-colonialism in the education system is gender. Almost every civilisation across the globe has registered disparities in the number of males and females both in learning spaces and working spaces, and the cases are much worse in developing countries (Maddrell et al., 2015; Tembon & Fort, 2008). UAE and Middle East at large are not exclusive to these trends (Evans et al., 2021; Schwab et al., 2017). Men and women have distinct social, economic, and cultural expectations and responsibilities in every Indigenous society. Being aware of such gender-specific roles and whether they would diminish or advance gender inequalities can never be undervalued. Decolonised and Indigenous education should be able to ascertain access to education on an equal footing, establish innovative educational approaches and instil gender-friendly socialisation (United Nations, 2010).

The high gender disparities in UAE schools and workplaces confirm that the goals of education with respect to gender inclusivity are either misunderstood or misplaced. UAE schools are dominated by the female gender (over 70%), yet females in workplaces are about 17% of the total workforce (Embassy of the UAE Washington DC, 2022; The World Bank, 2020). Fundamental questions are "where do educated females go?" and "where are males in the

mainstream education system?” There is no straightforward answer to these questions since there is no clear evidence to explore them. However, suggestions point to the dominating power of the male gender, which eventually see more men join workplaces as females, despite their education, remain at home to perform domestic chores since their education is considered less beneficial or productive than their domestic responsibilities as wives and mothers (Aikman & Robinson-Pant, 2019).

The overwhelming deviation between women in Emirati schools and Women in the UAE workplaces is what I perceive as a serious social problem that calls for the emancipation of Emirati women. European Institute for Gender Equality (n.d.) defines women’s emancipation as “The process, strategy, and myriad efforts by which women have been striving to liberate themselves from the authority and control of men and traditional power structures.” The Institute also mentions that the primary goal of emancipation is to secure equal rights for women, detach gender discrimination from laws, institutions, and behavioural patterns and replace them with regulations that promote the full participation of the female gender in a manner that guarantees equality to men. The realities of the experiences in the UAE are far from the goals of emancipated women. In this literature review, I attempt to answer a fundamental question: in which ways can decolonised and Indigenous Home Economics pedagogies contribute to the emancipation of Emirati Women? There is no clear response to this question as this is a research area not extensively explored.

### **The Current Position of Home Economics**

Home Economics is a branch of economics that deals with the study of household items such as food, clothing, shelter, and family. Home management is at the core of Home Economics, with concepts on human development, food science and preparation, family and personal finance, nutrition and wellness, housing and interior design, textile and apparel, and consumer issues taking precedence (McGregor et al., 2012). According to the International Federation of Home Economics (IFHE), Home Economics is the study that aims to achieve sustainable living for communities, individuals, and families (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2008). In their position statement, IFHE (2008) proposes a Home Economics curriculum based on four pillars of practice. The first dimension views Home Economics as an academic discipline aimed at educating new scholars to conduct research and advance new knowledge on thinking about and developing the curriculum and society. The second dimension views Home Economics as an arena for everyday living within families and communities that provides space for human growth and for meeting daily human needs. The third area views the curriculum as an opportunity to develop their own resources and capabilities that they need for their own personal life.

The final area views the profession as an opportunity to influence and develop policies that would engender empowerment and well-being for sustainable futures (International Federation of Home Economics, 2008). Based on the environment, Home Economists enable families and individuals to understand that their actions, choices, and capacities impact society both locally and internationally (Renwick & Powell, 2019). For a long time, Home Economics has been perceived as a subject that surrounds cooking and sewing. Contrary to this public and infamous perception, Home Economics is and has always been more than just cooking and sewing. Instead, it is concerned with various matters of daily living and centres on how, when, and where people meet their basic needs (Nickols & Kay, 2015). Even though these concepts appear to be basic as they define daily aspects of human life, it is unfortunate that they have largely been taken for granted (Kuusisaari et al., 2021). Social aspects such as nourishment and nutrition, clothing, and shelter are some of the top concerns that the world struggles with despite how simple they seem to sound. Adopting a scientific approach to these social aspects is core in stimulating sustainability at individual, familial, and societal levels. Due to home and social-based problems that envelope the world today, Pendergast (2009) is convinced that Contemporary Home Economics is at a convergent moment as these problems offer an

opportunity to re-vision the profession. Pendergast et al., (2012) articulate that the convergent factors in the contemporary world act as catalysts towards increasing men's involvement in the development of the profession, which has historically been dominated by women, streamlining consumption and globalisation patterns, increasing the emergence of expert novices who are perfect at learning new things in the high paced environment, and advancing home management skills, especially among younger generations. Ensuring that Home Economics adjusts to social, economic, and environmental changes is imperative in guaranteeing that it is a future-proofed subject.

Since its inception, as Schulz (2013) emphasises, Home Economics has been mainly focused on the well-being and empowerment of society at the individual and family level through the development of important characteristics for sustainable living. According to Benn (2012), Home Economics is based on concepts that foster daily life experience and science, and it tends to be gendered, culturally dependent, featured individually, and determined by society. It is gendered because it is concerned with households and food.

According to Hara & Rodríguez-Planas (2019), the practicality was adopted in the teaching of Home Economics as kitchen laboratories were introduced where they were subdivided into small family kitchens, and learners were given guidance on how to work using textbooks and recipes. However, after the women's liberation, Home Economics was not considered essential anymore as women demanded to be enrolled in formal learning institutions to be educated and earn their own money (Benn, 2012). It was later transformed by addressing gender equality and concepts in Home Economics. For example, it aimed to equip learners with experience and knowledge in planning and maintaining homework, understanding the proper composition of food, and understanding the need for hygiene and proper household organisation.

### **Indigenising and Decolonising Home Economics**

Pendergast et al. (2012) reiterate that the core objective of the Home Economics profession is to improve the world by advancing skills and knowledge critical to solving rising challenges. According to the authors, this goal is unattainable unless the profession is flexible to adjust to contemporariness and accommodate the differences within social structures. For Home Economists to be able to generate changes that are impactful to the world, Pendergast et al. posit that they must exhibit three critical attributes. First, they must be able to focus on the fundamental needs and practical concerns of individuals and families. The needs and practical concerns vary considerably across social groups, cultures, or races. This means that Home Economists can be impactful to the world only if they recognise that cultures differ considerably and that such differences are also reflected in the learning and education systems (Schulz, 2013). From this perspective, progressive Home Economics epistemologies and pedagogies should not be universalised in a one-size-fits-all manner but rather should reflect and be based on the rich Indigenous cultures and perspectives (Kuusisaari et al., 2021). Through this, upcoming Home Economists would be energised to use localised resources to solve local problems in a manner that befits the social, spiritual, and cultural expectations of the specific population.

Second, Pendergast et al. (2012) mention that Home Economists should have the ability to integrate knowledge, processes, and skills from various disciplines synthesised through interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary inquiry. Home Economics is a multifaceted discipline and, as such, should encourage the understanding of the world from the inside to the beyond (Nickols & Kay, 2015). Learning in any discipline must begin in the local societal arena, where a person gets the first experience and develops human growth and potential (Nickols & Kay, 2015). It is only after understanding Home Economics is constructed from a localised and indigenised perspective that learners can easily assimilate cross-border and global perspectives.

The last attribute is that Home Economists must have the ability to take critical, transformative, and emancipatory action at all levels and sectors of society (Pendergast et al., 2012). They should be in a position to identify critical problems, relate them to local Indigenous views, and apply professionalism to address them. In the case of this study, gender disparity is a problem in UAE, and the implementation of a decolonised, and indigenised Home Economics pedagogy is hypothesised to be a potential solution.

According to Sprūdža et al. (2010), the 21st century has witnessed a drastic change in social, economic, and political aspects of life across the globe. The education system has been challenged to change from the traditional memorising ideas to educate the learner on ways the concept learned in class can be applied in the real world (Starkey, 2017). It is only through progressive change that the education system can remain relevant. The change in Home Economics has shifted focus from memorising content to understanding the content and applying the content appropriately. Wright (2017) posits a need for a paradigm shift from Home Economics pedagogies that are exam-oriented to pedagogies that are practice-oriented. Achieving this and ensuring that the profession remains pivotal in shaping preferred futures call for redesigning the colonised aspects of the conventional Home Economics pedagogies. Pendergast et al. (2012) made five recommendations for decolonising Home Economics, which include rebranding the name, stopping fragmentation of the profession, contesting curriculum contents at all levels, assuring academic revolution of the profession, and undertaking research to measure the efficacy of interventions.

### **Benefits of Home Economics**

Home Economics as a discipline is associated with a number of goals that include enhancing one's environment by adding value to the resources essential in a household setup. Another benefit is that it enables individuals to express themselves in an open manner that would ensure they understand what is expected of them. Self-expression is a result of the skills that the population possesses as well as the economic situation of the country (Deagon, 2021). Home Economics entails the social life of individuals, food, shelter, clothing, culture, and the environment of human life. In terms of technology, it entails the skills that are needed to utilise the available resources to make a living based on technology.

Pendergast et al. (2012) opine that the welfare of a society is achieved through the development of all members of society, equipping them with the necessary skills, each understanding the role that they have to play. The goal is improving individuals' quality of life through addressing the developmental needs at both personal and societal level. Ronto et al. (2017) posit that since the main focus of Home Economics is on improving the quality of life for society, it would be beneficial for the policies proposed in Home Economics to be implemented. As they reiterate, equitable resource allocation is important as it ensures that all members of society have equal access to resources, and this would be beneficial as nearly everyone would have equal access to vital resources. Another benefit is that people would understand the value of the available resources and take great care of them for current and future generations.

Social injustices such as racism, gender inequality, and tribalism are habits of mind that society needs to get rid of, and such actions would be beneficial to every individual as the society would have access to equal opportunities (Pendergast et al., 2012). This is beneficial to both genders as there has been an increase in witnessed discrimination as was in the past. Lastly is the concept of happiness and finding value in life. Happiness is an end to itself, and the purpose of life is to be happy. Therefore, society must find out the importance of life and its purpose as this would enable them to realise their need.

### **Indigenous and Decolonised Home Economics Pedagogies and Emancipation of Emirati Women**

Pedagogy is the how of teaching (Ma & Pendergast, 2010). It entails the methods and practices that a teacher uses to teach the curriculum contents. Teachers have the responsibility of selecting teaching methods, approaches, and styles that they deem most appropriate in guaranteeing that students realise their own capabilities and improve their self-confidence and motivation towards maximised academic achievements. Classroom teaching practices vary considerably and are based on teacher-centred knowledge transmission processes, student-centred processes, constructivism, and inquiry-based learning (Smith, 2017). Contemporary research continues to point to constructivism and critical pedagogy as the transformative pedagogies that teachers primarily draw from (Loughran, 2013; Ovens, 2017; Shapiro, 2011; Thiessen et al., 2013; Ukpokodu, 2009). The constructivism approach, primarily drawn from Piaget's cognitive development theory and Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of meaning-making, construes learning as creating a linkage between what the learner already knows and believes and the ideas and knowledge that the learner is intended to learn (Shapiro, 2011). In simple terms, it perceives students as active learners who can learn from their experiences and reflection.

On the other hand, a critical pedagogy (CP) preoccupies itself with establishing solutions to social injustices by seeking ways to transform inequitable, oppressive, and undemocratic institutions and constructions (Giroux, 2020). CP propagates the perspective that the mainstream education system has been Eurocentric and that it is the role of the teacher to reject the neutrality of knowledge and instead invite learners to challenge the intent of the mainstream education to promote unquestionable acceptance of the status quo (Thiessen et al., 2013). CP views teaching as a political act where the teacher invites students to examine power structures, language and experience, and ethics and authority, among other social constructs of their surroundings, to understand social, political, and economic contradictions and ignite actions for the benefits of the oppressed elements of reality (Ovens, 2017). CP proponents maintain that creating instances of deviation from mainstream education contributes to questioning the realities of social constructs, which promises a major milestone in abolishing structural violence of gender, race, and class discrimination (Giroux, 2020). CP has been called a transformative pedagogy because of its intention to make a difference in the world.

While reviewing the two pedagogical approaches, Smith (2017), in their attempt to establish the best pedagogical approach to teaching Home Economics, eventually condenses them together into transformative constructivism that not only places the learner at the centre of the learning process but also takes into account the socio-cultural messages presented within the environment of learning. According to Smith (2017), the ultimate goal of the transformative constructivism approach is not only to develop knowledge from what the learner already knows but to encourage critical awareness of inequalities and problems within their surroundings. The classroom teaching practices disrupt the perceived commonplaces, critique multiple viewpoints, examine socio-political issues, take actions towards promoting social justice and make systemic oppression visible (Ovens, 2017).

Smith's (2017) pedagogical perspectives on Home Economics seem to greatly boost women's struggles. According to Dupuis (2020), Home Economics fosters self-sufficiency in promoting the feminist agenda. Decolonised and indigenised Home Economics ensure that the education system is injected with a good dose of practical knowledge necessary in weeding out unhealthy behaviours and fostering inclusivity. In the words of Nickols and Kay (2015), for the goals of gender equality to be achieved, Home Economics must include men and must stop being seen as a female-only subject.

Home Economics has traditionally been regarded as a subject suited for the female gender (Beinert et al., 2021). This is because women were regarded as homemakers and were tasked with the role of making homes while their husbands set out to fend for their families (Smith, 2019a). The past decades have seen the role of women in society change as they are also out doing jobs to sustain their families, although the rates of their involvement still remain significantly low. Their roles are no longer homemakers as such roles are no longer gender-specific (Kim, 2018). Stereotypes around the fact that Home Economics is a female-only subject continue to be entrenched in the few schools where the subject is taught in. As a result, the male students face limitations as they are denied the immense lessons that, if acquired, would influence their daily lives (Hara & Rodríguez-Planas, 2021).

There is a need to have the gender stereotypes that accompany Home Economics eliminated to ensure all learners with interest in the subject can confidently undertake the subject in their studies and to increase the penetration in terms of numbers of learners that gain interest in the subject. Declassifying Home Economics as a feminine subject and promoting it as a gender-neutral subject also comes a long way in enabling the change in attitudes of the parents and guardians in offering the necessary support to the learners; which afford them the comfort to pursue and learn practical skills that aid them in living improved lifestyles (Muzaffar et al., 2018).

### **Students' Perception on the Study of Home Economics**

Home Economics is considered an applied field of study due to the fact that it borrows from several interrelated disciplines (Smith, 2019a). These concepts are then lumped together to offer a comprehensive guide that aids learners, individuals, and societies as a whole in improving their daily aspects of life. It then makes Home Economics a very practical learning subject. In recent times, Home Economics has been reduced and viewed as only cooking and homemaking, which has lowered it to an undesirable level for most learners who choose to pursue it (Baiden et al., 2022). However, Home Economics is a broad area and subject with more than just cooking and homemaking as components (Kim, 2018).

A common question has been on if the study of Home Economics is relevant and should be part of countries' school and national curricula. If it is relevant as a part of the curriculum, what are its positive contributions to a learner's life? A survey done by Kim and Lee (2018) elaborates that 96 percent of the learners who answered the survey feel that Home Economics is an important learning subject as it equips them with viable, practical skills. They cite the ability to observe healthy dietary practices hence avoiding risks of contracting sedentary life diseases such as obesity.

In a separate study by Hara and Rodríguez-Planas (2021), the researchers make an observation that students pursuing Home Economics have opined that they consider Home Economics to be very relevant to their career ambitions and passions in life. This group of learners held that Home Economics is deeply meaningful to learn and applies in several areas of their lives. The study also enquired about the most interesting parts of the Home Economics subject that the learners considered. Food and nutrition topped the list of their most interesting parts, with other students finding clothing and textile to be more interesting and a further group claiming home management as interesting. The perception of students on Home Economics is widely positive, with some finding it more aligned with their passion.

### **Conclusion**

The examined pieces of literature bring various issues into mind. First, gender parity, especially in UAE and the Gulf region, remains a matter of concern as far as gender roles are concerned. Despite the fact that females make up the greater majority in UAE schools, they still remain

the minority in the country's labour force, which raises concern about how gender parity and women's visibility can be advanced. In response to this concern, I hypothesised that developing Home Economics, but in an Indigenous and decolonised form, can help in attaining women's visibility in the country.

Although there are very scant pieces of literature on Home Economics in relation to women in UAE, various resources on a global scale allude to the significance of the subjects in advancing women's visibility and position in society. IFHE, in their position statement, have held that the development of Home Economics is core in facilitating students in discovering and further developing their own resources and capabilities that can help them live a more informed life by directing their professional decisions and actions or preparing them for life (International Federation of Home Economics, 2008). In Pendergast et al. (2012), students and graduates of Home Economics are empowered to act responsively in their daily contexts, including food, health and nutrition, textiles and clothing, housing and design, and consumer science among others. The capacity of Emirati women to draw from such a disciplinary diversity would be a strength for the profession, allowing interpretations to be made in the relevant contexts.

As emphasised by Wright (2017), the Home Economics curriculum should be made necessary in revitalising the art of homemaking and, importantly, in cultivating self-efficiency, especially in supporting the feminist agenda. Injecting the Emirati women with a sufficient dose of practical knowledge gained through Home Economics, coupled with their feminist ideals, place them in a better position to provide solutions to major societal issues. However, the literature point to a gap in how Home Economics pedagogies are developed and dispensed. From its inception until recently, the subject has been viewed as a female subject and has been based on some universalised pedagogies (Renwick, 2019).

The current decade has marked a period of major shifts in society, with gender parity within social contexts, globalisation, and information and communication technologies taking precedence (Pendergast et al., 2012). These societal paradigm shifts demand reconsideration of the contents taught through the Home Economics curriculum, to whom they are taught, who teaches them, and how they are taught. In fact, evidence from the available scanty resources shows that decolonised and Indigenous Home Economics pedagogies have greater benefits, especially when it comes to gender roles, than conventional pedagogies (Beinert et al., 2021; Hanna, 2019; Muzaffar et al., 2018; Smith, 2019b). However, more still needs to be done to place such findings in contemporary contexts. Although some studies have pointed to decolonisation and shifting from a more universalised approach to Home Economics towards approaches that are consistent with local Indigenous contexts so as to maximise the value of the curriculum to both genders, more work needs to be done to propel Home Economics pedagogies towards contemporariness to guarantee effective engagement of all stakeholders in the development of the curriculum.

## Biography

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## 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

Duncan, J., Holland, J. M., Russell, M. B., Saboe-Wounded Head, L. & Spangler, A. (2022). Truth or Consequences: Advancing Equity in Family & Consumer Sciences in the United States. *International Journal of Home Economics*, 15(1), 70-89.

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 NCBDFCS

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 (NCBDFCS) 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 (NCBDFCS, 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 NCBDFCS, 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 NCBDFCS 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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## Living in the Shadows of Colonialism

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### Abstract

*When we listen closely, we can hear the legacy and Colonisation in so many of our stories. Colonialism casts its shadow on the lives of all peoples—Indigenous, BPOC and White—in different ways, and until we can practice critical consciousness about its pervasiveness we will continue to perpetuate cycles of oppression that were imposed by settler societies centuries ago. This paper witnesses reflection upon “critical incidents” in the light of colonialism, offering a model for critically examining one’s values, assumptions and ways of knowing as a first step in the transformative work of decolonisation. Since Human Ecology is a field concerned with transformative empowerment for individuals and communities it holds agendas like decolonisation at the heart of its mission, and so has a responsibility to explore decolonising mindsets and approaches. The work of decolonisation might be unsettling, but its urgency can no longer be ignored.*

**KEYWORDS:** DECOLONISATION, COLONIALISM, CRITICAL INCIDENTS, PLURAL TRUTH, REFLECTION

### Introduction

The major ideas at the heart of every discipline arose from the real life of a real person—not from the mind alone, but from the thinker’s psyche, body, relationships, passions, political and social context. Objectivism tries to protect its fantasy of detached truth by presenting ideas as cut flower, uprooted from their earthy origins. (Palmer, 1990, p. 5)

We are so sculpted by our stories that it can be difficult to see how we are created in their image. This is not a new idea. If we are to take transformative action for all people at all levels of society (IFHE, n.d.) we must reject the notion of detached truth and confront the origins of our stories. The discipline of Home Economics—and all others, under hegemonic colonial education systems—has arisen from the real lives of people with different priorities than those that we now recognise as urgent. The colonial project is both a legacy and current reality, and if we are to prioritise the urgency of equity, reconciliation, repatriation and emancipation we have no choice but to dismantle it. The question that troubles me is: where do I begin?

The more I reflect on the concept and realities of colonialism, the more aware I become of its pervasiveness. My story is shaped by colonialism—the competitiveness and absolutism with which includes, I think, the rational criteria by which I accept something as truth, the privileges I have been afforded by the colour of my skin, and the assimilation of my family into a colonised country. As a reflective practitioner (Vaines, 1997a) I feel that my contributions towards decolonisation cannot be separated from my personal journey, and so I feel that decolonisation must begin in my mind. Becoming aware of the influence of colonialism in my everyday

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assumptions, actions, interactions and values is an essential first step in transforming my practice as a facilitator of learning. Ignorance is no longer an option:

As long as you are unable to decode the significance of ordinary things, and as long as you take the signs of your culture at face value, you will continue to be mastered by them and by those who constructed them. (Solomon, 1988, as cited in Vaines, 1997a, para. 25)

## Purpose and Structure of Paper

In reflecting upon my understandings of colonialism and decolonisation I have found particular personal experiences have served as critical incidents (Tripp, 2011) in my learning journey. In this paper I will share two of these, each of which provoked me to examine my understandings, assumptions, values and behaviour, illuminating my knowledge gaps and inviting me to reconsider my perspectives. These critical incidents have informed my reflection and study differently, enabling me to metaphorically internalise different key ideas of decolonisation that now inform my communication, values, assumptions, and actions as a citizen and educator.

After narrating each critical incident in the form of a vignette, I reflect on the key decolonisation idea that it enabled me to explore, linking it to relevant literature. I will use the subheadings *Vignette*, *Reflection* and *Possibilities for decolonisation* to explore each critical incident. The paper concludes with a final reflection on the relevance of these inquiries to Home Economics/Human ecology. By reflecting on my own critical incidents, I hope to illustrate a kind of model for navigating such circumstances as they pertain to decolonising one's mindset.

For the purposes of this paper the following definitions inform my reflections:

**Critical incidents:** refers to critical incidents in education as explored by Tripp (2011), and in personal development as it pertains to one's role as an educator. In this sense, they refer to *events that are interpreted, by those experiencing them, as significant, compelling the individual/s to critically examine their values and actions in transformative ways* (Smith, 2019; Tripp, 2011).

**Colonialism:** Both an historical and contemporary issue. Historically, colonialism was imposed by missionary and militaristic colonial enterprises in an effort to dominate Indigenous societies, usurp land, and establish settler societies in their own image. This paper focuses on *contemporary colonialism—a form of post-modern imperialism in which coloniser values, assumptions, norms, ways of knowing and being are subtly prioritised, perpetuating power relationships and the oppression of Indigenous and Black People and People of Colour [BPOC] established via historical colonisation* (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005).

**Decolonisation:** seeks to *critically examine and dismantle the hegemonic hold of colonisation* in society, in an effort to emancipate those who have been historically and perpetually oppressed by it and reveal the deep wealth of Indigenous knowledge that has been systematically ignored by Eurocentric education and knowledge systems (Battiste, 2002). It aims to advance the interests of Indigenous peoples and transform what is important in settler societies by intentionally *decentring dominant colonial ontologies, pedagogies, philosophies, epistemologies, social structures and discourses and recentring Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing as communicated by sovereign Indigenous voices* (Battiste, 2002; McGregor, 2012; Smith, 1999; Younging, 2018). For the purposes of this paper, I will acknowledge that I am exploring what Tuck and Yang (2012) might critique as a metaphorisation of the term decolonisation, concerned with the reform of settler colonial structuring in society, rather than the meaning of the term which is concerned with the repatriation of Indigenous lands and life.

In order to position myself within the research, I will identify here as a White-presenting, bi-racial person, speaking from the perspective of an allied academic (Younging, 2018, p. 10). My intentions in this paper are not to represent “Indigenous Voice” (Younging, 2018, p. 10) or the experiences of colonialism for Indigenous Peoples, but to share some of my stories and reflections regarding colonialism and how they have affected my own ontological and epistemological curiosities and goals. I have maintained an interest in racial identity from a young age, recognising myself as the only White-presenting person in my immediate and extended paternal family, and noticing a disconnect between my experiences and theirs. My reflections, therefore, are grounded in the lived experiences of my family as immigrants to a colonised country, and the systemic impacts colonialism has imposed upon them. As an educator, I am wary of the colonial structures that continue to permeate our education systems, and I am tired of their perpetuation of the colonial project and the intergenerational harms that this project has on Black, Indigenous, and People Of Color (BIPOC) communities.

## Critical Incident 1

### Vignette: What’s in a Name?

Some years ago, I found myself, accidentally, arguing with my father. It was the kind of argument where others in the room raise a “good luck” eyebrow and then abandon ship. We had argued in the past, but this particular occasion did not elicit the familiar defensiveness of “I don’t want to do physics anymore” or “I don’t care what you think of my love interest.” This argument was untrackable and sailed beyond the laws of navigation that we had plotted together in days gone by. It was an argument about the colonial history of our surname.

My knowledge base was this: I know that my paternal family emigrated from India in the early 1950s. I know that my paternal grandmother was nineteen and living in Mumbai (then Bombay) when she had an arranged marriage with a man from Goa, West India, my grandfather, whose surname is etymologically Portuguese. I know that my grandfather had a Portuguese passport, could speak Portuguese and Konkani (the language of the Goan region) and that, at the time of their emigration from India, Goa was a colony of Portugal. I do not know whether my grandfather’s ethnicity was Indian, Portuguese or a combination of the two. I do not know whether his/our surname was Portuguese because of ancestral inheritance or whether it was adopted as a result of colonial or Catholic dominance. These were the questions I was seeking to answer when my father met me with rage and metaphorical tirades.

It seemed like a logical set of questions to me:

Was Nanpa Indian or Portuguese?

Was his passport Portuguese because he was actually of Portuguese ancestry or was it Portuguese because Goa was a colony of Portugal at the time?

Were Indians given Portuguese surnames during Portuguese colonial rule of Goa—is that why we have a Portuguese surname?

Whether my father knows the answers to these questions or not, I’m still unsure. What I do know is that his experiences—be they through the legacy of his family, his experiences with racism while settling in Australia, his displaced and amalgamated identity as a child of colour in a White settler society, or some other reason—were so fraught with emotion and illogical meaning that he was unwilling or unable to meet me at my place of wonder.

It doesn’t matter!

You’re an Australian!!!

The past is a foreign country—they do things differently there. (Hartley, 1953)

To be honest, I cannot really remember particulars. What I do remember is that every question I asked was met with a response that in no way answered it, or even really acknowledged the subject that I was talking about. Yet, it lasted a good 45 minutes. The more I tried to break down my argument by noting historical “facts”, logical questioning, seeking linear chronological clarifications, the less receptive my father became.

### **Reflection: Truth Under the Shadow of Colonialism**

Nothing was resolved in this heated non-debate. Yet it has stuck with me because of the disconnect it created between my father and me, even if only for its duration. Despite speaking the same language, we were unable to understand each other’s points. I was enquiring from my limited, technical-rational perspective and Eurocentric ontological assumptions of what qualifies as truth. I sought some factual origin of a name which, while possibly traceable in the scientific sense, held a more complex, personal history than I had been prepared or willing to hear. While my father did not answer the questions that I asked, he did offer his own truth of the matter; the history of our name should not hold any relevance as to who we are. We have adapted and our family identity is about how we *now* think and what we *now* do, not who we were. By limiting myself to technical-rational thinking in my line of enquiry, I did not hold any space for the truths that were more relevant to my father’s experience, and so was unable to meet him in a place that was comfortable or transformative for either of us.

### **Colonialism Pervades This Situation Intersectionally**

Firstly, there is the colonialism of my father’s legacy. Genealogy tests have confirmed some Indian ancestry; however, our surname is etymologically Portuguese. Colonialism clearly usurped the named identity of our family heritage at some point. Such a colonial practice can be seen in the surnames of First Nations Peoples in Australia and Canada, among other countries, and has been noted as a domination strategy used by settler societies in their efforts to assimilate and/or erase Indigenous cultures (Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., 2014; Triffitt, 2007). What plagues me personally about our surname, however, is that its ambiguous origins leave me wondering whether my ancestors were the colonisers (Portuguese) or the colonised (Indigenous Indians of the Goan region). Were they oppressed or oppressors? While the potential answers to these questions do not affect my personal motivations towards dismantling oppressive colonial social structures, they affect my perceptions of myself, my ancestors and our collective legacy. I was recently intrigued by an Instagram post from @ckyourprivilege, seeking perspectives of White folks in their research. They asked “Dear yt [white] friends, who are you without the title of ‘liberal’, ‘anti-racist’, ‘ally’ or ‘co-conspirator?’” (Check Your Privilege & Hill, 2022). As a White-presenting person I have often felt unsure of whether my voice is welcome in the academic or social spaces exploring issues of race and decolonisation. Decolonisation endeavours to recentre sovereign, self-determined voices in the communication of the truths, lived experiences and futures of BIPOC peoples, and disrupt colonial systems that have historically observed, evaded and obscured these truths and lived experiences in Eurocentric texts. Such labels serve as a kind of permission for settler voices within anti-oppressive forums, but permission to do what?

To avoid rumination in this rhetoric, I seek to situate myself within the work of decolonisation and understand where my voice sits on the legitimacy-privilege spectrum. Seeking credibility in labels is problematic—not to mention a relic of colonial epistemology—and while I recognise this, I also acknowledge my curiosity, perhaps shared by racialised students and educators, in stepping into this liminal space. Self-concept and critical communication skills, as explored in the British Columbia Family Studies 10-12 curriculum (Ministry of Education Province of British Columbia, 2007), are essential competencies in being able to situate oneself in the work of decolonisation. The lineage and experiences of my family hold important information for me in

developing my own self-concept, which influences the truth that I bring with me as I navigate historical and systemic colonialism.

Secondly, my father's lived experience immigrating to Australia as a 10-year-old saw assimilation as a coping strategy as he adjusted to life in White settler culture. He has an Australian accent, drives a Holden, worships the footy and speaks in a combination of quintessential Aussie catchphrases and humorous insults. If it was not for his looks and commitment to basmati rice with every meal, you probably would not question his heritage. But conversations with my uncles—my father's elder brothers—suggest that my father experienced a loss of cultural heritage during his adolescence. From their stories I know that racism was a feature of my father's experiences settling in Australia, with assimilation proving an effective avoidance strategy. Australia, among other colonised countries, still bears the legacy of restrictive immigration policies (i.e., the White Australia Policy.<sup>1</sup>) and assimilation initiatives that aimed to absorb immigrants into dominant White society at the expense of their own languages, culture, customs and traditions (Museums Victoria, 2017).

Thirdly, my technical-rational inquiry approach reflects my Eurocentric education in White settler Australian society. My early and adolescent education valued scientific truth, linear logic and absolutism; the world appeared to be black and white, right and wrong, better and worse. That which was interpretable, literature, the arts, spirituality, relationships, was valued less than that which was defensible by reason, and a culture of competitiveness celebrated the latter more than the former. Vaines refers to this as a *world as machine* perspective, drawing from the work of Wilshire in suggesting that positivistic ways of knowing have been so institutionalised in the wake of 17th century thinking that meaning has been reduced to linear, empirical, cognitive reasoning at the subjugation of the emotive, imaginative and other ways of knowing (Wilshire, 1990, as cited in Vaines, 1997b). Truth, under this colonial mindset, was not recognised in the emotive, historically rooted responses of my father. This scenario is but one of a myriad demonstrating how the hegemonic pervasiveness of technical-rational thinking perpetuates colonial structures in society, oppressing those whose truths and traumas are not recognised, represented or understood. Under the shadow of colonialism truth is not recognised or accepted for its pluralities.

### **Possibilities: Plural Truths Illuminate Pathways to Decolonisation**

In recent years I have become aware of how the technical-rational mindset has dominated my ontological assumptions. Where *ontology* refers to beliefs about the nature of reality and phenomenon, one's ontological assumptions constitute those elements of one's reality that are accepted as true. The *technical-rational or positivistic perspective* views truth as that which is singular, scientifically discoverable, grounded in theory, systematically justifiable and value-free (Brown & Baldwin, 1995; Sipe & Constable, 1996; Vaines, 1997a). Under this perspective, moral implications are of little interest and everyday experiences outside the scope of scientific importance are trivialised (Vaines, 1997a). The technical-rational mindset is deeply embedded in the institutional and social structures of modern society, dominating the kinds of knowledge

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<sup>1</sup> Between 1901 and 1966 the "Immigration Restriction Act" limited the migration of non-British and later non-White immigrants into the country. This legislation formally manifested the White Australia Policy which reflected the attitudes of white settler colonies of the 1800s. Non-white groups were considered to be intellectually and morally inferior and a threat to the fairly compensated, white, male, skilled workforce Australia was working to build. The Immigration Restriction Act required that migrants to Australia sit a dictation test, in any European language but chosen by the administering officer, leaving great scope for automatic failure. Less than four percent of applicants passed the test between 1901 and 1909, with no applicants passing after this date. The Immigration Restriction Act targeted immigrants of Asian Descent. While this particular legislation did not directly impact Indigenous Australians, the social structures, values and attitudes being perpetuated under the greater White Australia Policy did. (National Museum Australia, 2021)

types typically recognised and nurtured in education systems and leaving many oblivious to its hold (Battiste, 2005; Eisner, 1992; Fujino et al., 2018; Smith, 1999; Smith, 2016; Vaines, 1997b).

The notion of *truth*, therefore, is limited in scope and systematically arguable under the authorities of science and positivism. In recognising that technical-rational or positivistic perspectives represent but one ontological paradigm it becomes apparent that there are others that are often ignored in hegemonic, Eurocentric societies. By shifting our perspective to the recognition of *truths* we can assume that reality is understood from individual perspectives, shaped by context, power relations and discourse.

Another way of thinking about this is to recognise and acknowledge the various *ways of knowing* that shape our perspectives. Many scholars (Belenky et al., 1997; Davis-Manigaulte et al., 2006; Eisner, 1992; Fujino et al., 2018; Heron, 1992; Sipe & Constable, 1996) have offered insight and research into the myriad ways of knowing through which humans understand and communicate. I have found Eisner's (1992) explanations of *cognitive pluralism* to be quite inclusive and conducive to the advancement of equity. He suggests that cognitive pluralism is a conception of knowledge that recognises the human capacity to represent or express experiences and intentions through symbols (Eisner, 1992). The word *symbol* might conjure images of written language or visual representation, though they need not be limited to these Eurocentrically prioritised forms of language. Eisner argues that symbols or *forms of representation* are powerful cultural resources, enabling ideas, thoughts and feelings to be communicated publicly, rather than limited to private experience (1992, p. 80). Where space is created for cognitive pluralism in curriculum development, implementation and evaluation, conceptions of literacy can be expanded, enabling "realms of meaning" (Phenix, 1964, as cited in Eisner, 1992) to be shared that are otherwise neglected in systems prioritising Eurocentric, technical-rational intelligence.

One key priority of decolonising pedagogies is to *recentre Indigenous ways of knowing* (McGregor, 2012). Doing so requires the acknowledgement and inclusion of truths beyond those which are typically valued in hegemonic educational systems. The term *Indigenous ways of knowing* recognises the complexity and diversity of knowledge that exists amongst Indigenous Peoples. The First Peoples Principles of Learning, outlined by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), explains the breadth of learning that Indigenous ways of knowing prioritise. This learning incorporates "generational roles and responsibilities", "exploration of one's identity", "the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors", "memory, history and story" and the recognition that "some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations" (FNESC, n.d. para. 2). While this list is not exhaustive, it does demonstrate "realms of meaning" (Phenix, 1964, as cited in Eisner, 1992) beyond those for which positivistic thinking and education systems tend to hold space.

It is not enough to simply recognise such pluralities of truth and ways of knowing. We must actively create safe and empowering environments for BIPOC students, communities, scholars and activists in order to centre their sovereign, self-determined voices and witness the rewriting of BIPOC narratives. Historically, colonial research methods and texts have observed, evaded and obscured the truths and traumas of BIPOC Peoples (Battiste, 2002; Smith, 1999), perpetuating colonial agendas behind the illusion of objectivity. Illuminating these agendas might begin to dismantle them, however, progress must be directed by sovereign BIPOC voices if reconciliation and emancipation are the objectives. Educators can foster this by intentionally developing respectful, consent-based cultures of communication, forging connections with BIPOC community members rather than viewing engagement with local contexts as optional, ensuring BIPOC voices are equitably represented in classroom resources, and critically analysing and modifying learning outcomes to ensure Indigenous ways of knowing and other

manifestations of cognitive pluralism are accessible, supported and resourced in the classroom. In discussing the Black Thought Project, a social experiment started in 2018 with the intention of centring Blackness in public space (Black Thought Project, n.d.), facilitator Alicia Walters explains how centring Black voices and claiming physical space enables society “to see the world through the lens of the [B]lack experience [requiring us to] imagine how our rules and structures would be reorganized” if historically rooted racial hierarchies were removed (Walters, as cited in Dirshe, 2020). Centring the voices of Indigenous Peoples, Black Peoples and People(s) of colour can enable us to witness the effects of colonial structures on the lived experiences of these communities, and come to terms with our own privilege and relationship with colonialism.

My father is not an Indigenous man, and the jury is still out on the extent to which colonialism has negatively affected the legacy of his Indian heritage. However, the disconnect between our perspectives illuminates the limitations of colonial thought structures on all peoples. I am not advocating for inclusivity as the epitomised goal here as such a suggestion ignores the complex history and legacy of colonialism on First Peoples; but I am suggesting that embracing perspectives like cognitive pluralism in our education systems is essentially a prerequisite if inclusivity is to be achieved. We are witnessing the legacy of “cognitive imperialism” (Battiste, 2000) imposed by early settler societies in the kinds of ethnocentric thinking and Eurocentric models of education that prevail today (Smith, 2016), standards that reinforce the notion that Eurocentric/Western ways of knowing, teaching and learning are superior (McGregor, 2012). Rather, we can join the efforts of scholars, activists, artists and citizens by paying attention to ignored perspectives, creating space for the narratives, social imaginaries and pedagogies that have the potential to facilitate empathetic transformation (Fujino et al., 2018). By embracing plurality of truths and cognition we can open up the quest for meaning and its communication in inclusive and transformative ways. By listening to the lived experiences of our families and communities we are able to hear stories of colonialism that continue to resonate, tuning in to the intergenerational impacts of colonialism on our kin, ourselves, our privilege and the state of our society.

## Critical Incident 2

### Vignette: My Land Non-Acknowledgement

Early in my graduate studies I was invited to present a paper I co-wrote on anti-racist pedagogy at the 15th Canadian Symposium on Home Economics Education at the University of British Columbia. My presentation was on the second day, and I had noticed that, of the first day presentations, only a handful had begun with a land acknowledgement. While I was familiar with acknowledgements of country being part of ceremonial openings at home in Australia, I had not yet experienced land or country acknowledgement in this kind of setting, nor by multiple participants at the commencement of each individual contribution. Feeling out of depth—but also wanting to draw attention to this necessary and important ritual—I decided that I would begin my presentation the following day with an acknowledgement of sorts.

I would like to start by saying that I do not know how to acknowledge the traditional Peoples of this land, but I think it is very important and I am hoping that somebody will be able to teach me how to do this later on in the symposium.

It was kind of an awkward start. I had naively thought that admitting my ignorance would bring some humility to this process and help other people feel like not knowing was okay if one is willing to seek guidance. I had even rehearsed this address. My presentation proceeded, I watched those of others, social gathering ensued and at no point did anybody offer insight into the appropriate way to give a land acknowledgement. I was not so much baffled by this as I was disappointed that I had not come any closer to understanding this engagement protocol.

**Reflection: Doing the Work in the Shadow of Colonialism**

Why did nobody approach me to share their understanding of this protocol? Is this lack of response a reflection of colonialism prevailing in the academic context? Have I simultaneously offended my fellows and the First Peoples of the land of the symposium by attempting a land acknowledgement inappropriately? Was this even inappropriate? I have reflected on this incident on numerous occasions and do not have answers to some of these questions. Having actively tuned in to anti-racism and decolonisation since then, I do know how uncertain and uncomfortable the space of doing this work is, for the hold that colonisation has on social behaviours and expectations as well as the plurality of truths that are defining what decolonisation means for different peoples. I also know that I am the person responsible for my journey and contributions towards decolonisation.

Land-acknowledgement—as with any act of decolonisation—should begin with self-reflection and the questioning of one’s motivations, goals and intended impact (Native Governance Center, 2019). My inclusion of a non-land acknowledgement was ill-conceived, based on others’ presentations and, frankly, lazy. Searching “land acknowledgement UBC” on the internet yields not only an appropriate script, but reasons for its use and links for further self-education. Furthermore, there is a plethora of reputable resources available on the internet, via social media, in bookstores, journals and other platforms, all sharing perspectives and information about decolonisation, histories of White-settlement and colonialism, examples of everyday and institutional racism impacting BIPOC Peoples, anti-racism initiatives, and countless other transformative agendas. Not knowing how to navigate a land acknowledgement was a hurdle I could have, and should have, easily addressed.

**Possibilities: Decolonisation is a Workout, not a Walk in the Park**

We have discussed how decolonisation involves thinking critically about the colonial structures and assumptions that pervade society. Given the extent to which colonial imperialism pervades Western society and education, it feels fair to suggest that decolonisation can and should be adopted as a mindset, recognising that with such a mindset comes commitment and discomfort. Much like a physical workout, it might not feel as pleasant as a walk in the park. It should, however, feel increasingly familiar a practice the more our mental muscles are flexed, and commitment to practice can enable continued progress. Feeling unsettled is inevitable if transformation is the goal.

Tuck and Yang (2012) and Vowel (2016) suggest that the work of decolonisation should be unsettling. Having to look up land acknowledgement is barely the tip of the discomfort iceberg. Recentring Indigenous perspectives and revealing truths about colonisation do not fall within the comfort zone of settler colonial structuring. Nor do the objectives of repatriating Indigenous land and life, which, if realised completely rather than as an act of symbolic solidarity, implicates and unsettles everyone (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 7). Smith (2016) suggests that decolonisation begins within one’s mind and spirit, explaining that if Eurocentrically modelled education systems are to experience decolonising reform they must first accept the worldviews that exist beyond these hegemonic frameworks. Here we circle back to the acknowledgement and inclusion of plural truths and multiple ways of knowing, particularly Indigenous ways of knowing. If we are to recentre Indigenous voices in our efforts to decolonise education systems (Smith, 2016) we must also create space for the languages of expression and communication that imperialism has restricted through text and literature (Smith, 1999). As a student of Eurocentric education systems, my ontological frame of reference is going to be disrupted in my efforts to seek the perspectives of those whom such systems do not serve. Tripp articulates this in the light of teacher reflection:

Reflection is always informed by a view of the world which is created by our culture, values and experiences. This forms a circularity that reinforces our existing view of the world: we construct our world through reflection, but how and

on what we reflect is largely determined by our existing world view. It is this tendency which means that we have to do something other than merely reflect upon our practice to change it or view it differently. We first must change our awareness through deliberately setting out to view the world of our practice in new ways. (Tripp, 2011, chapter 1, para. 2)

Critically reflecting on my own ontological perspectives and assumptions helps me to notice the form and function of others'. In order to truly meet the perspectives and needs of those that settler colonial structures do not serve, I must begin by separating myself from these structures, creating space for truths that are not recognised under their authority. Failing to do so would only perpetuate this authority. In the case of land-acknowledgement this looks like moving beyond a tokenistic approach, taking the time to learn about the colonial history of the places where we work, teach, learn and visit, examining our understandings and relationships with this information, crafting statements that are well-informed and grounded in respect, acknowledging the meaning behind it. This work might feel unsettling, but it is necessary.

## Conclusion

### Entering the Liminal Space Between Colonisation and Decolonisation

I find it uncomfortable to write and talk about decolonisation. I have values and hopes upon which my words are grounded; however, I fear that as a White person I am taking liberties with a narrative that is not mine to tell. If the aspirations of decolonisation must be defined by the colonised then who am I to voice opinion? Tuck and Yang (2012) suggest that decolonisation is not a metaphor and can only be truly realised through repatriation—any other form in which it is adopted might serve to diminish this goal. Fujino et al. (2018) advocate for the creation of space in which the voices of the oppressed are recentred, defining the path towards healing and equity. I am not Indigenous nor racially oppressed, and so feel the need to tread respectfully in territory that is not mine to claim. Yet I feel confident that the limitations and assumptions imposed by colonisation extend far beyond those groups who have historically or presently been subject to oppression under its authority. In saying this I do not intend to diminish the atrocities and oppression experienced by Indigenous and other BPOC folks, rather suggest that systemic adoption of a decolonising mindset is a necessary step in finding solutions that involve repatriation and reconciliation. So, while I might feel uncertain speaking of colonialism from my limited and intergenerationally obscured perspective, I must accept my responsibility to contribute to the systemic change that we know is urgent and hold steady in this uncertain space.

Navigating the plurality of truth and the uncomfortable work of decolonisation is a long-term process. In this navigation we enter a liminal space, where we move beyond the familiar and embrace the unknown, for in it lies the potential for transformation. While sitting in this space we have the opportunity to engage in the kind of reflective practice that Vaines advocates, embracing “a journey that is complex, uncertain, unstable, unique and rich in value conflicts” (1997b, figure 1, p. 4). Recognising and making peace with these value conflicts enables a separation from the absolutism of the technical-rational truths typical of colonial knowledge structures. As an educator I recognise my influence over the building of knowledge and illumination of truth, and so choose to sit in the tension of liminal space (Aoki, 2005a, 2005b) as I navigate the chasm that can exist between modernist-laden curriculum and that which emerges from the very individuals and communities with whom we work. Aoki suggests that, for those of us grounded in linear logic, it is necessary to open our minds to the ways in which lived experience diverges from the hegemonic (Aoki, 2005a, p. 164). Where the hegemonic is a perpetuation of colonial imperialism, as it too often is in Western society, it is necessary to examine it critically, paying attention to the realms of meaning that are not present, recognised or supported, and create space that facilitates their emergence in safe and curious ways. Such

space must, therefore, respect symbol systems, languages, time frames, histories and truths that exist beyond hegemonic knowledge systems. If the centring of sovereign voice is a key pathway through which we are to demonstrate our respect and value for non-hegemonic, and particularly Indigenous, ways of knowing, and decolonise our education systems then we must begin by legitimately centring these within official curricula, creating communication networks through which teachers and schools can connect with local and relevant Indigenous and BPOC Elders, educators, scholars and resources, and forging a culture that can sustain these connections into the future.

My own motivation to enter and dwell in this liminal space is rooted in a calling to act ethically and equitably, to enhance the wellbeing of folks who have systemically been hurt, silenced and neglected—this motivation is at the core of the mission of Home Economics (IFHE, n.d.). If Home economists are to adequately demonstrate their capacities to take critical, emancipatory, and transformative action towards improving wellbeing for peoples at all levels of society (IFHE, n.d.) then sought solutions must be guided by the realities of those they endeavour to serve. And so, I move ahead seeking sources of ethical guidance that are critical, ontologically inclusive narrative and honest. It is not enough to recognise that my ontological assumptions and knowledge are limited, I must now sit in the ambiguous space compelled upon me by this ethical calling and tear them apart.

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### Biography

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## Theorising Practices With Decolonising Intentions

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### Abstract

*Within the home economics field the biggest number of practitioners are educators working in schools. As professionals they are consistently engaging with evaluation of their work, seeking to improve not only their practice but also the student experience. This paper provides a brief discussion of description of the challenges of transforming teacher practices to be inclusive of Indigenous knowledges and understandings within their classrooms.*

*Self-study and narrative inquiry are two approaches used by educators as they investigate their practices and consider how to enhance their work. By focusing on these two practitioner lead approaches to research, the intention is to provide a context for the following teacher educators' papers.*

**KEYWORDS:** DECOLONISING PRACTICE, PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE, SELF-STUDY, NARRATIVE INQUIRY

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that articulates the right of Indigenous people to have access to education that enables a quality of life—socially and economically (Graham, 2010). Additionally colonised countries are having to come to terms with how colonisation processes have removed Indigenous people physically from their land, have severed Indigenous people's connections to language, culture and spirituality and has worked to make Indigenous people irrelevant, lesser and other. In Canada the Truth and Reconciliation Commission came about as a direct consequence of protracted litigation by Indigenous people against the government and churches who ran Indian Residential Schools (Stanton, 2011). In South Africa after the first democratic election and dismantling of the apartheid state, the Truth and Reconciliation Report calls for all students to be educated in ways that develop a culture that supports human rights (GCIS, 2003; Horsthemke, 2005).

In colonised countries teachers are increasingly being asked to include first national knowledges and understandings within their programs. For teachers who are part of the settler population and whose knowledge of Indigenous people is informed by a colonial stance, the requirement to include Indigenous knowledges and understandings is challenging. Personal and professional experience shapes what teachers do within their practice as they provide learning opportunities for other people's children. Guided by curriculum to scope subject knowledge to be taught and their pedagogical content knowledge to transform subject knowledge into a comprehensible form for their students (Park & Oliver, 2008), teachers work to engage their students with learning. Teachers are also engaged on ongoing learning and professional development as they contemplate their practices, and learn more about their subject content and pedagogical approaches. As teachers reflect on their practices there are inherent challenges between

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knowing too much about what they are doing and why; not knowing about unnoticed moments and interactions; and not knowing enough about other's experiences.

Incorporating Indigenous knowledges and understandings into their classrooms requires teachers to rethink what they know through a decolonising lens and engage with their pedagogical practices in different ways. While some of this can be addressed through professional development and collegial practices it also demands that the teacher investigate their practices. Teacher practices are linked with notions of identity both as an educator (Loughran, 2004) and as a person from a particular cultural and racial group (Olivier, 2019), and where practices are sourced through intrinsic beliefs about the world (Whitehead, 2000) and how we are positioned within it.

When teachers respond to the need to incorporate Indigenous knowledges and understandings, they are not only rethinking their own positionality but are also posing the question "how do I decolonise my teaching practices?". This question reflects what Whitehead (2000) claims is about understanding our individual rationality such that "When I make a claim to believe or to know something, or to explain why something happened, I want to understand the logic of the belief, knowledge or explanation" (p. 94). The question is an example of Schön's "problem setting" where the teacher is able to reframe the issues to better understand their teaching practices in different ways. Teachers are able to reflect on how both colonial and decolonial worldviews (Loughran, 2018) inform their practices and thus come to understand them through different frames.

Kincheloe (2003) in his book *Teachers as Researchers* argues that teachers, together with students and parents need to participate in research to create their own knowledge about those issues that impact and inform the practices within the classroom.

The very basis of teacher research involves the cultivation of restless, curious attitudes that lead to more systematic inquiries. ... All educational acts become problematic to the teacher as researcher. This critical consciousness sees all educational activity as historically located. The perspective cannot view the educational act separately from a social vision, that is, a view of a desirable future (p. 38)

Such research inevitably generates self-reflection, new theories and different practices. With this in mind, there are a number of ways that teachers as practitioners can investigate their own practices. These approaches include action research, autobiography and autoethnography. The following papers provided by practicing teachers offer insights into their practices through narrative and self-study.

### Self-study

Self-study is an approach that has been largely utilised by teacher educators (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015) but is also evident in professional career learning (Rawes & Renwick, 2020) and support for teachers to become reflective practitioners (Samaras & Freese, 2006). Loughran posits that self-study "grew out of the work of reflective practice, action research and practitioner inquiry and is closely tied to teacher educators' sense of identity and desire to ensure (as much as possible) that they 'practice what they preach.'" (p. 1). For LaBoskey (2009) the practice needs to be principled and accordingly positioned within an intent for equity and social justice. As a result, it is an active, decision-making praxis. LaBoskey lists six principles that can both guide and be used to interpret self-study including:

- Teaching is a moral act founded on an ethic of care
- Teaching is an act of inquiry and reflection
- Teaching is essentially a political act.

These principles are core to teachers theorising their work and reflecting on their practice particularly in regards to decolonising curriculum and pedagogy.

The classroom environment is a complex social context (Kincheloe, 2003). For teachers to reflect on their practices in constantly changing milieu requires an approach that can cope with such dynamics. The value of self-study as a research process under such circumstance is that it is self-initiated and that it evolves with circumstances (Loughran, 2018). Self-study is less about the research process and more about the focus of the research (Loughran, 2018; Loughran & Northfield, 1998). In consequence it is easy to see why Loughran (2018) describes self-study through the metaphor of a journey and its focus on the destination. In context of the papers provided by the teachers in this special edition the destination is about decolonised practices and content and the journey is from a colonial to a decolonial approach to both subject content and pedagogical content knowledge.

### **Narrative Inquiry**

Story telling is a human activity that has been used since time immemorial to understand our place in the world such as through sharing experiences, trying to make sense of those experiences and to understand others (Moen, 2006; Spector-Mersel, 2010). Moen (2006) makes the claim that teachers live storied lives and utilise storytelling as a pedagogical practice. She also makes the claim that the use of narrative as inquiry is both the phenomenon and method that is used to describe the classroom experience. A narrative describes the sequence of events that the person telling the story wants to convey. The story teller will draw from and be influenced by their social and cultural contexts their natural circumstances (Spector-Mersel, 2010) leading Moen to contend that “Narratives, therefore, capture both the individual and the context” (2006, p. 60).

Spector-Mersel (2010) describes narrative inquiry that is “primarily a process that organizes human experiences into meaningful episodes” (p. 62). The engagement in narrative inquiry enables teachers to engage with a deeper noticing of their world. The different understandings that teachers’ narratives can disrupt or refute prevailing narratives (Lewis & Adeney, 2014).

The narrative of self inevitably leads to mining oneself as data. ... a shift in recognition of what makes knowledge and, emphatically, who is the storyteller in that process. It also means that the self recognises that the subjective story is not stand-alone: others are inevitably involved. (p. 72)

The use of narrative inquiry is to make sense of and to determine the meaning of experience. The intention is to offer many perspectives that seek both practical and functional applications. By telling stories about their practices teachers are in a better position to not only lay bare underpinning (colonial) assumptions while offering possibilities for decolonising.

The following papers are authored by teachers who are endeavouring to understand their practice. By investigating their practices these authors are looking to identify possibilities for movement towards and engagement with decolonial perspectives in their curriculum and pedagogies. Kincheloe (2003) has argued that privileging a technical and elitist approach to research on and about teaching that excludes teachers offers little benefit. Recognising and supporting teachers as researchers speaks to a democratic disposition enabling teachers to speak for themselves. These teachers, as contributing authors to this special edition on decolonising home economics, provide important insights into teachers’ reflection on practice to “understand what we do, why we do it, and how we do it” (Vaines, 1985, p. 70).

## Biographies

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*Kerry's previous research includes health promoting schools; exploring the relationship between school gardens and mental health in youth; and teachers' practice in health and food education. She is currently the Principal Investigator on a SSHRC Partnership Development grant focused on global food literacy education. The Food Literacy International Partnership (FLIP) includes Deakin University, Australia; Sweet Briar College, USA; and Gothenburg University, Sweden.*

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## Towards a Decolonised and Anti-Racist British Columbia Classroom Curriculum

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this paper is to address the need to recognize and understand that the British Columbia Food Studies provincial and classroom curricula has been strongly connected to colonialism and racism in order to make changes. When the provincial curriculum has moved away from prescribed student learning outcomes to the current “Content (Know)-Curricular Competencies (Do)-Big Ideas (Understand) model” (British Columbia, n.d.a), the provincial curricula allow some colonial and racist issues to be addressed in the Curricular Competencies. With this change, there are more opportunities for the classroom teacher to design, create, implement decolonized and anti-racist lessons and learning resources. To do so, the classroom teacher will need to be aware of the challenges that are involved with creating decolonized and anti-racist lessons and learning resources. I have also included my journeys in creating decolonized and anti-racist lessons and materials, which I will refer to as the classroom curriculum, with my students.*

**KEYWORDS:** HOME ECONOMICS, CURRICULUM, DECOLONIZATION, ANTI-RACISM, FOOD STUDIES

### Introduction

I was born and raised in Vancouver, the land of the Coast Salish peoples, *Skwxwú7mesh* (Squamish), *Stó:lō* and *Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh* (Tsleil-Waututh) and *xʷməθkʷəy̍əm* (Musqueam) Nations. My parents are Chinese immigrants who had met and married in Vancouver. During this time, assimilating into Canadian culture was expected and this was evident in school. Queen Elizabeth II’s picture hung in the hallway by the main office in my elementary school and we were expected to only speak English. There was the lack of representation of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) in the learning materials and one can be subjected to “Lunchbox racism” (Long, 2020, para. 2) a term that referred to children from immigrant families who were taunted for bringing in their home-cooked meals. The common reactions were:

“Eww...what’s that?”

“Eww...that looks gross!”

“What is that smell?”

that would be accompanied with a look of disgust.

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According to Dei (2014), “colonialism and racism are intricately linked and they both feed on each other” (p. 241). Therefore, it was not a surprise for children whose lunches were different to be discriminated against. Aside from the lunchboxes that we do see, there are also lunchboxes that we do not have the opportunity to witness on a frequent basis. For example, a common Inuit dish is whale skin and fat that is “commonly eaten raw and frozen, though it’s also eaten...as fried, pickled or fermented” (Liu, 2020, para. 2). I assume, such dish would also be subjected to lunchbox racism if seen in a cafeteria outside of the north.

It was these childhood memories, in addition to my personal and professional experiences that has encouraged me work towards a decolonized and anti-racist Food Studies classroom curriculum. In this paper I will explore possibilities for the need to decolonize Home Economics through an initial review of Home Economics education in Canada and is followed by a brief discussion of racism within context of Canada. Within this description of context, I will also explore both the practices and learnings that have informed my work as I actively move towards a decolonized classroom.

## **Literature Review**

### **Decolonising Home Economics**

Smith (2020) defines decolonialism as “the process of deconstructing colonial ideologies that normalize the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches” (p. 113). To decolonize Home Economics, it is important to first recognize, examine and understand how British Columbia’s education system and Home Economics are both deeply rooted in imperial and colonial principles. Thereafter, we can begin to decolonize our classroom curriculum. In doing so, Sleeter (2010) explained “is to critically examine that knowledge and its relationship to power” (p. 194) because Smith (as cited in Sleeter) explained, “while the language of imperialism and colonialism has changed, the sites of struggle remain” (p. 200). To do so, teachers need to be aware of “their own personal biases to avoid conveying their own biases to their students” (Lyons & Farrell, 1994, p. 9). As teachers, we need to remain open-minded to identify areas in the curriculum that continues to maintain a colonial perspective. Teachers need to be mindful of the content in learning materials. Do the learning materials contain stereotypes? Do the learning materials reflect the voices of the intended students? Roe (as cited by Lyons & Farrell) point out that it important that the curriculum is “inclusive...to emphasize the common elements that are shared by many groups” (p. 11).

### **Early British Columbia School System**

On July 20, 1871, British Columbia became the sixth province to join the confederation with the Queen as the head of state since becoming a British Empire colony in 1858 (Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, n.d.) The foundation of British Columbia’s education system has been based upon Eurocentric values since its establishment. Amin explains Eurocentrism or Eurocentric as “the superiority of Europeans and their descendants over non-Europeans, founded on a false polarity between ‘civilized’ and ‘savage,’ and ‘center’ and ‘marginalized’ peoples” (as cited in Battiste, 1998, p. 22). Therefore, “the largest population produced as ‘Other’ are First Nations peoples” (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 297).

According to Titley, when British Columbia public schools began in 1872, a large number of “Aboriginal children attended nationally-funded, church administered schools, although small numbers were scattered throughout some...newly created public schools” (as cited in Raptis, 2008, p. 119). Miller also pointed out that the Dominion government preferred “residential schools for eight- to fourteen-year-olds and industrial schools for students aged fourteen to eighteen...[and] boarding schools where the child could be disassociated from the prejudicial influence...on the reserve of his band” (as cited in Raptis, p. 120). The Canadian government’s

intentions have always been concerned with “assimilation of Aboriginal peoples to British ways” (Battiste, 1998, p. 16). The House of Commons Debates outline Canada’s first prime minister, Sir John A. MacDonald, validating the government’s residential school policy during the House of Commons in 1883:

When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write. It has been strongly pressed on myself, as the head of the Department, that Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of [W]hite men. (Miller, 2015, p. 2)

As a result, Aboriginal languages and knowledge has been excluded from the provincial curricula as an indication that “Aboriginal languages and knowledge do not belong in the education systems” (Battiste, p. 17). Furthermore, “Aboriginal children were subjected to persistent violence, powerlessness, exploitation, and cultural imperialism, only to become impoverished and devastated in the cognitive and physical aftermath of schooling” (Battiste, p. 19). In the 1900-1901 the Annual Report noted that “the school had not only a role to play in shaping the young, but also a responsibility to produce ‘practical men and women, who would make themselves useful to society and their country’” (as cited in Riley, 1984, p. 161). It is important to note that Canada and the Canadian society are a “culture of legally dominant Euro-Christian” (Miller, p. v).

### Early Home Economics

One of the first documentation of formal homemaking instructions in Canada was “credited to the Sisters of the Roman Catholic Church...[and] was limited at first to the teaching of Indian girls in a few isolated convents” (Simpson, 1966, p. 3). Simpson (1966) noted an article, “The Beginning of Education in Agriculture and Home Economics in North America”, from the *Journal of Home Economics* that was published in February 1910, describing how

... secular teaching was along the lines of manual training and what is now grouped under the head of Home Economics, it may be said that formal education in North America at the Convents in Quebec about the middle of the seventeenth century...Ursulines ...taught all that a girl ought to know...the training which the girls received must have been very largely in the house-hold tasks. (p. 3)

According to Wilcox (2009, para. 5), “Abenaki, Algonquin, Wendat, Haudenosaunee, Montagnais and Nipissing girls (among others) [who were] generally between 6 and 16 years of age” were boarded at Ursuline convents. In addition, it is noted that “Marie de l’Incarnation even learned several Algonquian and Iroquoian languages to help facilitate instruction and expedite Indigenous girls’ assimilation into French religion and culture” (Wilcox, 2009, para. 5).

With homemaking being first taught in Quebec convents, eventually there was a demand for formal teaching of homemaking skills for girls attending school. Adelaide Hoodless was one of a number of Home Economics pioneers of European descent, who advocated for and implemented “manual training for girls” (Simpson, p. 4) in the Canadian education system.

In British Columbia, the first few years included Needlework, which girls may choose to enrol in Victoria schools in 1895 (Irvine, 1975; Riley, 1984). Girls were expected to attend school to learn to “make a refined and cultured home [and] Home...is for three purposes, to minister to the moral, intellectual and physical requirements of the family” (Maddock, 1900, p. 14). From

1903 to 1916, the objective of Domestic Science in public schools as “to teach practical skills in order to improve living standards” (de Zwart, 1991, p. 32). In 1903, The Victoria Board of School Trustees agreed with the Victoria Local Council of Women to include cookery in addition to Needlework (Irvine, 1975). Thereafter in 1905, the Vancouver Local Council of Women was also successful in establishing a foods laboratory for Vancouver girls enrolling in Domestic Science (Irvine, 1975). When Vancouver outfitted two new sewing laboratories in secondary schools, treadle sewing machines were documented for the 1909-1910 school year (Irvine, 1975). The course outline for the 1912 school year included “needlework textiles and hygienic clothing. In 1914 the outline included needlework, housewifery, cookery, laundry and home nursing” (Irvine, 1975, p. 10). Student resources included a recipe book that was published by the Department of Education and three textbooks that were authorized for the high school level (Irvine, 1975).

### Racism

The Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (British Columbia, n.d.-b, para 1) defines *racism* as

... the belief that one group, as defined by the colour of their skin or their perceived common ancestry, is inherently superior to others. It can be openly displayed in jokes, slurs or hate speech, or can be more hidden in unconscious biases. Racism is deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs. In some cases, these beliefs have become deeply embedded in systems and institutions that have evolved over time. Racism operates at a number of levels, in particular, individual and systemic.

According to Stanley (2000), it “is particularly common in English Canada where the myth that there is no racism endures” (p. 81). This is regardless of “whether in public controversies, surrounding specific allegations of racist actions in private conversations, or in academic studies, many speak either of racism as existing elsewhere...or of racist incidents in Canada as unfortunate exceptions to otherwise civilized and tolerant norms” (p. 81). Lund and Carr (2010) further this perspective noting that “Whiteness is shrouded with denials that give White people yet another form of privilege; the ability to avoid discussion of how oppression continues to benefit White people” (p. 231). This can be witnessed by the lack of or the absence of documentation on the marginalisation of BIPOC in Canada.

Absent from our class content and classroom resources is information about Canada’s role in committing cultural genocide with the Indigenous Peoples, which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada defined as

... the destruction of those structures and practices that all the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And most significantly to the issue at hand, families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next. (Miller, 2016, p. 1)

The cultural genocide has created trauma within the Indigenous community, which is still present today. In a CBC interview in 2018, Chef Francis a member of the Six Nations (Ontario, Canada) commented that he is “prohibited from using narwhal, moose, beluga, and sea lion-all of which are traditional Indigenous country food” due to provincial regulations pertaining to wild game. Indigenous peoples continue to be restricted with accessing Indigenous foods.

Also not present is the history of Black Canadian slavery “in both French and English Canada...from 1628 to 1833...[where] slaves were the property of a variety of individuals and corporations” (Kihika, 2013, p. 37). Neither is the Chinese Head Tax that was implemented by the Canadian Government from 1885 to 1923 to prevent the Chinese from entering Canada after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway (Winter, 2008, p. 119) mentioned nor the Punjabi passengers who were aboard the Komagata Maru and were denied entry to during the summer of 1914 and had to return to India (Johnston, 2013, p. 9) nor the Japanese internment camps during World War II when the Japanese were viewed as “enemy aliens” (Day, 2010, p. 107) just to name a few historical events.

In 1971, the Liberal government introduced a multiculturalism policy to address the “demands of French-language speakers, an increasing culturally diverse citizenry, and Aboriginal People” (St. Denis, 2011, p. 307) that later became the Multicultural Act in 1988 to respond to what Wood and Gilbert noted as “the concerns of multiple ethnic groups, such as Ukrainians, who wanted recognition of their presence and contributions to Canada” (Wood & Gilbert, 2005, as cited in St. Denis, 2011, p. 307). Fleras and Elliot also pointed out that multiculturalism was to “acknowledge the need for increased understanding between ethnic groups, and the need to address racial discrimination” (Fleras & Elliot, 1992, as cited in St. Denis, 2011, p. 307). However, multiculturalism is a means

... to defend public schools against the need to respond to Aboriginal education. ... [and] makes it possible for non-Aboriginal teachers and schools to trivialize Aboriginal content and perspectives, and at the same time believe that they are becoming more inclusive and respectful. (St. Denis, 2011, p. 312-313)

In recent years, racialized communities and Indigenous Peoples continue to face racism in Canada. This can be recognized with the following terms being used: anti-Asian racism, anti-Black racism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia to describe the hostility directed towards these groups (Canadian Heritage, 2019). This was brought to the Canadian government’s attention, with the Ministry of Canadian Heritage producing an anti-racism report. Minister of Canadian Heritage & Multiculturalism Pablo Rodriguez begins his foreword to the Building A Foundation for Change: Canada’s Anti-Racism Strategy 2019-2022 with “diversity and inclusion are cornerstones of Canadian identity, a source of social and economic strength, and something of which all Canadians can be proud” (Canadian Heritage, 2019, n.p.). Minister Rodriguez also adds:

Building a Foundation for Change requires us to first acknowledge that there is a problem we need to address. We know that throughout our history, and even today, there are people and communities who face systemic racism and discrimination in our country. (Canadian Heritage, 2019, n.p.)

### **Methodology**

To design, create and implement a decolonized and anti-racist classroom curriculum, the subject teacher needs to recognize and understand the deep connections that the British Columbia education system and Home Economics has with colonialism and racism. In decolonising Home Economics, decolonialism is defined. Early British Columbia school system and early Home Economics were examined to identify historical issues and practices that warrant the need for decolonisation. Racism experienced by Black, Indigenous and People of Colour in British Columbia and Canada is also noted to understand the similarities and differences between immigrant and colonisation experiences.

Further analysis of Home Economics as a colonial tool is included to illustrate the role Home Economics manuals played in the provincial and classroom curriculum and how recipes such as White Sauce, Chinese Chews and Monkey Bread relate to colonialism and are controversies

themselves. Issues with selecting recipes without appropriating are outlined with Cultural Food Studies. Following the analysis of Home Economics, a brief evaluation of the current British Columbia Food Studies Curricula.

A review of anti-racist education by Dei (1993) and Mansfield and Kehoe (1994) is presented to provide direction in implementing methods to practice anti-racist curricular implementation and the criticism for anti-racist education. Subsequently, implications for additional research, for educators, researchers, policy makers, to examine gaps in theory and practice and the Canadian content will be documented. Following will be my journey in working towards decolonising my Food Studies classroom curriculum and implementing anti-racist lessons and recipes.

## Home Economics as a Colonial Tool

### Home Economics Manuals

In 1926, Jessie L. McLenaghan was appointed as the Director of Home Economics (Irvine, p. 10), which led to “a new impetus to the development of the subject, and steps were taken to bring methods up-to-date” (McLenaghan, 1941, p. 78). The Department of Education published *Foods Manual* that was to be used as a textbook to avoid copying recipes, which was a practice that was widely frowned upon (McLenaghan). The first manual used in British Columbia was the “1927 edition of *Recipes for Home Economics Classes: Circular No. 1* [that] was accompanied by a new fourteen-page curriculum” (de Zwart, 2003, p. 103). Students purchased the recipe book for 25 cents (Irvine, 1975).

In 1930, the manual underwent a revision and was renamed *Foods, Nutrition and Home Management Manual, Circular One (Revised)* (de Zwart, 1991). The manuals were an important resource for British Columbia Home Economics teachers from 1929 to 1975. McLenaghan’s foreword, in *Foods, Nutrition and Home Management Manual*, noted that the food selection and preparation have been cautiously selected due to the connection with health (British Columbia, 1930). The manual was divided into five units, which included: Home Management, Nutrition, Meal-Planning and Table Service, Food Preparation, and Sources of Food Products. Within the Food Preparation Unit, questions regarding health, nutrition, cooking methods and techniques were included along with recipes.

## Problematic Home Economics Food-Related Practices

### White Sauce

White sauce is also known as the Béchamel Sauce, which is one of the five Mother Sauces. It is also a recipe in *Foods, Nutrition and Home Management Manual* (British Columbia, 1930) under the Soup section. de Zwart (2003) used white sauce as a metaphor to describe Home Economics because white sauce “is bland and textureless; it covers up many sins, culinary and otherwise” (p. 2). de Zwart (2003) further explains the word *white* in white sauce, “closely aligned itself with conveying white culture” (p. 2). This is not to “imply that the knowledge, mission, or aims of home economics education are in any way inferior or substandard” (p. 2). Instead, according to Stage and Vincenti, “this alignment demonstrates a form of unreflective enculturation that has been detrimental to the profession and school subject, and that needs to be redressed” (as cited in de Zwart, p. 2).

### Chinese Chews

The recipe for Chinese Chews appeared in *Foods, Nutrition and Home Management Manual* (British Columbia, 1930). This recipe stood out because de Zwart (2003) pointed out that it is “a sweet bar-type cookie made of white sugar, flour, dates, walnuts and eggs...[and] was one

of two concessions to ‘ethnicity’ other than white British in the entire manual” (p. 157). Were the dates in the ingredient list perceived as being foreign? Dates do not originate from China. However, according to de Zwart (2003) recipes for Chinese Chews also appeared in the “*Purity Cookbook in 1945... A Treasury of Jewish Holiday Baking ... No Bake Chinese Chews in a newspaper advice column*” (pp. 160-162). In 2002, “Chinese Chews were included in a Chinese New Year website” (p. 161). Thus, de Zwart (2003) asked, “How did Chinese Chews become Chinese?” Was labelling the date bars as “Chinese” an indication “of the need of [W]hite people to have an Other from which to gain their own identity?” (de Zwart, p. 162). Narayan describes the use of the term “Chinese” for the recipe as “food parochialisms or culinary imperialism” (as cited in de Zwart, p. 162).

### Monkey Bread

The second laboratory session to the start off our new semester was Cinnamon Buns and the students were excited to make the sticky buns. I had given my students the option to make Monkey Bread.

My students: How do you make Monkey Bread?

I responded: You’ll need to roll the dough into spheres, dip into melted butter, roll in the cinnamon sugar mixture and layer coated spheres in a loaf pan because we are making a smaller serving size.

My students: But why is it called Monkey Bread?

What a great inquiry question after we had finished making our dough. My students knew the routine because we have always looked into the origin of various recipes since Grade 8. My students proceeded to take out their devices to look for possible answers online while waiting to be dismissed from class. The students’ answers ranged from a recipe originated from Hungary to how one would eat the bread by pulling it apart and into smaller pieces for eating. According to Avey (2022), the recipe has an unclear origin and is also known as bubble bread, bubble loaf, jumble bread, pull-apart bread, pinch-me cake, pluck-it cake, and monkey puzzle bread. My students also noticed that some websites had reference to “Southern-style” recipes and it had occurred to them that there could be hidden innuendos with the name of the recipe. The sudden realisation did not sit well with my students.

My students were quick to come to the idea that there was a racial connotation behind Monkey Bread since we had started the unit with a series of articles. The idea of the name with its (potential) racial connotation continued to perturb me. I continued to conduct an online search to see if there were any racial implications. According to Richie182’s (2010) contribution to Urban Dictionary, Monkey Bread referred to a Southern term that was both sexist and racist in its reference to adolescent girls. In a forum, Levity\_Kitty (2007) mentioned in a thread that a clerk made reference to it in racist terms. Layne (2019, para. 2) introduces first lady Nancy Reagan’s favourite holiday recipe with “Whatever the hell ‘monkey bread’ might be—something racist, we assume...”. Drawing from such information it is relatively easy to see the racial connotations associated with the product and thus it is necessary for teachers to pay attention to what it is actually being taught within their classrooms. This was important because “those of us who conduct research, teach and write, need to take responsibility for that which is stated and unstated and the ways in which we describe, subscribe, and relegate groups and individuals to categories” (Davis, 2009, p. 123).

Within my own work I needed to look from a historical perspective too. According to Avey (2022, para. 3), the term may have originated from “someone combined a 1940s Southern slang for snack food, ‘monkey food’, with a traditional jumble bread”. I could not find another source that would explain the entirety of “monkey food”, but something continued to not sit well with me. My search on jumble loaf resulted in images and pictures of cinnamon and raisin jumble loaves and cinnamon and chocolate jumble loaves. Collister (n.d.) describes jumble loaf as

“sweet raisin dough is rolled up with brown sugar and cinnamon, then cut up and put into a loaf tin in a jumble” (n.p.). With this description and what I knew about the recipe I was using it was possible to draw similarities between the two and therefore how I could utilise a new name.

One of my Black students had walked up behind me while I was conducting my research and questioned me as to what I was doing. I asked her opinion on what she saw as the inference in Monkey Bread and my student continued to explain to me that referring to individual who is Black as a monkey is deliberately used as a derogatory term. I apologized to my student for not having thought it through. I subsequently remembered H&M’s sweatshirt advertisement controversy (Byrne, n.d.) that presented a young person of colour wearing a hoodie with a monkey referenced slogan.

Following this conversation with the student I proceeded to connect with a teaching colleague to express my concern about my inability to find what I felt was sufficient information about racial inferences behind Monkey Bread. Her response was for me impactful,

If your research shows that there probably isn’t a racist origin to the name of the recipe, then I assume that there isn’t. But, if the name makes you feel uncomfortable, and wonder if there is a racist implication, then maybe it’s a sign not to use it. If it makes you feel this way, imagine how your Black students would feel. (Anonymous, personal communication, Feb 17, 2022)

I had shared this response with my student and I proceeded to ask if we should abandon the recipe. Instead, my student suggested that we rename the recipe. I also found that to be tricky as I felt that whatever we decided to use to rename would the racist implications continue to be represented. As Smith (2017, p. 181) noted, “changing the name doesn’t guarantee anything especially if there is no change in professional practice”. The students would need to know why the name Monkey Bread is controversial “language defines” (Smith, 2017). Davis (2009, p. 123) further explains, “Language that we...create and use in our studies of society, its institutions, its populations, economics and social behaviours, become codified and used to categorize, stigmatize, denigrate and separate its citizens over time”. For me I became concerned that the name Monkey Bread represented the racism that community members continued to face.

On the second day of our laboratory some of my students had asked me if they were able to continue to make traditional cinnamon buns. I asked my students to give me their reasons for the naming they used as I wanted to know. What they conveyed clearly was that they felt uncomfortable making Monkey Bread.

I supported their request while the remainder of the class used the Monkey Bread recipe because they were curious about what it was supposed to be. When my students completed their class, we had a class discussion that shared the information that we were able to find and offered ideas that needed further investigation. As a result of this discussion, I asked my students to provide an alternative name. One suggested, CinnaBubbles! and sounded more interesting than Cinnamon Sugar Pull-Apart Bread.

### **Cultural Food Studies**

Many Food Studies teachers would select recipes to incorporate into junior Food Studies class to illustrate diversity and teach an International Foods theme in senior Food Studies. As previously mentioned, many recipes that have been used in Home Economics have strong European connections and without a list prescribed recipes for Food Studies, there is more desire to select diverse recipes for our students. There is also an appeal to select recipes that our students can relate to, which will enable them to see themselves being reflected and increase their engagement. When selecting recipes, a conscious effort must be made to select

authentic recipes rather than appropriating recipes. In doing so will result in miseducating our students. If modifications are to be made to the recipe, then the modifications will need to be acknowledged. Long's (n.d.) article explains,

What everyone should always consider is that food is a part of people's identities and should be treated with respect. You don't have to love a dish, but you also don't need to disrespect it along with the culture it belongs to. You can and should add your own twist to a dish, but recognize its differences from the traditional version. You can definitely recreate other people's cultural recipes, but don't claim it as your own for money. Don't appropriate food, appreciate it (para. 12)

It is also important to note that when implementing the recipes in the course that the *tourist approach* is avoided. The tourist approach is when teachers incorporate "different cultures through celebrations, entertainment, and artifacts of the culture such as food and clothing across the globe" (Lin & Bates, 2014, p. 30). This approach is enjoyable, but does not allow students to question or examine the issues that are present and can further reinforce negative stereotypes.

## BC Foods Curricula Review

In 2017, the British Columbia Ministry of Education (n.d.-a) revised the provincial curricula for all subject areas and Home Economics became a part of Applied Design, Skills and Technology. The goal is to provide a provincial curriculum that "enables and supports increasingly personalized learning, through quality teaching and learning, flexibility and choice, and high standards" (British Columbia, n.d.-a). The provincial curricula model is based upon the "three elements, the Content (Know), Curricular Competencies (Do), and Big Ideas (Understand) all work together to support deeper learning" (n.d.-a, para 13).

In ADST, the Curricular Competencies expects students to be able to apply the Design Cycle, Skills and Technologies while learning the Curricular Content. An examination of the Food Studies 11 Course Content details the following that students are expected to know: meal and recipe design opportunities, components of recipe development and modification, issues involved with food security, factors involved in the creation of international and regional food guides, First Peoples food guides, ethics of cultural appropriation, food labelling roles and responsibilities of Canadian government agencies and food companies, and food promotion and marketing strategies and their impact on specific groups of people (British Columbia, n.d.). The current provincial curriculum aims to address the concerns that we have in regards to colonialism and racism and supports teachers to create and implement decolonized and anti-racist lessons with the students.

## Anti-Racist Education

### Moving Towards Anti-Racist Work

Dei (2014) defines anti-racism education as "an action-oriented educational practice to address racism and the interstices of difference (such as gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, ability language, and religion) in the educational system" (p. 240). Because "education can help young learners to develop interrogative voices to speak about social oppressions and relations of dominations" (Dei, p. 240), it is teachers in Canadian schools who can begin to "problematize Eurocentric, [W]hite male privilege and supremacy, and the consequent social inequities in our pluralistic society" (Dei, 1993, p. 37) in the classroom. As a result, anti-racist education "is a discourse about the social inequality experienced by all non-white people of various class backgrounds and sexual orientations" (p. 37). These factors intersect and different individuals will have different experiences. It will be important for teachers and staff to understand that our students have their own personal experiences.

Dei (1993) also explains,

... anti-racist education must be presented as political education in order to raise the level of individual and group consciousness, to develop critical political thinking and links and to encourage activism among all teachers, staff, and students for meaningful change in society. (p. 38)

In order for anti-racist work to be effective in schools, it “will depend on a clear historical understanding of the institutional structures, factors and issues that have contributed to discriminatory and ethnocentric education within the school system” (p. 38).

To achieve educational equity in the schools, Dei (1993) says

... our institutions of learning more accessible to the disadvantaged in society, as well as placing qualified racial and ethnic minorities, non-heterosexuals, women, and people with physical challenges in positions of power and decision-making in the schools and their administrative structures. (p. 40)

When freedom of speech and individual freedom is a challenge to address, Dei (1993) points out that “many educators, while upholding the principles of intellectual freedom, would also support the promotion of non-discriminatory teaching materials and non-racist and non-sexist discourse” (p. 41).

Anti-racist education must expose the underlying conflict of the universalistic values of the equality of all Canadians, as espoused in theory by the state and the discriminatory practices that are the norms in the everyday contacts between Euro-Canadians and people of colour. (p. 41)

Both the teacher and students will need to collaborate for change to occur.

The anti-racist educator’s pedagogy is “to discuss the issues of race, class, gender, sexuality and other forms of power relations simultaneously and in a manner that does not attempt to hierarchize the varied oppressions in society” (p. 42). Dei (1993) furthers that the “classroom pedagogy should focus on the examination of the ways in which race, ethnicity class and gender have differentially shaped the experience of being Canadian for different groups at different points in time” (p. 42). Students will need to learn to understand that these issues that lead to oppression are interconnected.

Challenges to anti-racist education are the need to establish a safe place to discuss all forms of discrimination, that the teacher needs to be aware that they are in a position of power, and all can be unlearned and lost.

### **Summary of Mansfield and Kehoe**

Mansfield and Kehoe (1994) explain that “as a politicized curriculum, anti-racist education teaches the structural, economic, and social roots of inequality... It focuses critical attention on unequal social and power relations that capitalism maintains and gives the appearance of rationality” (p. 420). Students need to be aware and understand the inequalities that are present. According to Mansfield and Kehoe (1994), anti-racism is reductive in that it reduces the race to one stereotype and another is “reductive tendency of anti-racism is to privilege ‘institutional racism’ as the exclusive explanatory variable in accounting for discrepancies between educational and material attainments” (p. 422).

A criticism of anti-racist education is “predominantly theorized [to] have the unintended effect of exacerbating rather than ameliorating the very problems it identifies ... [w]ith its almost exclusive emphasis on ‘race’” (Mansfield & Kehoe, 1994, p. 423). The second criticism is that anti-racism and anti-racist education is that “virtually exclusive association of racism with colour distracts attention from other ... equally damaging forms of discrimination” (Mansfield & Kehoe, 1994, p. 423). Mansfield and Kehoe (1994) advance this point by arguing that “without an understanding of racism, what generates it, and how it is manifested, teachers who would implement anti-racist initiatives are in the awkward position of being well-intentioned but poorly informed arbiters of racism” (Mansfield & Kehoe, 1994, p. 424). Lastly, it “is suggested by several research findings that implementation of anti-racist initiatives may produce negligible results or ... unintended counterproductive outcomes in the classroom” (Mansfield & Kehoe, 1994, p. 425). Mansfield and Kehoe (1994) cautions that anti-racism can create racism.

## Implications

With support for and criticisms against anti-racism education and pedagogy, further research is needed to examine the effectiveness of a decolonized and anti-racist Canadian Food Studies classroom curriculum. Both Dei (1993) and Mansfield and Kehoe (1993) pointed out the importance of having both the teacher and the students understand the significance of the inequities that intersect, which creates oppression. Without that basic knowledge, an anti-racist education and pedagogy will become ineffective. In addition, it would also be beneficial for policy makers, researchers and provincial curriculum committees to have the same understanding in order to create policies, procedures, and documents that will support decolonisation and anti-racism.

Teachers who are unaware of the history of Home Economics and are uninformed of its purpose, then teachers are at a disadvantage and will not be able to effectively decolonize the Food Studies classroom curriculum. Teacher in-service is suggested to have teachers knowledgeable and comfortable in creating a decolonized and anti-racist Food Studies classroom curriculum. With the provincial curricula open for teachers to select their teaching and students’ learning resources, teachers who continue to select Eurocentric recipes and/or lessons will continue to perpetuate colonial values. On the other hand, if the teacher selects appropriated recipes without knowledge, the teacher would be miseducating the students. There will be the danger of reinforcing negative stereotypes too. This can also be reinforced with the Tourist approach for introducing cultural foods into the Food Studies classroom curriculum. A suggestion is for teachers to collaborate with colleagues and a second suggestion would be for teachers to collaborate with their students and involve their families, if possible, to build relationships.

Colonial values and racism continue to be present in Canada and needs to be addressed with our students. Our students also need to be made aware of the inequities that are present across our country. As teachers, we need to inform our students of the inequities present in our society and within our learning resources. When selecting learning resources, it is best to ensure that our students are reflected in the learning resources.

## Cultural Journey: Food Studies Experiences

### Food Studies 10

My journey to design a decolonized and anti-racist curriculum started with examining my Food Studies 10 curriculum critically when I started my master’s program. Food Studies 10 was based upon the theme, multicultural foods and the objective was to introduce my students to foods from around the world. My curriculum had been setup according to a list of countries and recipes that accompanied their respective country of origin. I would be progressing from one country to the next with my students. The theoretical component to each unit was learning about each country’s cuisine, culinary techniques, culinary ingredients, and special occasions

associated with their foods. This led me to question: Who decided which countries to focus on? How were the selected countries and its recipes chosen? Why did we start with Canada? Who did this Bannock recipe belong to that I am using? How authentic are these recipes then? Why am I using the tourist approach, but most importantly, how do I avoid the tourist approach or othering.

I had to change the focus from highlighting each individual country to emphasising a common food product or culinary technique. For example, the Flatbread or Unleavened Bread Unit recipes now included a selection of crêpes, roti, pita, tortilla, chapati, paratha, roti canai and scallion pancake. Students were quick to point out that a roti is very similar to the tortilla. My students were quick to inform me how a flour tortilla reminded them of a roti and share with me how they have interchanged a roti in place of flour tortilla at home. I have also requested students to share their family recipe with me so that I can share with the class. One of my students shared with me, Mama Guerra's Pandesal. I have also invited a parent to demonstrate her authentic Persian Loobia Polo recipe.

Six years later, I had found myself teaching Food Studies 10 again. It was time for a revision because I have deemed it to be outdated and the provincial curriculum had been updated. I had also changed the objectives for each course too. In Food Studies 10, my curriculum would explore recipes in its most traditional form so that students appreciate all that encompasses the recipes. In Food Studies 11, my students would learn to understand why traditional recipes are modified when introduced to a new or different audience with a Canadian focus. In Food Studies 12, students are encouraged to create recipes by applying their personal experiences, knowledge, skills, and techniques.

I had the opportunity to collaborate with my students. Our theme was street food. The recipes that my students wanted to try were Chow Mein, Kathi Roll, Tibetan Momos and Sepen, Sticky Rice in Lotus Leaf, Chicken Wings and Homemade Boba, Greek Feast, Paneer Pakora and Mango Lassi, and Shaved Ice. The recipes provided a range of culinary techniques and flavours but was limited to just one version of the recipe due to the length of the course.

What were momos? I learned that momos are Tibetan dumplings with yak meat filling, which is similar to the Chinese potstickers or the Japanese gyoza. I pointed out to my students that due to inaccessibility, we cannot use yak meat and due to their diet restrictions and food preferences, we were only using ground chicken or vegetables. If we had more time, we would have travelled around the world to sample a variety of tasty dumplings (Buckley, 2021).

My students love to recreate South Asian recipes that they have at home in class and yet, I do not feel that I am the right person to teach them. My discussions with the parents around this topic have always been with the parents wanting their children to learn what they cannot learn at home. However, my students are always excited to tell their parents that they had made pakoras or samosas at school. When I asked my students what their parents' responses were when they know I am not South Asian, my students would always respond with, "At least she tried" Accessing my students' family recipes have been difficult because my students are hesitant to write out the recipes that we are not accustomed to in class. The response would be, "Ms. Wong, we don't use measuring spoons and cups at home like we do at school."

### **Food Studies 11**

After a year, I returned to teach Food Studies 11 to the collaborative group of students I taught during first semester. I had asked my students to define Canadian cuisine. My students responded with Canadian grown foods and names of dishes. I gave my students an assignment with Jaelin (n.d.) recounting former Prime Minister Joe Clark's definition of Canadian cuisine,

as a "smorgasbord," a type of Scandinavian meal originating from Sweden, which describes a buffet table with many dishes on it, hot and cold. What I think makes Canadian cuisine unique is the multicultural foods that make our buffet table so

diverse. Canadian food is influenced by Indigenous, English, French, Italian, Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Iranian, Jamaican, Indian, Sri Lankan and so many other different cultures.

A second assignment that my students had completed was The Great Canadian Food Tour. My students were to travel in our imaginary school bus to each province and territory and select either a food ingredient that was native to or a recipe that came out of each respective province or territory. As for recipes, we made Canadian Semiaquatic Rodent Posterior Doughnuts (Van Rosendaal, 2016), Nanaimo Bars using the recipe from the City of Nanaimo (2021) and Sushi Pizza. Sushi is traditionally Japanese, which my students were familiar with. I decided to search if there was a Canadian version of the sushi and I found Sushi Pizza (Wan, 2020, para. 5) which was “invented by a Japanese-born, French-trained chef named Kaoru Ohsada in the early 1990s” in Toronto’s financial district. For this reason, Wan (2020, para. 4) justified the validity of the Sushi Pizza by explaining that it

... is not that of an intimidating foreign dish bastardized by a white chef or personal gain, nor a sensational item launched at a hipster food market to lure in crowds for a summer. It started, as many Canadian food traditions do, with an immigrant adapting the food they knew to the tastes and customs of the cultures around them and making it their own.

I work with a predominately South Asian community and during the fall, we celebrated Diwali as a school. When I had asked my students how they would like to celebrate Diwali, my students responded with Paneer Pakora. When I asked my students how Paneer Pakora is Canadian, my students responded by telling me how they can find all the ingredients at their local supermarket and can be found sold in sweet shops around the city. My students had also brought up about how South Asians faced racism when they first arrived in Canada on the Komagata Maru and were sent back to India. I acknowledged that it was a terrible experience for the passengers. I allow my students to raise concerns that they have because “when a teacher gives voice and space to multicentric perspectives and other legitimate interpretations of human experiences, all students gain from knowing the more complete account of events that have shaped human history” (Dei, 1993, p. 43). I also did not want my students to be miseducated, which is

... education that misprepares students for the actual social conditions that they are likely to encounter; that misrepresents knowledge, that narrows or cuts off opportunities and growth; that lies to students about who they are or what their society is like. (Thompson, 1997, p. 15)

## **Food Studies 12**

Surprisingly, both of my classes came up with a similar list: Macaroni and Cheese, Fried Chicken, Cinnamon Buns, Cajun Chicken Burger, and the Supreme Crunch Wrap. I was hesitant about preparing Macaroni and Cheese at first because it was a recipe that was used in Food Studies 9. I would be introducing Macaroni and Cheese as a Soul Food in Food Studies 12 instead of a food item for dinner and learning how to make a proper white sauce. Then I made a connection almost a decade later with de Zwart’s (2005) White Sauce metaphor, which referred to preserving colonial ideals in early Home Economics Education that can still be seen in today’s curriculum.

My students’ next lesson was on why Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben deserved to retire (Twitty, 2020) in order to gain a better understanding on how African Americans arrived in the United States and what their lifestyle and living conditions were like. This was an important lesson to me because I remembered asking my students before to identify Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben. My students were excited to tell me that Aunt Jemima owned pancake mix and syrup while

Uncle Ben owns a rice company. The students thought they were rich. If that were only true. I had to tell my class that Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben were not a power couple. That is why my students must uncover the truth behind Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben. We needed to understand that “racism is a system of privilege and oppression, a network of traditions, legitimating standards, material and institutional arrangements, and ideological apparatuses that, together, serve to perpetuate hierarchical social relations based on race” (Thompson, 1997, p. 9). Thus,

...through critical anti-racism education, we are able to clarify the functions of [W]hite power/privilege, and how it masquerades as normal, universal, reasonable, and natural to the extent that those punished by such power may even develop fantasies, desires, and aspirations of [W]hiteness. (Dei, 2014, p. 240)

My students were taken aback when they discovered that Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben and Rastus preserved the White community’s idea of Blacks enjoyed being subservient. My students appreciated the eye-opening lesson and were deeply saddened at the same time. With a better understanding of the African American’s terrible past, we then explored what constituted as Soul Food. Miller (2015, p. 1) described Soul Food as

... a coined term that brilliantly captures the humanity and heroic effort of African-Americans to overcome centuries of oppression and create a cuisine that deliciously melds the foods and cooking techniques of West Africa, West Europe, and the Americas.

My students also learned that all Soul Food is Southern-style food, but the majority of Southern-style food is not Soul Food (Peartree & Lalomia, 2022). We decided to make Snoop Dogg’s Mack and Cheese and a Southern-style buttermilk fried chicken that were both categorized as Soul Food.

## **Conclusion**

My students’ cinnamon buns and CinnaBubbles turned out great, but most importantly we have learned to question the validity of our learning resources. My students know that we are to learn from one another and together. According to Dei (2014), “racism and anti-racism education is a major task and responsibility for the contemporary educator and learner” (p. 239). I have just started my journey towards a decolonized and anti-racist Food Studies classroom curriculum and my work will need to continue to allow my students to be seen and their voices to be heard in the curriculum with meaningful intent. This was just the beginning to decolonising my classroom curriculum.

## **Biography**

### **Madeline Wong**

*Madeline Wong was born and raised in Vancouver, British Columbia. She is currently a high school Home Economics teacher with the Surrey School District. Madeline has found collaborating with her students has become much easier after having taught at the same school for 14 years. Madeline is also an executive member with the Teachers of Home Economics Specialist Association and the Surrey Home Economics Teachers Association. She has been a long-time member of her professional learning community because of the many friendships that have been formed and the sharing of ideas and resources.*

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## My “Truth” in Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples of Canada

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### Abstract

*I am a professional Home Economist (PHEc) under the Manitoba Act (1990). In this paper I reflect on an approach to uncover my personal contribution (my “truth”) to colonisation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. I examine my family life, education and career as a professional Home Economist. First Nation (people identified as Indian under the Indian Act) and Métis authors have guided my learning on the impact of colonisation. Historical references related to the practice of Home Economics within the provincial department of agriculture are used to clarify the colonising focus on which my career was based. The intention is to discover a pathway for myself and my profession to learn and acknowledge our colonising impact on Indigenous Peoples. This process is offered to other Home Economists who are exploring ways to decolonise Home Economics and build a respectful, relevant service with Indigenous Peoples.*

**KEYWORDS:** RECONCILIATION, DECOLONISATION, HOME ECONOMICS, HOME ECONOMIST, INDIGENOUS

### Introduction

Over the last decade, I have been reading, learning and questioning my own understanding of First Nation and Métis history. Indigenous authors offer stories of their truth in serious, heart rendering non-fiction as well as in entertaining and meaningful fiction. All have aided in my enlightenment and contributed to my social conversations with family, friends and colleagues. I recommend these authors to anyone open to learning truths that we may never have imagined. Such authors include but are not limited to Thomas King (2017), Jean Teillet (2019), Richard Wagamese (2012), Drew Hayden Taylor (2021), Monique Gray Smith (2018), Jody Wilson-Raybould (2021) and Bob Joseph (2018).

Recently, I started cleaning out items saved over the decades of my life. This included many of my essays completed in fulfillment of my Bachelor of Home Economics, University of Manitoba 1973-1976. These essays and exam papers offer real-at-the-time research documents useful in this pathway of self-study. I sought information and guidance from Indigenous authors in my education and understanding of the impact of settler society on Canada’s original inhabitants. One of the first services provided by the provincial government in the early 1900s was agriculture and soon after Home Economics programs were offered in Manitoba. Both Agriculture and Home Economics have recorded histories which I examined for details, attitudes and reflections on service to Indigenous Peoples over decades of time. By studying my own career as a provincial civil servant, I pay attention to my role in the ongoing system of colonisation.

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The call by the International Journal of Home Economics on the topic of “Decolonising Home Economics” offers me an opportunity in which to organise new knowledge, thoughts and research on the topic from a uniquely Canadian perspective. This paper also provides a means in which to contextualise and understand what the Truth and Reconciliation Report (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRC], 2015) means for an individual Canadian and a profession.

## Parameters and Definitions

In this self-study, I grew to understand that the first step in decolonisation is personal—one must search within one’s self to find their “truth” before moving towards reconciliation or decolonisation. The premise for this self-reflection comes from the (former) Governor General of Canada, Michaëlle Jean who wrote a dedication for Bob Joseph’s (2018) book, *21 Things you may not know about the Indian Act*; “When the present does not recognize the wrongs of the past, the future takes its revenge. For that reason, we must never, never turn away from the opportunity of confronting history together—the opportunity to right a historical wrong” (n.p.). The *Indian Act* is the handbook of Canadian colonisation. Thus, in this paper, the term *truth* is a recognition of the past wrongs to Indigenous Peoples to which I or my profession have contributed.

For purposes of clarity, Joseph (2018) provides definitions of terms used to describe Indigenous Peoples in Canada. In Canada the use of the term *Indian* is used in the context of Canada’s *Indian Act* and will continue in use for as long as that *Act* exists. *First Nation* came into use in the 1970s as a replacement for the term *Indian Band*. *First Nations* can mean many communities or for Indian people in general. The term *Indigenous Peoples* is used commonly now, replacing the term *Aboriginal Peoples*, and includes First Nation, Inuit and Métis Peoples. Indigenous Peoples is the descriptor term most utilised in this paper.

Jean Teillet’s (2019) historical text about the Métis Nation explains the term Métis as used today as, “a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation” (p. 478). The use of the term Métis replaces all former labels given by settler society such as “half-breed”, “mixed-bloods”, and “Bois-Brûlés” (Teillet, 2019).

The terms *settler* or *settler society* or *coloniser* refers to peoples who came to Canada post-Euro-Christian contact with Indigenous Peoples. The term *decolonisation* was “once viewed as the formal process of handing over the instruments of government, but is now recognized as a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power” (Smith, 2013, p. 78).

In Canada, the TRC

... spent six years travelling to all parts of Canada to hear from the Aboriginal people who had been taken from their families as children, forcibly if necessary, and placed for much of their childhoods in residential schools ... the Commission’s focus on truth determination was intended to lay the foundation for the important question of reconciliation. (2015, p. v)

The Commission provides *94 Calls to Action* needed in Canada’s reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

### “Truth” in My Early Family Life

Raised in a White, middle class settler family, I had little interaction with Indigenous People living in my community and attending my schools. My friends were, and continue to be, mostly non-Indigenous. The few friendships with Indigenous youth were short-lived. This is the case even during the time that my mother was employed at the Portage Indian Residential School in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Despite her Euro-Christian ancestry, I believe she tried hard to understand and assist many young Indigenous students from Northern Manitoba. She attempted to learn the Cree language and engaged with female students in crafts such as beading and moccasin making.

As a family, we billeted some girls and boys in our home while they attended local public high schools. My “truth” is that, despite this opportunity to learn about and engage with Indigenous youth, I did very little. I have fond memories of girls who lived with us, but never sought out any enduring friendships with Indigenous youth. Thankfully the minimal understanding gained through this family experience helped limit an outright racism. Recently, I shared my memories and stories with family members about my experience with the residential school system. My new insights lead me to returning my mother’s photos and memorabilia to Long Plain First Nation, one of the communities impacted by that particular residential school.

### “Truth” in My Formal Education

After rereading my university papers, I see pervasive misrepresentation and disregard of Indigenous Peoples. I found many examples but include only one that shows systemic racism imbedded in my thinking and learning. The paper completed for a course on women’s history was entitled “Social Morality in Early Manitoba” (author). During a brief sketch of Manitoba’s early history (late 1800s and early 1900s) there was no mention of First Nation or Métis peoples. As a student, I sought only sources that described the settler, coloniser society point of view. Part of my “truth” is that my settler education comprised almost no learning about Indigenous Peoples’ history. But worse than ignorance, I read my own racist words. In a section of this paper describing the high incidence of prostitution in Winnipeg, I included this statement “The acceptance of saleable sex was aided by the well-established practice of Indian men selling their wives and daughters for pennies” (author). Using this racist statement in my essay shows more than simple ignorance. It illustrates that, despite what I thought, systemic racism was part of my life and education.

### Journey of Learning

In my journey to better understand Canada’s history of colonisation, I quote mainly from three Indigenous authors despite the many excellent sources available:

- Joseph, Bob (2018). 21 Things you may not know about the Indian Act: Helping Canadians make reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples a reality. Indigenous Relations Press
- Teillet, Jean (2019). The North-West is our Mother: The story of Louis Riel’s people, The Metis Nation. Harper Collins
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future. National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

Each of these resources was meaningful, relevant and helped trigger my desire to seek the meaning of truth and reconciliation for myself as an individual and as a professional Home Economist. From these references, I learned from Indigenous authors about Canada’s *Indian Act*, Canada’s treatment of Métis People and Canada’s history of Indian Residential Schools.

The Indian Act was enacted in 1876 and remains in effect to present day. Initially, the stated intention was paternalistic, the principle being that Indigenous Peoples were to be taught like children to prepare them for “higher civilisation”. “But that paternalistic attitude gave way to increasingly punitive rules, prohibitions, and regulations that dehumanized Indians” (Joseph, 2018, p. 8). Of note, “it was not until 1960 that the right to vote was extended, unconditionally, to all Indigenous Peoples” (Joseph, 2018, p. 82). This happened within my lifetime. The wrongs against Indigenous Peoples are not ancient history.

Of the 21 points that Joseph makes about the *Indian Act*, this section of my paper focuses on the degradation of Indigenous women and the disruption of family and community. Joseph explains that prior to European contact, women were central to the family. “They were revered in the communities that identified as matriarchal societies, had roles within community government and spiritual ceremonies, and were generally respected for their sacred gifts bestowed upon them by the Creator” (2018, p. 20). This attitude towards Indigenous women changes dramatically as a result of the fundamental disruption by colonisation to the traditional lifestyle of Indigenous communities.

The imposition of the elected chief and band council system (1869 to present day) displaced traditional political structures and did not reflect, consider, or honour Indigenous needs and values. Under the *Indian Act* “the goal of an elected band council was to undermine traditional governance and augment assimilation” (Joseph, 2018, p. 19). Joseph describes how elections every two years causes divisiveness amongst communities and families and constantly challenges the traditional belief that rights are held collectively. Short run interests overrule traditional long run cultural orientations.

Some of the early actions that lead to the degradation of Indigenous women began with how the *Indian Act* controlled and denied Indigenous woman’s rights. The *Indian Act* (1869-1985) denied Indian status to women and their children, who married non-status men (Joseph, 2018). Numerous changes related to Indigenous women’s status were made to the *Act* over time. However, not until 1985 was the *Indian Act* amended “to remove discrimination against women, to be consistent with Section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*” (Joseph, 2018, p. 21).

The creation of reserves enacted in 1876 and continues to present day caused irreparable damage to Indigenous family and community. “A reserve is a tract of land set aside under the *Indian Act* and Treaty Agreements for the exclusive use of an Indian band” (Joseph, 2018, p. 24). Joseph writes that “In reality, reserves were created as a means of containing and controlling Indians while providing European settlers full access to the fish and game, water, timber, and mineral resources that had formerly sustained Indian life and culture” (2018, p. 24). Over time, the *Indian Act* legally allowed reserve land to be expropriated by any private group or government wanting it (Joseph, 2018).

Métis People did not fare well within colonisation either. Jean Teillet’s historical documentation of the history of the Métis Nation describes numerous actions taken against Métis people. The company controlling western Canada prior to Canada’s involvement was the Hudson’s Bay Company (Teillet, 2019). Then Lord Selkirk was granted control of some land in the Red River region. The Council of Assiniboia, an object of the Hudson Bay Company, consistently ruled against Métis claims for rights and land ownership. Once Canada purchased the North West from Great Britain, it instituted the survey and sale of land to newcomers. All attempts by Métis families who settled and often cultivated the land, to have their ownership legally recognised were thwarted (Teillet, 2019).

### “Truth” in Agricultural Development

“Agriculture was one objective chosen as the path for Indians to follow to become ‘civilized’” (Joseph, 2018, p. 37). According to western theories of civilisation, agriculture was the

development stage just before industrialisation. However, there are numerous examples where reserve lands were taken from Indigenous People, largely because the land that was negotiated by Treaty was desired by settler farmers. One such Manitoba example is the dispossession of the Peguis First Nations (formerly known as the St. Peter's Indian Settlement). Indigenous Peoples, lived, farmed and undertook commerce on Treaty 1 lands situated north of Winnipeg, Manitoba. They were known as "agricultural pioneers in their own right ... a vibrant, highly educated and prosperous people" (Burrows, 2009, pp. 13-14). In the efforts to convince members to surrender their lands, agricultural inducements were offered, "freedom to sell their produce and other goods on the market without Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) interference" (Burrows, 2009, p. 4). Despite numerous efforts to prevent their forced removal, settler encroachment was "the driving force behind the destruction of the reserve and removal of its people" (Burrows, 2009, p. 2).

On the other hand, many reserves were located in areas unsuitable for agriculture. "Government agencies later used the low success rate of some Indian farmers as reason to reduce the size of reserves" (Joseph, 2018, p. 37). When Indian farmers were successful in crops, cattle and produce and were in a position to compete with settlers on a commercial basis, the government responded to settler complaints. Through the *Indian Act*, government instituted permit systems where Indian farmers required a permit to leave the reserve and to sell farm products. Indian farmers required approval from the Indian agent to purchase farm machinery. In addition, settlers were prohibited from purchasing goods and services from Indian farmers. The permit system sections of the Act were not repealed until 2014 (Joseph, 2018).

When I compare the province's agriculture policies and programs, I see parallels to actions taken against Indigenous Peoples. The department of agriculture published its history entitled "The Ministry of Agriculture in Manitoba from 1870-1970." In its prelude, the author references historical documents in describing agriculture practices pre-European contact. All references come from non-Indigenous writers. The prelude offers only brief reference to food production practices undertaken by Indigenous peoples (referred to as natives), Métis peoples (referred to as mixed bloods) and fur trading companies with the express purpose of supplying food for the fur trade industry. It seemed important for the author to dispute the fact that agriculture caused the disappearance of the buffalo.

It is apparent therefore that it was not the introduction of agriculture that drove the buffalo from the Manitoba prairies, but the disappearance of buffalo herds from the native grasslands which caused a biological vacuum in the prairies and made the introduction of subsistence agriculture an imperative. (Government of Manitoba, 1971, p. 14)

As do all Euro-centric documents, the department of agriculture's history is predicated on ownership of the land being in the hands of others. There is no recognition that lands were taken from First Nations, and later Métis, inhabitants. The development of government agricultural services was built upon the premise, that the Government of Canada wanted land to pass to "actual settlers" and not into the hands of the Métis (Teillet, 2019) or First Nations (Joseph, 2018). In fact, the department of agriculture benefited from an expropriation of Treaty Lands when the Riding Mountain National Park was created. Early in the history of agricultural extension work, semi-annual meetings were held in a summer camp "where the type of accommodation is steadily increasing" (Manitoba Agricultural Representatives Association [MARA], 1974, p. 49) in and around the national park.

One of the few stories related to Indigenous Peoples was written in Manitoba Agricultural Representatives Association's history of extension staff about a widespread drought in 1958-59. Municipal and departmental staffs were on the search for hay supplies to feed farm cattle in The Pas, Swan River and Roblin areas. Civil servants with the Lands Branch offered up hay meadows in the Pasquia area. As the story was told (MARA, 1974), I interpret this to be another

example of Indigenous lands being offered up for use by settler society without their consent or benefit. A story from 1946 taken from the same reference demonstrates systemic racism by adopting the name of Pow-Wow for large social occasions. “The origin of the name (Pow-Wow) is not clear but the name itself proved quite appropriate, - particularly for one held in Gimli when the behaviour of some of the more ‘spirited’ members verged on boisterous” (MARA, 1074, pp 48-49). It is ironic that at the time of the cultural appropriation of the term ‘pow-wow’, the *Indian Act* prohibited Indigenous Peoples from practicing their cultural ceremonies such as the sacred Sun Dance ritual of First Nations people on the prairies (Joseph, 2018).

It is not surprising Home Economics services and programs ignored Indigenous audiences. It is not surprising that Indigenous women, families and communities did not seek programs or services from the department of agriculture or Home Economists.

### “Truth” in My Profession and Career

The practice of Home Economics was established early in Manitoba’s systematic colonisation of Western Canada. In 1910 a diploma course for young women was developed within the newly established College of Agriculture. “In 1916 a degree course, Bachelor of Home Economics was established for young women” (Burwell et al., 2011, p. 1). The audiences served at this time were objects of the provincial government such as Agricultural Societies, Women’s Institutes, 4-H youth clubs and farm and rural women, all of which are members of settler society. When Home Economics services expanded into the City of Winnipeg and Northern Manitoba, I believe some clients were Indigenous. But our impact on people living on Indian Reserves and Indigenous-only communities was limited. Largely, the targeted audiences, comprised mainly of non-Indigenous peoples, did not change over the decades of programming up until and including my career with the department. This is the case despite the mission, vision and purpose of the field of practice of home economics.

The Manitoba Association of Home Economists is governed by *The Professional Home Economists Act*, passed in 1990, which recognises the right of qualified members to use the Professional Home Economist (PHEC) designation. This registered status provides for self-regulation via an established code of conduct. Prior to 1990 Home Economists organised themselves under a similar banner with similar aims and purposes. Under MAHE’s Constitution and Bylaws the profession of Home Economics is described as: service to individuals, families and communities to actively promote improved quality of life and to study social issues with the focus and expertise of Home Economics and thus make recommendations for action when appropriate. To highlight one of the stated codes of conduct:

The home economist must discharge her duties to clients, employers, employees, members of the public and associates in the profession with integrity. Integrity comprises soundness of moral principle, especially in relation to truth and fair dealing, uprightness, honesty and sincerity. (Manitoba Association of Home Economists [MAHE], n.d.-b, n.p.)

The code continues in directing members to “work towards the betterment of society by encouraging public respect for, and by trying to improve the quality of life of the individual, the family and the community” (MAHE, n.d.-a, n.p.). Our existence and code of conduct clearly directs our profession as one that could/should be of service to Manitoba’s Indigenous Peoples.

As a professional Home Economist, I worked with the Province of Manitoba for 37 years (1976-2014). Most of this time was with the department of agriculture (with its varying departmental names). As a District Home Economist, I recall only three events at which I delivered program information to Indigenous People. Audience members were respectful and courteous. But I now realise how disrespectful I had been in not being properly prepared. I delivered information,

developed by non-Indigenous people, with none of us having understanding of the needs and wants of my audience.

Knowing the needs and wants of your audience is one of the primary theories of Extension, the theoretical method underpinning our departmental practices. "Your credibility and/or that of your extension organization can be at stake if programs are developed that do not meet the needs of people" (Baker, 1984, p. 57). Baker explains there are opportunities for educators who are external to the community, "there is opportunity for you to check out your own perceptions of needs and priorities from a position which should be free from biases" (1984, p. 57). He continues to point out that "potential conflict and resistance can be avoided and involving people in needs identification can help increase motivation, participation and commitment as well as determining apparent apathy" (1984, p. 57). My "truth" is that I had not felt it necessary to explore my Indigenous audience's needs prior to delivering my programs, despite my stated support of the Extension approach to learning and teaching. Further, I now realise that my settler approach was very likely a deterrent to Indigenous peoples from seeking Home Economics services and programming.

In 2002-2003, I was privileged to work on a special project, *Northern Food Prices Project: Exploring strategies to reduce the high cost of food in Northern Manitoba* (Government of Manitoba, 2003). For a short period of time, I had the opportunity to work closely with many Indigenous People. In many ways, my approach was respectful. Under the guidance of Indigenous staff with the department of aboriginal and northern affairs, I listened and learned a lot. The Report reflects what I and other working committee members heard and learned. Generally, the Report's 14 recommendations for action were not popular with government. Perhaps this indicated the working committee which researched and wrote the report was on the right track. Just as in much of Manitoba's history, attending to issues of concern to Indigenous and Northern people has often been done so reluctantly.

As a Home Economist, our goal is to support and strengthen women, families and communities. As an employee with the department of agriculture, our target audience was identified as "rural" and sometimes "Northern" women, families and communities. My "truth" is that I ignored an important segment of women, families and community during my career. I remember sometimes the argument of "jurisdictional responsibilities" (whether or not Province employees had a responsibility to Indigenous Peoples) was used to negate my responsibility to these groups. But it was not an acceptable argument as Indigenous women and families lived within my service area.

### **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Call to Action**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (TRC, 2015) is a major source of learning and guidance for settler society people.

The Commission heard from more than 6,000 witnesses, most of whom survived the experience of living in the schools (Indian Residential Schools) as students. The stories of that experience are sometimes difficult to accept as something that could have happened in a country such as Canada, which has long prided itself on being a bastion of democracy, peace, and kindness throughout the world. Children were abused, physically and sexually, and they died in the schools in numbers that would not have been tolerated in any school system anywhere in the country, or in the world. (TRC, 2015, p. v-vi)

However, the Commission clearly states that "shaming and pointing out wrongdoing were not the purpose of the Commission's mandate. Ultimately, the Commission's focus on truth determination was intended to lay the foundation for the important question of reconciliation" (TRC, 2015, p. vi).

Joseph concisely summarises the Commission's *94 Calls to Action* (2018). For the purposes of this paper, there are a number of Calls to Action to which I and my profession can respond to directly as they relate to our field of practice. Some of these include: developing culturally appropriate parenting programs (#5); developing and delivering culturally appropriate curricula (#10); developing and delivering appropriate early childhood educational programs (#12); include Aboriginal language rights and education on residential schools, Treaties, and contributions in Canadian history in classrooms, public programs and post-secondary education (#14, #62, #16); and contributing to eliminating gaps in health concerns between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples (#19).

Calls to Action that I believe are directed specifically to the profession of Home Economics are:

- 63. *We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:*
  - iii. *Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.*
- 23. *We call upon all levels of government to:*
  - i. *Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the healthcare field.*
- 66. *We call upon the federal government to ... [utilise] funding for community-based youth organisations to deliver programs on reconciliation, and establish a national network to share information and best practices.*
- 93. *We call upon the federal government ... [to work with] newcomers ... to reflect a more inclusive history of diverse Aboriginal people of Canada, including information about Treaties and the history of residential schools.*

(TRC, 2015, n.p.)

Much good work has begun, as evidenced by many Home Economists and academics. I include my personal mentor as an excellent example: as Professional Home Economist, Dr Marlene Atleo, a member of Ahousaht First Nation, holds the position of Senior Scholar with University of Manitoba and continues to instruct at universities in British Columbia (Atleo, 2014). Atleo brings truth in her instruction in aboriginal and cross-cultural adult education courses. But we all need to do more.

## Conclusion

In this self-study, I learned the first action one needs to take in decolonisation is to find our own "truth", our contribution to the wrongs forced on First Nations and Métis peoples. This paper is part of this process, making a public statement and describing my initial attempts to find my "truth". I discovered some reprehensible attitudes and actions of my own doing as well as in the historic base of the colonialist government service in which I practiced home economics. I lived and practiced my career within a settler paradigm. For most of my career as a provincial government employee, I was directed away from providing services to Indigenous groups.

Until I as a citizen of Canada and my field of home economics practice undergo a process of finding our "truth", I do not believe we can truly begin the decolonisation of home economics and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. "Getting to the truth was hard, but getting to reconciliation will be harder" (TRC, 2015, p. v). I suspect this will take the rest of my lifetime.

I continue this process of self-reflection with a Personal Pledge (see Figure 1) for action as suggested by Joseph (2018).

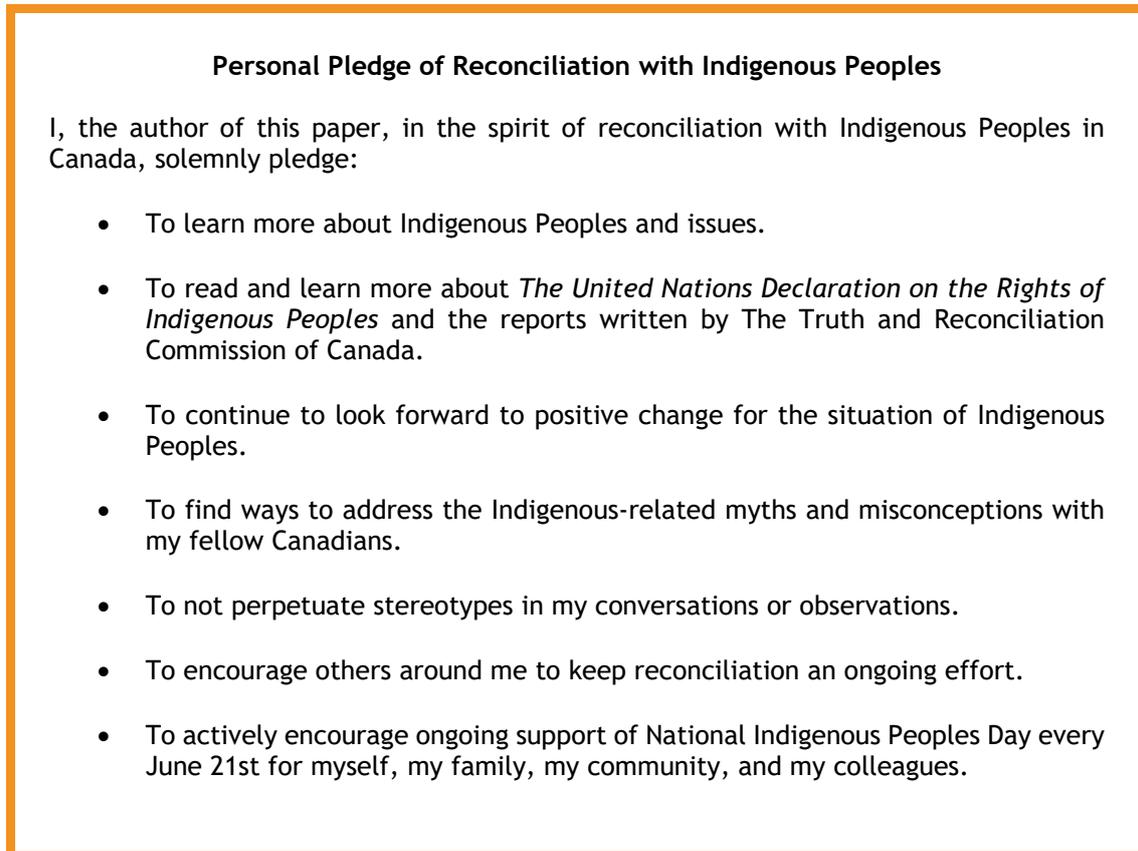


Figure 1 Personal Pledge of Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

By making this Pledge, I hope to become a Responsible Ally with Indigenous Peoples as described by Dr Lynn Gehl. I take to heart all, but in particular her first of 16 actions demonstrated by responsible allies: I will not act out of guilt, but rather “out of genuine interest in challenging the larger oppressive power structures” (Gehl, n.d.)

I realise that continuing on my journey of personal development as a responsible ally does not negate the value and importance of our Home Economics education, mission, codes of practice and work. But I and my fellow Home Economist colleagues might improve our service to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples by following the guiding principle, *Etuaptmumk*, taught by Mi’kmaw Elder Albert Marshall (Institute for Integrative Science and Health, n.d.). *Etuaptmumk* is a Mi’kmaw word for “two-eyed seeing”, that is “learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing” (Institute for Integrative Science and Health, n.d.).

Two-eyed seeing adamantly, respectfully, and passionately asks that we bring together our different ways of knowing to motivate people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike, to use all our understandings so we can leave the world a better place and not compromise the opportunities for our youth (in the sense of *Seven Generations*) through our own inactions (Institute for Integrative Science and Health, n.d.).

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## Biography

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*Debora Durnin-Richards is a Member of Manitoba Association of Home Economists, having held numerous executive positions. She is proud of the profession, its commitment to a Code of Conduct and legislation requirements. Previous to retirement from the provincial department of agriculture, Durnin-Richards practiced home economics within a number of roles from community service to management and covering a vast array of work, district delivery and management of home economics programs, 4-H Youth, policy, marketing, northern food prices and strategic planning. Durnin-Richards is a member of Manitoba Women's Institute, SERVAS Canada and Manitoba Association of Parliamentarians. Education includes a Bachelor of Home Economics and Master of Education.*

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## The Orange Shirt Project as a Collaborative Approach to Reconciling

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### Abstract

*In this paper, we discuss a community-based knitting project that is a response to the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action to educate about the legacy of Indigenous Residential Schools. We highlight the need to keep the concept of reconciliation active by using its verb form to point to the need for ongoing work. We next focus on the ways in which The Orange Shirt Project (TSOP) touches on both Indigenous pedagogies and the responsibility of public pedagogues, such as university faculty, to engage in work that enacts public agency. Finally, we tie our work back to the importance of relationships and relational ethics in doing the work of reconciling. Our goal is to show this project as a reproducible form of activism that can occur in multiple contexts.*

**KEYWORDS:** RECONCILIATION, PUBLIC PEDAGOGIES, INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS, ORANGE SHIRT PROJECT

In December of 2015 the Canadian Commission on Truth and Reconciliation released its Final Report, produced through thousands of hours of testimony gathered from Indian Residential School survivors across Canada, as well as from archival documents relating to the functioning of those schools, such as they were. In short, it was estimated that more than 150,000 Indigenous children were removed from their homes for “education” in these schools (McMahon, 2021). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC, 2015) estimated that approximately 3201 did not return home; however, Justice Murray Sinclair, head of the TRC, has argued that this number is likely higher, estimating 6,000 children but likely more (CBC Radio, 2021).

As startling as those numbers are, it is widely known in Indigenous communities that the numbers could not be accurate, given the recollections of survivors, and that the Commission has access to incomplete records as the result of “the sporadic record keeping and poor document survival” (Hamilton, 2021, p. 2). But at least the Commission’s report was a start, and through the additional release of *94 Calls to Action*, it offered Canadians both a starting point to fuel conversations on reconciliation and decolonisation, as well as some direction regarding how to move forward together in a better way.

In this paper, we discuss a community-based knitting project as an example of a collaborative act of reconciling that we are currently engaged with at our home institution. In curricular terms the Tiny Orange Shirt Project (TSOP) may relate most closely to the areas of Home

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Economics and Visual Art. However, it has the potential to be widely transdisciplinary and therefore holistic in nature, drawing in other curriculum areas such as Social Studies—history, sociology and Language Arts can be better seen as a natural fit for decolonising and reconciling learning. In countries such as Australia and Canada educators in schools are required to integrate Indigenous content into the learning experiences offered to students. Bishop and Vass (2020) have noted that within a curriculum that has been shaped by both neoliberal and colonial agenda positions, engaging with Indigenous content is represented as a distant idea and speaks to Giroux’s “important questions about the politics of representation” (2004, p. 66).

The low numbers of Indigenous educators in schools (BC Government, 2019; Johnson, 2017) and the extent that teachers with a settler background are able to reconcile Indigenous perspectives and content in their work underscore the value of transdisciplinary approaches. Secondly, we suggest that this transdisciplinary potential also offers an entry in Indigenous pedagogies of use across disciplines, both because of its collaborative nature, and because of its potential for inclusivity and recursion. Third, we suggest that as an act of public pedagogy the TSOP is also a way of representing the number of children lost, understanding the significance of these events, and offering potential for replication in other sites and contexts. Ultimately, TSOP is a move towards decolonising teaching and learning in that it deliberately disrupts the siloed nature of modern schools as well insisting on a collaborative rather than individualistic act of meaning making. Knitting the orange sweater offers possibilities as a mindful act for the knitter, as a way to engage in both the producing and creation of a sweater. The collection of multiple little orange sweaters contributed by many knitters is about a common purpose of both remembrance and a provocation to think differently about Indigenous experience, specifically in Canada. The installation of many little orange sweaters in a public area that includes dialogic panels and multimedia offers ongoing possibilities for understanding and reconciliation, especially as it is located in a faculty of education.

Our engagement with public pedagogies and intention to contribute to the decolonisation of teaching and learning within our university is explored in this paper in four moves. Initially we focus on the use of verbs within the Call to Action. We move on to consider how Indigenous pedagogies both require and support collaborative practice, and then take into consideration public pedagogies as a means for doing something such as knitting. Lastly, we describe the ways in which the TSOP has developed and is evolving at our site.

### **Verb-Based Languages and the Calls to Action**

While the Calls to Action offer avenues to reconciliation for Government, Sport, Social Work, and several other key institutions of daily life in Canada, we focus specifically on one call aimed at the Education sector:

62. *We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:*
  - i. *Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.*
  - ii. *Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.*

(TRC Calls to Action, 2015, n.p.)

Although straightforward in naming what is required in this sector, this call poses a challenge in two key ways. First, this Call's broad nature deflects the tendency of many educators to place this work in a singular curricular silo. In keeping with the holistic focus of most Indigenous teaching and learning, its deliberate vagueness leaves open the possibility for responsive and experiential work in all subject areas, and the potential to weave Indigeneity throughout learning at all levels. Second, and this is more a problem of the institution at which it is directed than of the call itself, since those who are called upon to take up this work are ironically also those who have been deliberately unprepared to do so by virtue of the colonial erasures in their own education (Leddy & O'Neill, 2022). While there is a growing body of resources produced by Indigenous scholars, educators and community members, without engaging in specific and targeted *un-learning*, teachers will risk replicating the same deletions and colonial mythologies that this call aims to eliminate. This is the soul work that decolonising education calls for.

We are intentional in this work to refer to reconciling as an undercurrent of this project. Reconciliation is a noun, which, as several scholars have pointed out (Whitinui, 2021), risks telegraphing the idea that it is a done deal, a *fait accompli* that requires no further action. In keeping with Giroux's (2004) discussion of the responsibility of public intellectuals, we wish to disrupt this potential for lassitude by using the verb form, insisting that reconciling is an ongoing action that must be undertaken by each of us. We link this to the frequent assertion that most Indigenous languages, in Canada at least, are verb based (Michell, 2018). That is, the action often comes before the subject or object of a sentence. This inverted sentence structure (sort of like the way Star Wars' Yoda speaks) is instructive in itself for keeping the focus on the *doing* rather than on *who* is doing. Conceptually, this points to a key ontological difference between Indigenous and Western ways of thinking. It is less the individual doing the thing that matters than it is that the thing that is being done. This is the way of decolonising and reconciling too.

### **Indigenous Pedagogies and the Power of Working Together**

The Tiny Orange Sweater Project, initiated by Jennifer Kent Symons on Facebook in summer 2021, now has more than 448 members across Canada. Lorrie Miller, Shannon Leddy and Kerry Renwick were inspired to develop a related project that could provide powerful pedagogical opportunities in the teacher education program in which we all work. Hosted by Department of Curriculum & Pedagogy the TOSP offers students, faculty and staff the opportunity to participate in the creation of a permanent installation in the education building that will offer visceral evidence of the atrocious outcomes from Indian Residential Schools across Canada.

In this light, our project offers three key links to Indigenous pedagogies in that it is first a holistic in approach, offering learning opportunities and curricular innovations across subject areas. Second, the TSOP is a collective project that builds on the power of all of us working together over one of us working alone and points to the importance of collectivity in Indigenous worldviews. Third, our project encourages student participation in whatever way the student is able or chooses; that is, contributions are not prescriptive or restrictive, but rather invite students to shine in their own way.

The culmination of the TSOP will be a three-story-high multi-panel fabric installation each of which will hold up to 1500 tiny orange shirts and sweaters. To gather that many pieces together, we have invited all members of our faculty to make contributions, recognising that even the idea of this project and the image of a large-scale installation may spark creative energy in our colleagues. The panels will offer opportunities to enumerate, discern, inspire, provoke, research, contribute, engage, reverse-engineer or design, write, create, recreate, compare, record and generally learn from, through, and with for students in all of our departments and disciplines.

Equally important is the pause for thought that creating something so large together might affect in educational discourse. While Western and colonial thinking tend to draw on the Lockean propensity to prefer individualism (Seawright, 2014), Indigenous thinking tends to more collective and less anthropocentric understandings (Michell, 2018). On the surface, this may seem merely a semantic difference, but we argue that it is deeply instructive in the impact that collective thinking, planning and doing can have towards both notions of achievement and inclusivity. As Little Bear (2000) points out, in Indigenous thinking, the responsibility of the individual is to the community and to learn what is needed to support the wellbeing of the community. Imagine the nurturing shift this might make if we approached revising education with that ethic in mind.

As educators in Home Economics and Art we are well aware of the need to develop student centred projects and pedagogies. We cannot bake a project or create a sculpture on behalf of our students—we need to support them as they learn to do it themselves. This philosophical positioning must also accommodate the fact that students each shine in different ways. Both Arts and HE education encompass several specific areas of potential study: painting, drawing, sculpture, and printmaking for the former, and culinary, sartorial, and familial for the other. By exploring each, students can self-select those they feel most adept at and express their learning in ways that speak to their strengths and talents. In this light, we anticipate that the TOSP will offer similar latitude in how students are invited to contribute. Those who do not knit may crochet; those who do not bead may sew. And those who do neither may write, or sing, or apply a mathematical formula that will in part. be supported by dialogic panels and multimedia elements to be included in the installation. What matters in this type of learning is the process and engagement rather than the product.

### **Public Pedagogy and Meeting the Need to DO Something**

One of the most challenging aspects of working through truth to get to a place of reconciling is often the feeling of helplessness in the face of so much trauma and its consequences in the present (Dion, 2009). One of the most readily evident benefits of the TOSP then is to meet this need by offering the opportunity to participate, collaborate and contribute. But this work also touches on the importance of collectivity referred to earlier, in that it also means we support one another through the challenges of this learning, of grappling with difficult knowledge (Pitt & Britzman, 2003), and of becoming more than perfect strangers (Dion, 2009) to Indigenous peoples and histories.

We link this work to what Giroux has termed “a pedagogy of public memory” which is “about making connections that are often hidden, forgotten, or wilfully ignored” (2004, p. 68). In consideration of how long it has taken for the truth of Canadian and colonial history to come to light, we feel this type of public memory is a crucial aspect of the ways in which our installation will function within our faculty. Not only is our pedagogical approach public, it is also political. The intention of the pedagogy being utilised is to enact Giroux’s concern for connecting “understanding with the issue of social responsibility” as part of our teaching responsibility “to educate students not only to engage [with] the world critically” (2004, p. 72), but to act on what they learn. Giroux centres his discussion of public pedagogy in the area of cultural studies where he primarily works. We take his point about the unending nature of the “project of democratic social transformation” (2004, p. 76).

In part, we draw inspiration for this public pedagogical approach from the work of arts educational theorists John Dewey and Maxine Greene. In considering art as experience, Dewey (1934) gets to the heart of its pedagogical potential by suggesting that

... it is when the desires and aims, the interests and modes of response of another become an expansion of our own being that we understand him (sic). We learn to see with his eyes, hear with his ears, and their results give true instruction, for they are built into our own structure. (p. 350)

That is, art has the power to transform our perspectives through our interactions with it; in this light, a public display of thousands of tiny orange shirts created by thousands of contributors offers tremendous pedagogical potential. This work can also meet what Greene (1995, p. 65) suggests is the prerogative of educators: “we teachers must so emphasise the importance of persons becoming reflective enough to think about their own thinking and become conscious of their own consciousness”. This is a heavy responsibility that we must take up not only as teacher educators, but which we must also inspire in our students so that they might inspire it in their students.

### **Knitting as a Private/Public Pedagogy**

Knitting is a process and product orientated skill (Strawn, 2012). Kargól (2021) describes three benefits of knitting. She identifies knitting is a social activity in that family members and friends can be the first source of inspiration and induction into knitting. Knitting groups and online communities offer ongoing connection and opportunity for problem solving, refinement of technique and extension of skills. It can be undertaken as solitary or communal activity (Corkhill et al., 2014; Jou et al., 2021; Kelly, 2014; Robertson, 2011). A second focus by Kargól (2021) is on knitting as a way to engage thought. With a focus on hands combined with repetition means that knitting becomes mediative and offers a symbolic value to end product. Corkhill et al. (2014) describe knitting as having a “rhythmic and sensory nature, which can be calming, with potential meditative and therapeutic qualities” (p. 36). The knitter is required to perform repetitive tasks that can be complex to produce varied and creative products. Lastly Kargól (2021) sees knitting as a creative endeavour seen within everyday life. It is a particular type of creativity that privileges the process rather than the result. Phillips (2013) notes possibilities for a symbiotic relationship between the knitter and the material. Engaging with knitting as activity offers an intrinsic reward for the knitter/creator (Clarke, 2016) rather than relying on affirmation or judgement from others.

Knitting has been utilised beyond the pragmatic process for producing a garment or household item. Phillips (2013) notes that while knitting was a homey pastime, it was both a creative and re-creative art form. Turney (2009) has described knitting as both art and craft, utilising design to create fashion and performance that is done in context of everyday living. Its accessible features make it readily accessible to amateurs and craftspeople as well artists and designers. Yet in spite of this, hand knitting is largely ignored or relegated to an outdated past. It is judged as being uninteresting and ordinary and Strawn (2012) notes knitting has been viewed as women’s work. Phillips makes the claim that “it was nearly always a woman who wielded the needles” (2013, p. 9). However, there are different positions on this, such as Desmarais (2020) writing about men engaging in knitting practices and refuting perceptions of knitting as a wholly feminine endeavour, and Beyer (2022) writing about how the COVID-19 pandemic has enabled a resurgence in men engaging with needlework.

Kelly (2014) has considered how knitting can be seen as a feminist project. Whether undertaken by women and men as a craft or hobby, knitting creates a space for contestation and subversion about femininities and masculinities. Feminists have also claimed knitting as a project undertaken by all genders and as a way to challenge the disconnection between public and private domains (Groeneveld, 2010; Kelly, 2014), and that knitting as a community offers possibilities for a collective identity and action. Clarke remarks on how “Knitting and craft have a long history, the meanings of which are constantly changing” (2016, p. 304) yet the practices and techniques persist. In context of family, knitting was a pastime that produced necessary everyday clothing such as sweaters, socks and hats (Phillips (2013, p. 5). The task of knitting clothing and household items has not been an activity for all women with Strawn, (2012) noting that exploitative employment practices (Farinosi, 2021) have meant knitting has been coercively undertaken by enslaved women and those trying to earn while living in poverty.

Groeneveld (2010) describes how knitting has been utilised as a political statement. These range from supporting troops or enacting anti-war protests to knitting as a way to raise funds for charity. Clarke describes how knitted protest banners are evident on site but they also incorporate those not in attendance but who contributed to the knitting. Knitting in protest is seen as a safe form of protest because it perceived as non-confrontational (Kelly, 2014; Robertson, 2011). Women knitting while on sites of protest argue that “the politics of feminism could be worked out through action rather than theory” (Robertson, 2011, p. 190). However, this position is in diametrical contract to radical feminists who have been much more willing to be confrontational have rejected images of protesting women knitting as “inimical to feminist goals” (Robertson, 2011, p. 190). In her description of *The Knitting Nannas* (see <https://knitting-nannas.com>), Kelly (2014) notes how their peaceful protests are also disruptive as they “bear witness to the war against those who try to rape our land and divide our communities” (n.p.).

As a counter-hegemonic discourse knitting has been used to express feelings and reactions to socio-political circumstances. Yarn-bombing is utilised to instigate a form of activism or what Springgay (2010) calls “knitivism”. Yarn-bombing exploits the underlying assumption of innocence associated with knitted art while drawing on a gentleness of knitting to unite (Farinosi & Fortunati, 2018). The first yarn bombing has been attributed to Magda Sayeg (Haveri, 2016) and as another textile artist has commented, “no-one knits for hate, you knit for love most of the time” (cited in Farinosi & Fortunati, 2018, p. 139). Goggin (2015) observes that yarn bombing is unexpected, in location and regarding common understandings of appropriateness since “clothing outdoor ‘things’ in yarn disrupts the domestic use of yarn and the public use of space” (p. 96). In this powerful incongruence the “the actions and initiatives are disruptive because they challenge the status quo” (Farinosi & Fortunati, 2018, p. 157). Yarn-bombing invites reflection.

Following an earthquake that severely damaged L’Aquila, a town located in central Italy large numbers of the population were forcibly removed to outer areas of the town. According to Baldini and Pietrucci (2017) this relocation was argued as being necessary for safety purposes; however, it disrupted people’s sense of connection to their neighbours and community and disconnected them from the patterns and supports within their everyday life. In response to a lack of agency, citizens engaged in a grassroots movement to express their concerns utilising yarn-bombing or yarn graffiti (Baldini & Pietrucci, 2017; Farinosi & Fortunati, 2018). According to Goggin (2015) yarn bombing is an example of protest and also a way to lay claim to rhetorical citizenship through participation in civic life.

In their paper Corkhill et al. (2014) focus on knitting as a means for contributing to wellbeing with social benefits. More than an innocent pastime Corkhill et al. posit that knitting has benefits both psychologically and socially. Following an earthquake in Japan that affected the city of Shichigahama in Miyagi Prefecture a knitting project was started as a way to bring together survivors and manage their mental health and wellbeing (Jou et al., 2021). The project offered benefits to the knitters as it enabled a shared space where they could be with others who were experiencing similar experiences and stress after the event. By engaging with knitting as both a creative and mindful activity the knitters found mental respite during a traumatic time. The knitting was also purposeful beyond the social and mental needs of the knitters as their engagement provided an opportunity to demonstrate concern and care of others. What the knitters produced included clothing and blankets for the survivors who had lost so much. Corkhill et al. have remarked about how “knitting for those who are more vulnerable and, in more need, than oneself can change a knitter’s perspective on the world. Wrapping someone else up in something warm and cozy is symbolic of caring for others” (2014, p. 40).



Figure 1 Orange Shirts 1 (Author's own image)

The Orange Shirt Project (n.d.) was developed at the end of 2021 to acknowledge the impact of residential school in Indigenous people in Canada. The initiating circumstance for founders was the discovery of 211 unmarked graves at the sight of the former Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Indian Residential School. It was the first of many such discoveries that followed throughout western Canada, significantly altering the total number of children who succumbed in Indian Residential Schools and never made it home first established by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015. The project was not to produce items to wear nor was it to cover elements within the outdoor public space under the cover of darkness. It was a protest about the unethical practices associated with Residential Schools in Canada and the deliberate concealing of the deaths of over 7000 children as of February 2022. It was a statement of support for those communities whose children never returned and the ongoing trauma of those who did survive. Engaging in the knitting of the orange sweaters offered a way to be mindful of “the loss and pain experienced by Indigenous people while looking towards a healing” and to “to witness the truth ... and then begin to live reconciliation” (Orange Shirt Project, n.p.).



Figure 2 Orange Shirts 2 (Author's own image)

The Tiny Orange Sweater Project (see <https://www.facebook.com/groups/328077959023299/>) was initiated by Jennifer Kent Symons in the Summer of 2021 through a posting on social media (Facebook), and quickly gained traction. Our version of this project will be positioned in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia, Canada where we feel it will offer maximal potential for both curricular and pedagogical connection. In the early stages of the project, we held workshops with students from NITEP (UBC's Indigenous teacher education program) and other students in both teacher education and graduate courses. Opportunities were provided on campus during lunchtimes to collect yarn, but also sit in a shared space to knit. Beginners were able to get instructions and coaching from more experienced knitters and crocheters. A website was then developed that not only provided background about the project,

but also offers patterns for making including knitting, crocheting, beading and sewing. The website also offers a record of where in the world donations have come from, including Ireland, the United States, and Australia.



Figure 3 Orange Shirts 3 (Author's own image)

Academics, administrative staff, and students became involved in the project and frequently commented on the powerful impact of the growing collection of tiny orange sweaters on the countertop in the reception area of the Teacher Education Office. Preservice teachers in the Bachelor of Education programs were able to engage their students with the project while out on their teaching practicums and brought back sweaters created by students in their practicum schools from across the Lower Mainland Region of British Columbia. Contributions will continue to be collected after the official installation launch, set to coincide with Canada's National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, so that subsequent graduating classes will also have the opportunity to participate and contribute to the installation. All of this work has been facilitated by a small grant from the Faculty of Education, which provided funding for the installation of a wall of little orange sweaters. At the time of our writing, more than 300 sweaters have been collected, each of which represents approximately 1 to 2 hours of creation time, making it clear why the goal of 7000 sweaters is aspirational and may take several years to achieve. This in no way diminishes the intent and impact of the project, however, and instead extends its temporal influence over several years and several graduating classes.

### **The Pedagogy of Hands Back, Hands Forward**

One of the best known Musqueam teachings frequently evoked in our institution is the principle of hands back, hands forward. The late Musqueam Elder Vince Stogan shared this teaching with Dr Jo-Ann Archibald who wrote about it in her 2008 book, *Indigenous Storywork*, and often shares it in her public speaking engagements. It has now been taken up by many of our colleagues, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, because of the power it holds and the responsibility it conveys:

My dear ones ... Form a circle and join hands in prayer. In joining hands, hold your left palm upward to reach back to grasp the teachings of the ancestors. Put these teachings into your everyday life and pass them on. Hold your right palm downward to pass these teachings on to the younger generation. In this way, the teachings and knowledge of the ancestors continue, and the circle of human understanding and caring grows stronger. (Tsimilano, as cited in Archibald, 2008, p. 50)

This teaching offers an apt and tangible representation of the way in which knowledge flows through us all; with one hand we receive knowledge from those before us and with the other we have the duty to share that knowledge with those coming after us.

This is perhaps at the heart of The Orange Shirt Project - through it, we hope to share the burden of Indian Residential Schools with those who have lived through the traumas they held. And in manifesting that burden through this collaborative creative work, we hope to share the weight of that burden with all who encounter it. It is an act of reverence, remembrance, respect and responsibility. It is an act of humility and of hope, a call to allyship, and acknowledgement of Indigenous survivance and presence. We are grateful to those who inspired us to this work, and those providing funding to support it. We are grateful to those who have contributed to it, and we hope that all of our work together honours all those whose loss of life, or loss of dignity and innocence, is represented in each tiny orange shirt. We cannot undo what is done, but we can work to ensure such things are never done again.



Figure 4 Orange Shirts 4 (Author's own image)

We give the final word to Greene (1995 as cited in Kohli, 2018, p. 195) who reminds us that “meaning happens in and by means of an encounter with a painting, with a text, with a dance performance” (p. 139, emphasis in original). We hope that meaning will continue to happen as students engage with our installation work in the years to come.

## Biographies

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*Kerry's previous research includes health promoting schools; exploring the relationship between school gardens and mental health in youth; and teachers' practice in health and food education. She is currently the Principal Investigator on a SSHRC Partnership Development grant focused on global food literacy education. The Food Literacy International Partnership (FLIP) includes Deakin University, Australia; Sweet Briar College, USA; and Gothenburg University, Sweden.*

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**IFHE**  
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
FOR HOME ECONOMICS

PEER-REVIEWED RESEARCH PAPER

## *Part B Peer-Reviewed Papers*

## Curriculum as a Home Economics Construct

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### Abstract

*This paper teases out curriculum as a home economics construct so practitioners can ensure responsible and accountable practice from a curricular perspective. Beyond the readily recognizable state-approved curriculum, 12 other kinds of curricula are discussed (e.g., official, hidden, null, operational [taught], received [learned], concealed, societal, ideological). Curricular types vary from (a) what is supposed to be taught, (b) what should be taught, (c) what is actually taught, (d) what is learned outside formal schooling, (e) what is inferred by students, or (f) what is left out completely. Curricula are characterized as overt and covert, external and internal, intentional and unintentional, and articulated and unspoken. What counts as curriculum differs in the minds of officials, teachers, students, society, home, stakeholders, and the media. A key takeaway is that curriculum is ubiquitous making it very hard to pin down and clarify. But home economists are obligated to do just that because students' learning cannot be happenstance. Recommendations are tendered for future research.*

**KEYWORDS:** CURRICULUM, CURRICULUM AS A CONSTRUCT, TYPES OF CURRICULA, HOME ECONOMICS, EDUCATION

In its centennial Position Statement about what constitutes Home Economics, the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE, 2008) recognized curriculum as one of four key dimensions of practice (see Figure 1). Home economics<sup>1</sup> is “a *curriculum area* that facilitates students to discover and further develop their own resources and capabilities to be used in their personal life, by directing their professional decisions and actions or preparing them for life” (p. 1). This paper addresses curriculum and its many meanings with the author assuming that home economists cannot adequately address the curriculum area dimension of their practice with a narrow conceptualization of what constitutes curriculum. The broader their understanding of the curriculum construct, the more effective and accountable their practice in the curriculum area.

In more detail, curriculum herein is framed as a construct, meaning it is an idea “containing various conceptual elements, typically one to be subjective and not based on empirical evidence” (Lexico, n.d., para. 2). *Curriculum as a construct* is assumed to be the object of a person’s mind or thoughts. This means its existence depends on their mind (Bunge, 1974). That is, what home economists *think* counts as curriculum affects what they teach and how and with what degree of accountability to students and society. Thus, critical awareness of how one

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<sup>1</sup> Ideas herein pertain to home economics as well as family and consumer sciences, human ecology, human sciences, family studies, home ecology, home sciences, and household sciences.

understands curriculum impacts home economics practice. How home economists interpret what curriculum means to them matters. They must

...have the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to successfully implement equitable pedagogy and practice. Before teachers can effectively enrich their students' lives, they need to enrich their own understanding [of what constitutes curriculum]. ...Teachers need to be aware of not only their beliefs and attitudes but also critically examine the materials they utilize. ...Teachers need to "identify the ideological messages in texts" [so they can] make informed ... curriculum and pedagogical decisions. ... Teachers need to examine their own perspective and materials within their classroom to be effective. (Lauridsen, 2003, pp. 62-63)

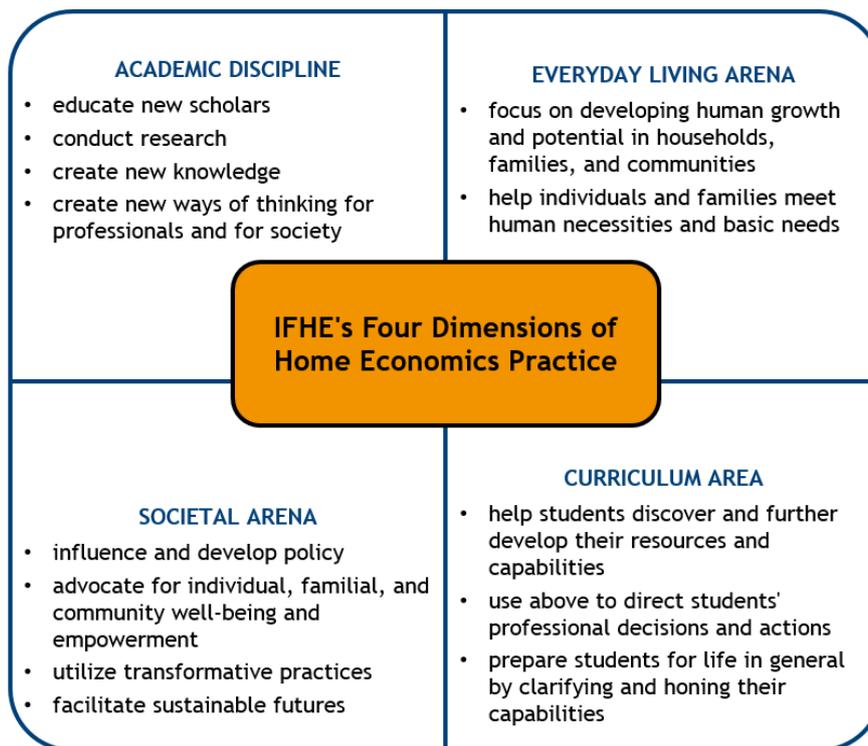


Figure 1 International Federation for Home Economics' dimensions of home economics practice

## Curriculum Defined

Curriculum is Latin *currus*, "racetrack or chariot" and *currere*, "to run" (Harper, 2022). Technically, a curriculum is thus a course to run, a learning track to follow while overcoming obstacles. But curriculum is not as clean cut as this definition suggests—it is more than the formal, state-sanctioned, official curriculum. Since 1881, the term curriculum has referred to systems of education with system meaning a set of things working together as a mechanism or as an interconnecting network (Harper, 2022).

Through formal, informal, and nonformal curricula, students learn strong lessons that resonate with them on several levels—emotional, social, and intellectual. This paper concerns the various kinds of curriculum beyond formal and why it matters that home economists have knowledge of them. Awareness of curricular diversity orients them to the nuances of the *education system* that can impact what students learn or not, intentionally or not, knowingly or not.

## Curricular Types

Wilson (2021) identified a variety of curricular types (see Table 1 for plain-language summary). Each is examined (drawing on Wilson unless otherwise stated) followed with an overview of commonalities and variations noted by other curriculum scholars (e.g., Cortes, 1981; Eisner, 1994; Glatthorn et al., 2012; Goodlad, 1979 and associates; Goodlad & Su, 1992). Taken together, the different kinds of curriculum represent a comprehensive approach to conceptualizing curriculum beyond the readily recognizable formal, state-approved curriculum.

Table 1 Kinds of Curriculum (adapted from Wilson, 2021)

Type of Curriculum	Definition
Formal, Explicit, Overt, Official	What is <i>supposed</i> to be taught
Pragmatic (Curriculum in Use)	What is <i>actually</i> taught
Unofficial	What teachers believe <i>ought</i> to be taught
Received (Learned)	What students <i>actually</i> learn and understand (tested and verified)
Concealed, Internal Schema	Learning in students' minds that is concealed from teachers (not tested)
Hidden, Covert, Implied	Strong, enduring educational ideologies and social norms that students learn without realizing it (not formally taught)
Social	What students learn when interacting with peers
Societal	What students learn via socializing forces outside of school
Concomitant/Home and Family	What students learn at home and in their family
Rhetorical	Rhetoric from stakeholders outside the education system that affects curricula
Phantom (Media Exposure)	Persistent messaging from mainstream media exposure that enculturates students to society's dominant views and to generational subcultures
Electronic	What students learn on the internet and through social e-networking
Null	What is <i>not</i> taught (what is <i>left out</i> of student learning intentionally or not)

As a caveat, scholars focused on curricular types tend to not categorize them, accepting them as standalone in nature. An examination of Table 1 reveals that they differ on several factors including but not limited to normativity, actualities, where learning occurs (in class, minds, families, communities, media), influential power figures, and visibility. These and other differences complicate initiatives to create any sort of overall taxonomy (Catalano, 2010). As a further caveat, the addition of home economics examples was avoided as a matter of principle to avoid taking critical, incisive power away from readers who are in a myriad of contexts. Evidence of different types of curricula will be relative ("Curriculum", 2015a; Smith, 2002). Adding examples could lead to many readers *not seeing themselves* in the paper.

### Formal, Explicit, Overt, Official

The *formal* curriculum is that which is approved, printed, and distributed by a government's Department of Education or equivalent policy body. It includes any curriculum guides, framework documents, outcome and standard documents, and approved or state-authored textbooks and resources (Di Mascio, 2013). It is called *explicit* because it is a clear, easy-to-understand and detailed account of what teachers are supposed to teach based on a combination of disciplinary standards, best practice, prevailing ideologies, and convincing rhetoric (Whitson, 2005; Wilson, 2021). It is called *overt* because it is an open expression of "the intended instructional agenda" (Wilson, 2021, p. 2) and a government document openly available for public scrutiny. Teachers are expected (nah ... required) to know and teach the *official* curriculum and use it as a framework, roadmap, or blueprint to plan their instruction (Whitson, 2005).

### Pragmatic (Curriculum in Use)

Pragmatic is Latin *pragmatikos*, “relating to fact” (Harper, 2022). This type of curriculum is called *pragmatic* because it refers to what actually happens in teaching practice (as a matter of fact) rather than what is supposed to happen; it is the *curriculum in use*. Despite the existence of an official curriculum, teachers often teach what they realistically *can* teach depending on a variety of factors but especially (a) subject-matter training and comfort level with state-mandated content, educational philosophy, and rationale; (b) instructional strategy competencies; (c) available time and other resources; and (d) competing duties and obligations.

### Unofficial

Unofficial means not authorized, not approved, and not sanctioned (Anderson, 2014). The unofficial curriculum constitutes what teachers *believe* should be taught, but their beliefs fall outside the realm of the official, state-approved curriculum. The unofficial curriculum can be intentional, planned, and subversive (i.e., purposefully teaching outside the lines), or it can be quite spontaneous through taking advantage of teachable moments. The unofficial curriculum is “what the teacher ‘really’ wants students to learn.” Its presence in the education system becomes entangled with the issue of an “individual teacher’s academic freedom” or how free teachers are to deliver unsanctioned learning without recrimination (Whitson, 2005, p. 2).

### Received (Learned)

This kind of curriculum concerns what students actually take away from the explicit, pragmatic, and unofficial curricula. It is called *received* because students (a) detect content that resonates with them, (b) accept what was taught and (c) internalize it to create new knowledge and understandings (per Anderson, 2014). They graft the new information onto their existing knowledge schema (see next). The extent of their learning can be affirmed and verified. Hallemeier argued that the received curriculum (i.e., the *learned* curriculum) is very important because “teaching is not the same as student learning” (2015, Slide #7). Teachers must be able to determine what students actually learned and can do this using both assessment (formative) and evaluation (summative).

### Concealed, Internal Schema

Wilson (2021) envisioned students’ *internal schema* as a curriculum that is concealed (unknown and unseen) from the teacher but plays a very powerful role in students’ learning. Put simply, each student comes to class with their own (a) lived experiences; (b) a prior knowledge schema; and (c) mental processes, learning styles, and learning preferences. This means that each student is affected differently by the learning environment, learning climate, pedagogical style, and content taught. This curriculum is really their *life course* that they bring to the class. Albeit with little control over the *concealed* curriculum, teachers can explore its depth and extent by using exit slips and reflective and debriefing exercises to find out what students know coming into a lesson and remember or take away (meaningful learning) from a lesson or learning activity (e.g., laboratory experience or field trip)(Wilson, 2021).

### Hidden, Covert, Implied

The *hidden* curriculum is very powerful and often insidious (i.e., gradually, subtly proceeding with harmful effect). Students do not even *know* they are learning about strong and durable ideologies, paradigms, norms, and values of the surrounding society. This curriculum is *implied* through seating arrangements, the use of classroom space, lining up for recess, singing the national anthem, saying a particular prayer or a blessing, raising hands to speak, competing for grades, or adhering to a rigid timetable. School boards, principals, teachers, aids, and custodial staff *subtly* (sometimes overtly) convey what is important to learn and what characterizes when learning is happening (Wilson, 2021). *Subtle* means a delicate, understated process that is

difficult to describe or analyze yet still reaps strong results (Anderson, 2014). Students *infer* what is important to learn and how it should be learned based on evidence in front of their eyes and their own reasoning processes (Wilson, 2021).

An example helps illustrate the hidden curriculum (see Figure 2). In situations like this, students are being educated, and they do not even *know* it because the curriculum is not openly acknowledged or displayed (i.e., it is *covert*). Dominant societal notions of what counts as and is worth learning are being conveyed indirectly and are basically *hidden* from view. But they exert incredibly enduring learning that is so invisible and covert that students cannot even find it to critique it. They unknowingly absorb lessons from classroom arrangements and scheduling and from teachers, administrators, and support staffs' actions and attitudes ("Hidden Curriculum", 2015; Lukman, 2019; Socol, 2020; Wilson, 2021).

A girl entered a classroom where she saw students sitting in a circle. She assessed the situation and then asked the teacher, "Why aren't we sitting in rows? We cannot learn if we are not sitting in rows." She then turned a seat toward the blackboard and sat down with her back to the class. The custodial staff often chastised this teacher for not putting the seats back in rows when her class was over. They said, "She's not doing it right." Turns out that other instructors had complained to the head of maintenance about the custodians who had left the seats in a circle arguing that "My students cannot learn in this seating arrangement. I have to waste valuable time putting the seats back in rows before I can start teaching."

Figure 2 Example of the hidden curriculum (Source: Author's personal experience)

### Social

Students also learn while engaging, interacting, and socializing with their peers. "Besides having fun (which has value in itself!), children learn social skills that include: [sic] communication, cooperation, problem-solving [sic], and perspective taking. Research shows that social skills help children succeed in school and in life, too" (Goyette, n.d., para. 3). The *social* curriculum is important because many students do not know what is expected of them in different social situations. With the teacher's guidance, they can learn these skills while academically and socially interacting with peers. Also, if scaffolded, they can learn appropriate ways to address conflict and help each other understand respective intentions and feelings all of which impact academic learning (Goyette, n.d.) (i.e., the received or learned curriculum).

### Societal

A society is an aggregate of people living together in a more-or-less orderly community (Anderson, 2014). The *societal* curriculum refers to all the learning that happens via socializing forces within this community (Wilson, 2021). The latter pertain to "the hidden hand of social forces beyond our control" (Perrino, 2000, para. 2) that guides, controls, and influences people's lives. Students learn from family, peer groups, churches, neighborhoods, workplaces, organizations, public opinion, and the media (mainstream, social media, and alternative press). These societal forces (people and institutions) deeply shape what students are exposed to and learn: values and norms, information and insights (Cortes, 1981; Perrino, 2000).

### Concomitant/Home and Family

Concomitant is Latin *concomitari*, "companion, accompany" (Harper, 2022). The *concomitant* curriculum is so called because it refers to students learning through companionship or from people accompanying them or associated with them. Wilson (2021) meant this adjective to pertain to what is learned or emphasized at home and within the family and its experiences. In

addition to being exposed to information (facts) and familial opinions about education, learning, school, and life-related matters, students learn religious expression, political orientations, values, ethics, morals, beliefs, skills, and preferred behaviors. Students also learn content, thinking skills, processes, and knowledge sanctioned by the family, which may or may not align with the state-sanctioned explicit and teacher-sanctioned pragmatic curricula.

### Rhetorical

Rhetoric is the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing to impress upon people one's opinions and beliefs (Pankl & Ryan, 2008). The *rhetorical* curriculum is called thus because it represents ideas from authority figures outside the formal education system (e.g., academics, education experts or pundits, curriculum consultants, policymakers and politicians, administrators). They proffer their thoughts on education (e.g., philosophy, pedagogy, content, evaluation) and the education system using speeches, working papers, state and consultancy reports, media interviews, policies, and regulations and guidelines. Their thoughts often reflect their critique of the education system or existing curricula and how it can be improved or updated to reflect *their* opinions and suggestions. Attendant change to existing, explicit even pragmatic curricula may be immediate, interminably long, or non-existent.

### Phantom (Media Exposure)

Phantom means illusory. Something is apparent to the senses (i.e., very real) but has no substantial or material existence—there is form but no substance (Anderson, 2014) (e.g., phantom pain associated with a missing limb). Wilson (2021) used this adjective to represent the curriculum that arises from the prevalent and persistent messaging (ideas, positions, opinions) about education via exposure to all form of media. Yarbrough et al. (1974) described the *phantom* curriculum as “the great unindexed body of data children acquire” (p. 226). Students *learn* when exposed to media, and this indiscriminate learning is relentless and omnipresent (i.e., widely and constantly encountered), especially with the advent of electronic portable devices (Mitchell, 2016) (e.g., tablets, smartphones, MP3 players, laptops, smartwatch).

Wilson (2021) asserted that sustained media exposure “enculturates students to the predominant meta-culture” (p. 2), and this learning is seldom exposed and critiqued. To unpack this statement, consider that enculturation refers to the process of learning and absorbing the dynamics of *one's own* surrounding culture and acquiring beliefs, practices, values, and norms that are appropriate or necessary to adapt to and fit into that culture and its worldviews (Grusec & Hastings, 2007).

*Meta* is Greek and can mean “in common with, participation, community” (Harper, 2022). The predominant metaculture that Wilson (2021) referred to is any culture or set of cultural phenomena that transcend (go far beyond) the boundaries of class, geography, epochs, and such (Lexico, n.d.). McIntosh (1989) explained that “like islands in the sea, one culture may appear unconnected to another when viewed superficially across the water. But in reality, they are one at foundation level—through the rock; [through] the metaculture” (p. 13). An example is how Celtic, Sanskrit, and other tribal peoples all use a circle to demonstrate the universal principle of continuity.

Metaculture is thus the background that underpins all the world's cultures and helps people experience a common identity as a human being (McIntosh, 1989). He explained that it is “the ground of our being ... that which brings meaningfulness into life” (McIntosh, 1989, p. 13). Wilson (2021) asserted that media exposure plays a pivotal role in defining that metacultural identity with the *phantom* curriculum (learned through media exposure) perpetuating it.

The phantom curriculum is also a powerful agent for acculturating students into cultures *other than* their own main culture especially narrower or generational subcultures, which can influence how the explicit and pragmatic curricula resonate with students (Wilson, 2021).

Subcultures share a set of secondary values (e.g., environmentalists) that differ from mainstream values. Generational subcultures include value differences among generations (25-year time spans). Western examples include the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, Generation Y, Generation Z, and Generation Alpha. Examples from other regions are available at “Generation” (2022).

### Electronic

Wilson (2021) used the adjective electronic to refer to what students learn while surfing the internet for personal (informal, recreational) and/or formal educational purposes. The *electronic* curriculum (a subcategory of the phantom curriculum) can expose students to lessons that are overt or covert, good or bad, correct or incorrect, informative or entertaining, current or dated, perverse or respectable. Students access this curriculum through websites, Blogs, wikis, chatrooms, listservs, instant messaging, emails, TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and all manner of social media platforms. Teachers delivering the explicit and pragmatic curricula must remain vigilant in teaching students to be critical consumers of the *electronic* curriculum so they can stave off manipulation, abuse, bullying, cyber-preying, and such. Teachers must teach netiquette, fair and legal usage, plagiarism and information piracy, and online security (personal identity and financial)(Wilson, 2021).

### Null

On a final note, all curricula noted thus far have focused on what students learn or are exposed to in school or in their personal life. The *null* curriculum refers to what students are *not* taught. Null is Latin *nullus*, “none” (Harper, 2022). Much is written about the null curriculum because what students are not taught is sometimes more telling than what they are taught. What is “left out of their learning” sends powerful messages to those savvy enough to discern and comment on the absence.

Neglecting to expose students to certain things (e.g., information and subject-matter content, processes, skills, competencies, values, norms, perspectives, attitudes) inadvertently teaches them that these things are not important enough to study, are not important to their life experiences nor to society. Worse still is that this lack of exposure deprives students of the chance to engage with, consider, critique, accept, or reject something that may have consequences on the kind of life they lead; the kinds of opinions they consider or hold; or perspectives, ideologies, and worldviews they explore and contemplate. Whether left out of their learning on purpose or not, the *null* curriculum sends powerful, impactful messages (subliminal and conscious) about what is important to learn, how, why, when, where and from whom (Wilson, 2021).

Consider what students would and would *not* learn if the explicit, pragmatic, or unofficial curricula taught war but not peace, competition but not cooperation, debates but not dialogue, certain cultures but not others, certain histories but not others, men’s experiences but not women’s, adults’ lives but not children’s, mainstream media but not alternative media, growth, development, and technological progress but not sustainability, stewardship, and moderation ... and so on.

The *null curriculum* refers to what students do not have the opportunity to learn. In this case, students are learning something based on the absence of certain experiences, interactions, and discourses in the classroom. For example, if students are not taught and expected to question, critically examine, and call out sexist language in books, they are learning something—that it may not be essential for them to engage in this work of critique and exposure. In other words, what is absent or not included in the curriculum can actually be immensely present in what students are learning. (Milner, 2017, p. 88)

## Other Conceptualizations of Curriculum

The ideas in this section may feel similar to each other, but there are actually subtle differences between how each source used the same label. This caveat addresses any perceived redundancies in their definitions. Glatthorn et al. (2012) and Goodlad and associates (1979) categorized curricula as either intentional or unintentional. The latter refer to the *hidden* curriculum, which produces changes in students' knowledge, values, perceptions, and behavior whether they are aware of it or not. Akin to Wilson's (2021) rhetorical approach, Glatthorn et al. (2012) recognized the *recommended* curriculum that contains what *ought* to be taught as espoused by a cadre of stakeholders (e.g., scholars, professional associations, commissions, policy-makers). This is sometimes called the *ideological* curriculum because it tends to reflect the existing fund of knowledge or prevailing (dominant) ideas about a subject, and it has been construed as the *formal* curriculum because it represents the interests of society as approved by educational authorities (Goodlad and associates, 1979). This is somewhat akin to Wilson's (2021) notion that formal means state-sanctioned and official.

Glatthorn et al. (2012) also discussed the *written* curriculum, which pertains to the rationale, goals, objectives, outcomes, content, learning activities, instructional materials, and evaluation techniques that are specified in a curriculum guide. Another type of curriculum is that which is actually supported with allocated and available resources. This *supported* curriculum is shored up with time allocations, personnel, textbooks, resources, and professional development (PD). Without this support, teachers would not be able to teach certain things and students would miss out on learning them.

Like Wilson's (2021) pragmatic curriculum in use, Glatthorn et al. (2012) identified the *taught* curriculum, which is what students see in action every day rather than what is written down in official guides. It reflects the teacher's considered judgement about what will be best for the students or what is feasible to teach given available support. The *tested* curriculum is what its name suggests—it is an assessment and evaluation of what students actually learned whether the tests are teacher-made, district-developed, or standardized external instruments. Finally, the *learned* curriculum is what students understand, retain, and know both from intentional and unintentional learning (akin to Wilson's, 2021, received curriculum).

Goodlad and Su (1992) further characterized curricula along several levels that resonate with Wilson's (2021) typology (see Table 1) but with different labels and interpretations. What they called the *societal* curriculum is generated by members of the public—stakeholders interested in education and the education system: politicians, bureaucrats, special interest group representatives, professionals, academics, and educational experts and specialists. The *institutional* curriculum is so called because members of educational institutions (e.g., administrators, superintendents, principals, educators) make modifications to the state-sanctioned official curriculum to fit their situation and context. They can modify it by making changes to (a) content and the way it is organized; (b) standards and outcomes and how they are prioritized and measured; (c) resources and how they are sourced and allocated; and (d) courses, modules, units, and even lesson plans.

Akin to Wilson's (2021) pragmatic and unofficial curricula, Goodlad and Su (1992) proposed the *instructional* curriculum, which is what teachers actually teach on a daily basis. Teachers base their instructions on what authority figures have deemed necessary or desirable for students to learn (i.e., the institutional or formal curriculum). Goodlad and associates (1979) called this same approach the *operational* curriculum because it is what teachers actually do—how they really operate in the classroom. They further warned that what *is* taught may not be what teachers *think* they taught.

Finally, Goodlad and associates (1979) defined the *experiential* curriculum as what students perceive and actually experience appreciating that (a) each student has a different learning experience (due to different learning styles and preferences) and (b) what they experience may be very different from what was intended in the formal, sanctioned curriculum or even what the teacher personally intended. As a caveat, *experiencing* something does not mean that it was *learned*.

## Summary

By way of summary, curricular types vary from (a) what is supposed to be taught, (b) what should be taught, (c) what is actually taught, (d) what is learned outside formal schooling, (e) what is inferred by students, or (f) what is left out completely. Curricula are characterized as overt and covert, internal and external, intentional and intentional, and articulated and unspoken. What constitutes curriculum varies in the minds of officials, teachers, students, society, home, stakeholders, and the media. Decisions about curriculum are made at the societal (ministries of education and school boards), institutional (school administrators and faculties) and instructional (teachers) level (Rogers, 1981). Hindsight allowed this rudimentary attempt to categorise the curricula in Table 1.

Curriculum is so much more than the official curriculum guide. Truly, curriculum is ubiquitous—everywhere all at once, which makes it very hard to pin down and clarify. But herein, home economists are being asked to do just that because awareness of these learning determinants and their powerful influence strengthens home economists' prowess as professionals practicing in the curriculum area (IFHE, 2008). In addition to taking active, professional roles in writing official, state-sanctioned curricula and ensuring the latter are transparent and forthright in their messaging (so the latter is readily discernible to an inquiring mind), home economists must critique the unspoken, invisible, and unintentional curricula. They must appreciate that "students absorb lessons in school that may or may not be part of the formal course of study; for example, how they should interact with peers, teachers, and other adults; how they should perceive different races, groups, or classes of people; or what ideas and behaviors are considered acceptable or unacceptable" (Lukman, 2019, p. 289).

"The unspoken or implicit academic, social, and cultural messages that are communicated to students while they are in school" ("Hidden Curriculum", 2015, para. 1) must be exposed, critically analyzed, and augmented with counter points and arguments. That said, Socol recognized that

...educators find it far easier to change the formal curriculum (they are often happy to do that) because they clearly know what it is. On the other hand, the hidden curriculum is called that because most people can look right at it, and not see it. (Socol, 2020, para. 9)

The information shared in this paper aids home economists in discerning and exposing unspoken, invisible, and unintentional learnings whether positive or negative.

## Recommendations for Future Research

This paper did not report original research about how home economists around the world conceive curriculum as a construct and use it in their practice, but its preparation and the peer review process inspired many ideas for future research on the topic:

Future research should focus on a critique of home economics practice through a curriculum-as-construct lens. How do we collectively understand curriculum as a construct, and what do practitioners think this understanding means for their practice? For example, Marulcu and Akbiyik (2014) envisioned using their findings about Turkish preservice teachers' perceptions of

curriculum ideology to inform revisions to teacher education programs. The same intent could inform research about how home economists view curriculum as a construct. Results and findings could inform innovations in home economics practice in the curriculum area (IFHE, 2008).

Curriculum is informed by ideologies, which are beliefs about what should be taught, why, and for what ends. Four common curriculum ideologies include scholar academic (disciplinary knowledge), child-centered, social efficiency, and social reconstructivism (Crowley, 2021; Schiro, 2007). Far beyond the scope of this paper, future researchers are encouraged to explore which curriculum ideologies (perspectives, orientations) are prevalent in global home economics practice and whether these ideologies best serve the profession's aim of (a) optimizing well-being and quality of life of individuals, families, and communities and (b) thriving in the curriculum area of practice (IFHE, 2008). What would need to change?

What counts as curriculum determines the function of schools, teachers, and students (Crowley, 2021). By association, how home economists conceive curriculum as a construct affects their function as an educational practitioner. Future research should focus on home economists' perceptions of the import of using the 13 types of curricula in their practice. How do they think curriculum as a construct affects their functions?

In this paper, the types of curricula were presented in Table 1 without an overt attempt to create a taxonomy or classification system. An example is Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of three domains of learning. Appreciating the challenges inherent in creating a curriculum construct taxonomy (Catalano, 2010), future researchers might want to empirically explore if a home economics-informed, curriculum-as-construct taxonomy is feasible or even necessary.

A related idea is creating a typology of home economics specific curricular types relative to how well they help the profession optimize quality of life and well-being while working in the curriculum area of practice. Creating a typology may be apropos because both typologies and constructs are conceptually based while taxonomies are developed empirically (Smith, 2002). Typologies are useful "when the genesis of something is unknown" (McGregor, 2018, p. 55). They break down the component parts of an overarching *concept* into several dimensions, types, or styles. An example is the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*, which breaks personality down into four dimensions (Myers & Myers, 1980). McGregor (2004) conceptualized a typology of home economics styles along four dimensions. What might a home economics-informed, curriculum-as-construct typology look like?

"When the terms *curriculum* or *curricula* are used in educational contexts without qualification, specific examples, or additional explanation, it may be difficult to determine precisely what the terms are referring to" ("Hidden Curriculum", 2015, Textbox 1). Future research should qualify whether the historically well-established curricula in Table 1 resonate globally with home economists or if they are drawing on different perspectives of what constitutes curriculum as a construct.

Hand in hand with the previous recommendation is the idea of collecting from home economists a global range of examples and evidence of the 13 types of curricula in their experiences and contexts. Insights into this diversity of curricular perceptions could inform any IFHE initiatives related to helping home economics practitioners see themselves acting in *the curriculum area* to facilitate students' discovery and further development of their own personal resources and capabilities (see Figure 1).

## Conclusion

Given that IFHE (2008) envisioned home economists using curriculum to help students “discover and further develop their own resources and capabilities to be used in their personal life” (p. 1), it is imperative that home economists gain a rich appreciation for the complexity of the curriculum construct. More than the official, state-approved curriculum, it reaches into the visible and invisible arms of learning. Students learn things or not—intentionally or not. Their education and learning must not be happenstance. Cognizance of curriculum as a construct holds home economists accountable for their professional work in this practice arena. Knowing what they know after reading this paper, home economists can responsibly choose to examine and reflect on how they interpret curriculum as a construct and change their practice accordingly.

## Biography

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## Development of a Climate Change Education Program Using Knowledge of Behavioral Science Such as Nudges and Verification of its Effects in Decreasing CO<sub>2</sub> at Home

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### Abstract

*Climate change is a critical issue. However, the effects of climate change education have not been quantified. This paper investigates the contribution of education in curtailing climate change by measuring household energy consumption and behaviors. We developed an educational program incorporating the United Nation's Sustainable Developmental Goals, active learning, and behavioral science insights, including nudges and the stages of change model, and enrolled 2016 junior high and high school students throughout Japan. After excluding those who did not provide consent for their data to be used as well as outliers from the statistical data, finally 300 students were included in the analysis.*

*Each student recorded their home electricity and gas meter values and checked the implementation of 16 energy-saving behavior items. Implementation of the 16 items improved by 22.4 percentage points after the lessons. Decreases in electricity and gas usage were particularly notable following the third lesson. Average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated by electricity and gas decreased 3.7% (0.39 kg/day) per household. We found that conducting climate change education in junior and senior high schools contributed to decreasing household CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.*

*The developed climate change education program led to a 3.7% reduction in household CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, confirmed by meter readings, and the results of the questionnaire survey revealed changes in awareness and energy-saving behavior. If the developed program were widely introduced, it might contribute to CO<sub>2</sub> reduction at home.*

**KEYWORDS:** CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION, ENERGY-SAVING BEHAVIOR, CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSION REDUCTION, BEHAVIOR CHANGE, NUDGE

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## Introduction

Extreme weather due to climate change is a critical issue for humanity; the Framework Convention on Climate Change also points out the importance of education on climate change (United Nations, 1992). The impact of education on awareness and behavioral changes in Japan has been previously reported by the authors (Matsubaguchi & Mikami, 2015; Mikami, 2018; Mikami et al., 2010, 2015, 2019; Mikami & Nagao, 2011a, 2011b, 2012; Nagao et al., 2007; Nagao & Mikami, 2016). Similar studies have been conducted worldwide (Boudet et al., 2014, 2016; Aguirre-Bielschowsky et al., 2018; Ferrari-Lagos et al., 2019). However, the extent to which such education actually contributes to decreases in household CO<sub>2</sub> emissions has not been quantified because it requires study participants to read meter values at home and report them to the investigators. This paper investigates whether climate change education can contribute to reductions in household CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by measuring actual energy consumption and the implementation of energy-saving behaviors.

There are concerns that climate change induced global warming will lead to rising sea levels through seawater expansion and melting glaciers, and extreme weather events will become more frequent, damaging natural ecosystems, living environments, and agriculture. In response, the world took its first step toward a decarbonized society when the Paris Agreement came into effect in 2016 (United Nations, 2015).

Japan has an interim target of a 26% decrease in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and other greenhouse gases by fiscal 2030 (as of the fiscal year 2013). However, to meet this target, the household sector would have to significantly decrease emissions by roughly 40% from fiscal 2013 levels (Ministry of the Environment, 2015).

The Italian government has made climate change and the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) part of the compulsory curriculum for all public schools from 2020 and has decided to carry out training for teachers. On the global stage, Greta Thunberg's speech at the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has sparked a growing number of student-led strikes involving teachers and parents, and expectations for education are growing.

In Japan, the Act on the Promotion of Environmental Conservation Activities through Environmental Education, which came into full force on October 1, 2012, is promoting environmental education. However, even though references to environmental education are scattered throughout the Course of Study and textbooks stipulated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the learning content is not systemized, and there is a lack of systematicity and coordination among subjects and grades (Matsubaguchi & Mikami, 2015). Furthermore, the outcomes of such education are rarely reported, and most such reports are little more than qualitative assessments; in other words, more thorough research is needed (Mikami et al., 2015).

In the present study, we developed a climate change education program aimed at junior high and high school students in Japan. The program, which is incorporated in home economics classes, encourages energy-saving behavior and provides an opportunity to learn about environmentally friendly consumer behaviors. The program is designed such that the energy-saving impact of environmental education can be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. To verify the overall effects, we measured household energy consumption as a quantitative indicator, and used implementation of energy-saving behaviors and surveys assessing motivation to take action as qualitative indicators. Using these measures, we evaluated the impact of education in terms of whether those receiving this education could reduce their household energy use and promote energy-saving behaviors. Accordingly, clarifying

the effects of climate change education through this program should provide evidence of the importance of climate change education.

This research formed part of the Ministry of Environment's Project to Promote Voluntary Measures in Households and Others Through Information Dissemination (Nudges) that Promote Low-Carbon Behavioral Changes launched in 2017 (Ministry of the Environment, 2017).

## Research Methodology and Details

### Developing a Climate Change Education Program

Our idea was to maximize the impact of climate change education. This program was developed by incorporating both the latest findings of behavioral science and the methods used in Japanese education so far, based on the Japanese education concept of fostering students' ability to think, make judgements, and express themselves. These acquired skills and knowledge are necessary for problem solving. Specifically, we adopted an active learning approach that involved the following behavioral science methodologies: nudge theory, which won its author, Richard H. Thaler, the 2017 Nobel Prize in Economics and has techniques for promoting voluntary choices of desirable behavior (Thaler, 2007; Thaler & Sunstein, 2008, 2009); the transtheoretical model, that is the behavior change stage model which was derived from studies on smoking cessation and improving health; and commitment, which is a behavioral planning method.

The intention of the *nudge* used in this program was not to regulate, teach, or guide as before, but to respect the freedom of choice of individuals, that is, not to prohibit choice, but to elicit a voluntary change in their behavior. There are several methods for nudging, but we adopted three points in particular. The first is the use of illustrations related to energy-saving behavior that can be understood without explanation. The illustrations appeared many times in the text and were printed as stickers that could be used as reminders at home. The second point is to show a total of 16 items—8 behaviors that involve changing device settings and 8 behaviors that involve daily actions—from among many energy-saving actions, and to provide a concrete image of the action to be taken. The text shows the specific setting method as well as photos and illustrations of the device. The third point is to recommend changing default settings, such as the temperature for heating and cooling devices, so that children can quickly feel the effects while measuring energy use. For example, by lowering the default temperature of the water heater, the energy saving effect can be expected to continue. Based on the above, we developed textbooks, digital teaching materials, and the abovementioned energy-saving action stickers.

We also intended for the program to provide practical education on SDGs, with a particular focus on *Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy*, *Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production*, *Goal 13: Climate action*, *Goal 14: Life below water*, and *Goal 15: Life on land*.

This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of our institution (Approval No. Ita H29-12, Ita H30-29).

### Pilot Climate Change Education Program to Promote Energy-Saving Behavior

#### *Participants*

We recruited schools from throughout Japan to avoid bias toward any particular region and obtained the cooperation of seven junior high schools and six high schools. After excluding those who did not provide consent for their data to be used as well as outliers from the statistical data, finally 300 students were included in the analysis.

### Program Design

The pilot energy-saving education program took place from April to July and September to November of 2017 and 2018, during mid-seasons that saw little seasonal differences. With a view toward its future nationwide rollout, teachers at the participating schools conducted the lessons during weekly home economics classes. We conducted a training session for all the teachers involved, in which we explained the program and the textbook and provided instruction about the learning contents and how to teach them. In addition, we prepared reference materials for the teachers, as discussed later. As shown in Table 1, 50-minute lessons were held once weekly, actual energy usage was recorded by the students at home, and energy-saving action behaviors were measured using questionnaire surveys.

Table 1 Learning flow

Step	Subtitle theme	Goals	Main learning activities
Step 1	Prior learning	Reading electricity, gas, and water meters	Students learn about various forms of energy used in the house; location of electricity, gas, and water meters; and how to read and record meter readings.
Step 2	Issue discovery	What is the relationship between global environmental issues and energy conservation?	Students become aware of environmental issues that result from climate change accompanying global warming. By conducting research to create a newspaper, they deepen their understanding of global environmental issues. They consolidate and implement measures within reach in their daily lives.
Step 3	Investigating and planning solutions	What energy-saving measures can students take themselves?	Students become aware if they are wasting energy and what arrangements enable them to conserve energy. They become aware of the importance of their energy-saving behavior and implement energy-saving behavior at home and school.
Step 4	Activities aimed at solutions	Experience and implement power-saving measures Note: One of the items listed in the right-hand column	Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electricity (power-saving experiment)</li> <li>• Gas (eco-cooking)</li> <li>• Water (water-saving experiment)</li> <li>• Overall (energy-saving behavior card game)</li> </ul>
Step 5	Improving evaluation of practice activities	Make a declaration for a sustainable society	Publish newspaper created via previous research activities and deepen each other's knowledge and make personal commitment (declaration) to save energy.  Look back on results of meter readings, and check how much household gas, power, and water consumption has declined by engaging in energy-saving behavior.
Step 6	Post learning	Look back on own lifestyle	Submit remaining materials including meter reading sheets and challenge letter from "Dr Energy-saving."

We hypothesized that the education program would elicit behavioral changes in the children that would influence their families and lead to reduced energy consumption during the program compared with that before the program as well as increase the number of energy-saving action items practiced in daily life.

The program consists of six steps, with each 50-minute class focusing on a different step. In addition, the students were asked to record the electricity, gas, and water meter readings and practice each lesson's energy-saving behaviors at home. Questionnaire surveys were conducted for each step in order to evaluate changes in motivation for engaging in energy-saving practices as well as 16 items of energy-saving behavior. The analyses of these surveys were comprehensively verified by combining these quantitative indicators and qualitative indicators.

Step 1 reviews what kind of energy is used at home and explains how to measure energy use. In this step, no attempt is made to alter the students' behavior toward energy consumption. Step 2 explains energy conservation, including the relationship between climate change and daily life as well as how energy savings can be realized by making simple adjustments to device

settings. In addition, students begin researching a topic that they will write about in the form of a newspaper article to be presented in Step 5. Step 3 involves learning multiple specific energy-saving behaviors and understanding eight items that are most effective in daily life. Step 4 provides four types of experiential learning depending on the school situation: a power-saving experiment, a water-saving experiment, eco-cooking, and playing energy-saving action card games.

Step 5 is the presentation of the newspaper article the students have written based on their own research. The aim of this step is to have the students think about actions to take in. Step 6 encourages the students to reflect on what they have learned through the program. The program flow is illustrated in Figure 1.

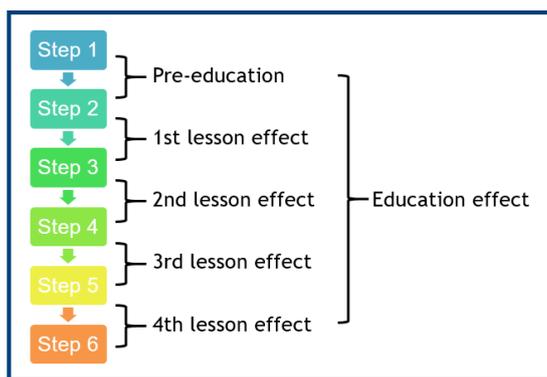


Figure 1 Project scheme

This program design is based on Japan’s new course of study, which recommends that home economics classes be organized as follows:

1. discovery of problems in daily life
2. examination and planning of solutions,
3. practical activities for solving the problems,
4. evaluation/improvement of practical activities, and
5. practice at home or in the community.

These five areas correspond to Steps 2 to 6 of the developed program, respectively.

Furthermore, our program is designed from the viewpoint of the transtheoretical model. In this model behavioral change is considered to occur through each of the following stages: indifferent period, interest period, preparation period, execution period, and maintenance period. Our previous research (Mikami, Akaishi & Nagao, 2019) suggested that it is necessary to provide information suitable for each stage in order to elicit energy-saving behavior (Table 2).

Table 2 Support measures according to the transtheoretical model

Stage		Support measures
Precontemplation	Does not intend to act within the next 6 months	Provide information on the need for changing energy-saving behavior
Contemplation	Intends to start the behavior within the next 6 months	Provide information on methods and processes for changing energy-saving behavior
Preparation	Ready to act within the next 30 days	Setting energy-saving action goals and coaching for behavior change
Action	Has recently begun behavioral change and intends to continue	Coaching and feedback for sustaining energy-saving behavior
Maintenance	Sustained efforts for more than 6 months and intends to maintain effort going forward	Continuous provision of information and follow-up to sustain the transformation of energy-saving behavior

The educational course involves six steps, which are taught over 6 weeks in weekly home economics classes. The educational effects of each step are evaluated by questionnaire surveys after each class and by changes in electricity, gas, water meter readings recorded by the students at home.

*Measuring Energy Use*

The students learned how to take measurements from electricity and gas meters at home so that they could check the impacts of energy-saving behaviors. Students visually checked the values displayed on their home meters and recorded them on a worksheet. Electricity and gas consumption as well as the corresponding CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were estimated from these measurements. To analyze energy consumption data, we used the following screening criteria: availability of all measurement dates and measured values for electricity and gas; final measurement date within 2 weeks of the end of lessons; and positive consumption volume (as measured by current reading minus previous reading).

The upper and lower limits of the ratio to the previous reading were set at 1.5 × the interquartile range; based on these data, we excluded as outliers those participants whose final reading was in the upper or lower 1% of the distribution. Electricity and gas consumption were temperature-corrected for the post-lesson figures using the formulas shown in Figure 2, and we estimated the household energy consumption for those who did not receive energy-saving education (base figure). Using the ratio of the base figure and the measured figure ([measurement/base figure] - 1), outliers (5% above and below) were excluded from the data, taking into account differences in area and temperature fluctuations.

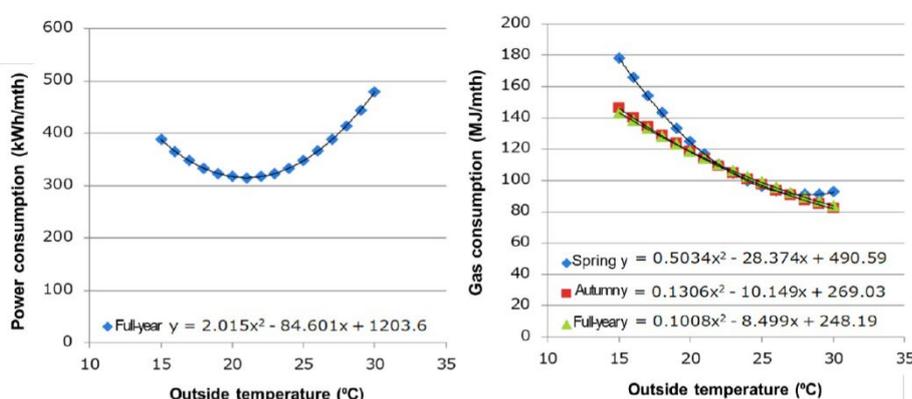


Figure 2 Approach to temperature correction (Kanto region)

Note: Based on a monthly household survey on energy use (*Family Income and Expenditure Survey* by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and the Statistics Bureau of Japan, 2018) covering 5 years (60 months) from 2012 to 2017 and temperature data from the Japan Meteorological Agency. Outside temperatures corresponding to regional classifications in the household survey were created using adjusted municipality temperatures with weighted average number of households per municipality. Energy usage is not available for city gas from the household survey, so this was calculated by dividing the amount of spending by the city gas price (for 1465.12 MJ) from the retail price statistics survey (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications).

Using the formulae below, we converted measured electricity and gas consumption into CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which we displayed as overall household CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to energy use.

$$\text{CO}_2 \text{ emissions (kg) from electricity} = \text{Electricity consumption (kWh)} \times 0.65^*$$

$$\text{CO}_2 \text{ emissions (kg) from gas} = \text{Gas consumption (m}^3\text{)} \times 2.21^\ddagger$$

\* FY2017 average thermal power coefficient in the Plan for Global Warming Countermeasures (2016 cabinet decision)

‡ City gas (per m<sup>3</sup>) 2.21 kg (CO<sub>2</sub>/m<sup>3</sup>): Calculated using the typical composition for Tokyo Gas's 13A city gas

*Measuring Awareness of Energy-Saving Behavior and Impact of Behavioral Changes*

To measure the practice of energy-saving behavior, we set 16 items in total: eight concerning changes to appliance settings (improving default settings) and eight everyday activities (improving habits). We chose items likely to generate results in a short time period and easy for junior high and high school students to carry out (Table 3), which could decrease household CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by roughly 20% compared with the case of no educational intervention.

Table 3 Changes to implementation rate

n = 300		A	B*	C <sup>†</sup>	D	E
		CO <sub>2</sub> decrease (kg /year/ household)	Before lessons (%)	After lessons (%)	(d = c - b) Change in percentage points (%)	(e = a × d) Estimated CO <sub>2</sub> decrease (kg/day/ household)
Appliance settings	1 Kitchen water heater on lowest setting	51	28.3	57	28.7	0.04
	2 Bath temperature setting lowered	19	54.3	78.3	24	0.01
	3 Shower temperature lowered	28	56	77.7	21.7	0.02
	4 Washing machine on eco-/water saving mode	3	37.7	68.7	31	0
	5 Power plug removed when not in use	73	38.7	71	32.3	0.06
	6 Fridge set to medium or weak	40	47.7	73.7	26	0.03
	7 TV set to energy-saving mode	99	25.7	52.3	26.7	0.07
	8 Room temperature set to 28°C and 20°C in winter	75	40.7	65	24.3	0.05
Everyday activities	9 Turn lights off when out of room	43	86	94.7	8.7	0.01
	10 TV off when not watching	37	79.7	93.3	13.7	0.01
	11 Using toilet half-flush button when appropriate	4	61	82	21	0
	12 Closing toilet lid	33	74	89.3	15.3	0.01
	13 Keeping showers under 5 minutes	120	22.7	56.3	33.7	0.11
	14 Ensuring bathtub lid is put back into position	39	64	79	15	0.02
	15 Only boiling water when needed	83	63.7	86.3	22.7	0.05
	16 Putting lids on cooking pots	18	77.7	92	14.3	0.01
<b>Overall</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>53.6</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>0.47</b>	
<b>Appliance settings</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>41.1</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>26.8</b>	<b>0.29</b>	
<b>Everyday activities</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>66.1</b>	<b>84.1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0.19</b>	

\*B = Number of students who answered that they were implementing behaviors before the educational program / 300 students

†C = Number of students who answered that they were continuing to implement the learned behaviors after the educational program / 300 students

Throughout the program, during each lesson, the participants circled the energy-saving behaviors they were able to accomplish out of the 16 items. We measured changes in implementation before and after the energy-saving lessons and aggregated the results. In addition, we evaluated interest in environmental issues and implementation of energy-saving behavior, using a questionnaire survey with items rated on a five-point Likert scale. The effect of education was inferred from the ratio of the number of students who answered that they were implementing behaviors before the educational program to the number of students who answered that they were continuing to implement the learned behaviors after the educational program.

## Results and Implications

### The Developed Climate Change Education Program

This program aims at effective education and applying behavioral insights, developed as shown in Table 1. Lessons were held six times, once weekly in principle, in line with Steps 1-6.

Figure 3 shows the primary resource, the textbook developed for student use. We also developed the following materials: worksheets for recording household electricity and gas meter data; worksheets for students to make notes about their own energy-saving behavior; a newspaper article template for investigative learning with the aim of encouraging commitment; action plan sheets for retrospective learning using the behavioral planning method; stickers with pictures that reminded and encouraged students of voluntary energy-saving behavior; and reference materials for teachers, including lesson plans and digital teaching materials. This program encouraged data entry on the above-mentioned worksheets for not only measuring the effects of teaching but also for encouraging students to set their own hypothesis and verify the results of engaging in energy-saving behavior by visualizing energy use and behavior.



Figure 3 Textbook for students

The program used the transtheoretical model, which is often used for smoking cessation and improving dietary habits. Previous research has confirmed that it is difficult to generate educational outcomes when teaching individuals who are disinterested (Mikami et al., 2019), so the initial focus of the program was to improve environmental literacy and eliminate indifference as well as incorporate content that resonates at each step.

We also kept in mind the global education trend of active learning, and therefore included in-class group discussions, debates, group work, and investigative learning. To put into practice

the knowledge the students had acquired, the program also included experiential learning such as power-saving experiments, eco-cooking, and gamification.

### Changes in CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions due to Education

Data on the households that were involved in the educational program are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Participants' household status

		Number in study	Share (%)
Persons		300	100
Housing type	Detached house	189	63
	Complex	107	35.7
	No answer	4	1.3
Household size (persons)	2	8	2.7
	3	72	24
	4	135	45
	5	57	19
	≥6	22	7.3
	No answer	6	

### Changes in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from energy (electricity and gas)

Figure 4 shows the cumulative decreases in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from electricity and gas consumption. A major change is apparent around the third lesson. We believe that this change is due to experiential learning. The rates of decrease in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions shown in Figure 5 were calculated as:

$$(\text{measured value} - \text{base value}) / \text{base value}$$

Without any instruction, the estimated value was 10.6 kg/day/household, but that value decreased to 10.2 kg/day/household in households with students who had taken one or more lessons in the course, a change of about 3.7%. The t-test confirmed statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.01$ ) before and after teaching.

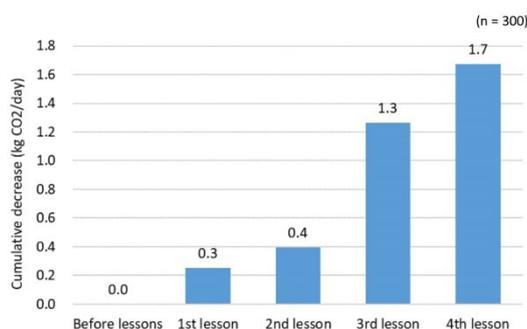


Figure 4 Cumulative decrease in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from electricity and gas

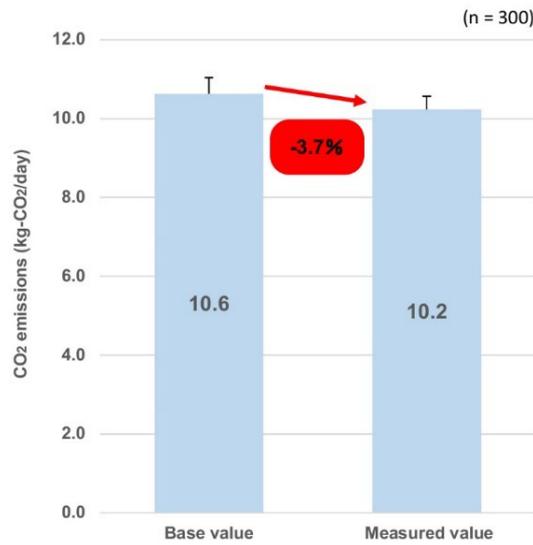


Figure 5 Change in household electricity and gas CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

**Impact of Energy-Saving Education on Interest in Energy-Saving Behavior and Behavior Changes**

We clarified changes in household electricity and gas consumption due to education. We also used a questionnaire survey to investigate which actions affected these changes and change in interest in environmental issues and awareness of carrying out eco-friendly energy-saving behavior. The results show changes in the practice rate of energy-saving behaviors and the changes in students as evidenced by the editorial postscript of the newspaper they created.

*Energy-saving behavior implementation rates*

As shown in Figure 6, interest in environmental issues improved from 54.5% before the lessons to 72.9% after the lessons. In line with the improvement in interest, behavioral implementation rates also improved as shown in Table 2, and for the 16 items overall, the average improvement was 53.6% to 76.0%. The implementation rate before the lessons was low for all categories concerning changes to appliance settings at 41.1% on average, and high for everyday activities at 66.1% on average. After the lessons, implementation rates improved to 68.0% and 84.1%, respectively.

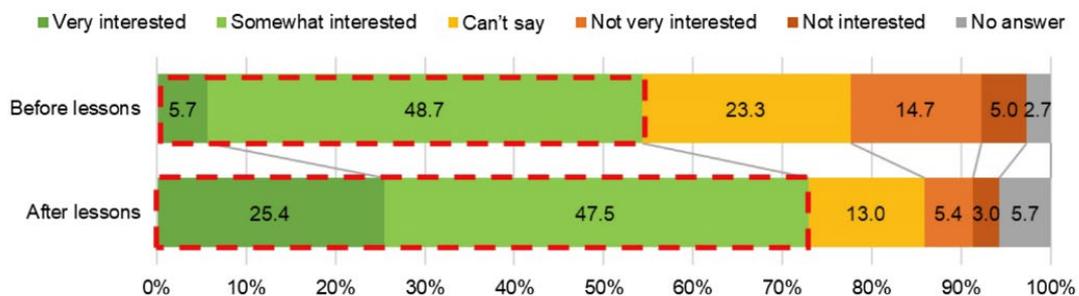


Figure 6 Changes to interest in energy conservation after lessons

Decreases in household CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were hypothesized from implementation of set behaviors. Based on improvements in implementation rates, decreases presumed to be due to the lessons averaged 0.47 kg/day/household. Although this is nothing more than an assumption, Figure 5

shows measured decreases of 0.39 kg/day/household, suggesting that individual changes in behavior resulted in changes to the numbers.

Considering the items in more detail, the implementation rate of three items was below 30% before the lessons:

1. *Kitchen water heater on lowest setting*
7. *TV on energy-saving mode*, and
13. *Keeping showers to under 5 minutes*.

Implementation rates climbed over the course of the lessons to about 50%. Particularly for energy-saving behavior involving changing appliance settings, once settings are changed, appliances can be used as is, which has good prospects for results. However, in some instances, the participants were unable to change their behavior for reasons such as not knowing how to set the device, inability of the device to be set, and opposition of other family members to energy-saving behaviors, including those related to water heaters and TVs. It takes time to change household behavior as well, so society first needs equipment that enables consumers to save energy easily, starting at the appliance-manufacturing stage. Furthermore, it is necessary to promote energy-saving behavior through education.

For seven of the items involving everyday activities (excluding 13. *Keeping showers to under 5 minutes*), implementation rates were already high before the lessons, at over 60%, and rose to over 80% after the lessons. The editor's postscripts in the newspaper assignments (described below) show that through the education program, the students came to understand the monetary savings and benefits of saving energy, and explaining the reasons led to understanding of actions and the desire to implement them, suggesting that the students' awareness of energy-saving behavior in their daily lives.

#### *Energy-saving awareness and behavioral change as revealed by analyzing editor's postscripts in the newspaper assignment*

In addition to energy-use data and energy-saving behavior implementation rates, to shed light on understanding and desire to implement energy-saving behavior, we analyzed and extracted the most frequently used vocabulary from the free description editor's postscripts written after the newspaper writing assignment ( $n = 300$ ). In the transtheoretical model, behavioral change requires moving through the pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance periods. Research to date has shown that individuals move from cognition and understanding through improved awareness to improved behavior during these stages (Akamatsu & Nagahashi, 2008; Akamatsu & Takemi, 2007; Mikami et al., 2019; Prochaska & Norcross, 2007; Takemi & Akamatsu, 2013).

Analysis of the results revealed that the most frequently occurring verbs moved from *know* and *understand* (related to cognition and understanding), through to *being aware of* and *keeping in mind* (improving awareness), to *can do* and *do* (improving behavior).

Figure 7 shows excerpts of comments related to energy-saving behavior. We confirmed that through the newspaper assignment, the students had the opportunity to become aware of global environmental issues such as global warming, and thus take measures for the environment, and implement actions via an eco-declaration.

<p>A lot of people told me to save energy, and I used to wonder why, but after reading and investigating, I learned that it was easy to do at home. I want to look for things I can do myself at home, where I can take initiative.</p>
<p>Up till now I had no interest in energy conservation or environmental problems. People in my family were worse than me and left the lights on and wasted a lot of water, things I did not feel good about. I didn't say anything because I thought it was not the place of someone like me who knew nothing about energy-saving, money, or the environment. However, through this newspaper, I learned a lot of things. I came to think that in the future it would be good if I could change the attitudes of not just myself, but my family, and people around me.</p>
<p>I thought I was taking showers in under 5 minutes when I measured the time to see if I could save, but I was surprised to find I was taking longer. Later, I was forgetting less and less often to turn off the lights on the stairs, which I sometimes forgot to do, and I became more aware of saving energy. I thought that we should do as much as we can.</p>
<p>After taking these lessons, I learned how much energy I had usually wasted. These lessons were extremely good for me. I think that global warming is progressing rapidly, so it is important for each of us individually in cooperation with our families to be aware of saving energy in our activities. In my lifestyle from now on I want to use the experiences I learned in the classes</p>

Figure 7 Excerpts of free reflections on energy-saving behavior in the newspaper editorial postscript comments

## Conclusion

In this research, we developed a climate change education program aimed at junior and senior high school students (aged 13-18 years) that is easy to adopt in the classroom. We evaluated the energy-savings impact of the lessons quantitatively and qualitatively to investigate what kind of contribution the program could make to Japan's energy conservation education and elucidated the following.

We measured actual household energy consumption using electricity and gas meter readings. We confirmed the impact of this climate change education on decreasing the consumption of electricity and gas. In particular, decreases were large from the third lesson, which involved experiential learning. Decreases in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from electricity and gas consumption resulted in lower emissions of roughly 3.7% or 0.39 kg/day/household.

We also investigated interest in environmental issues and implementation rates of energy-saving behaviors. Interest in environmental issues climbed by 18.5 percentage points after the lessons and the implementation rates in 16 energy-saving behaviors rose by 22.4 percentage points on average. There were some items where implementation rates remained low after the program, but the commonly cited reasons were that the student did not know how to change either device settings or negative household opinions toward energy-saving behavior.

Classroom lessons included a newspaper writing assignment. Analyzing the commentary in the editor's notes, we found words that indicated improvements in attitudes such as *being aware of* and *keeping in mind* and improvements in behavior such as *will use*, *can*, and *continue*.

We found that conducting climate change education in junior and senior high schools promoted changes in awareness and behavior and contributed to decreases in household CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

In the future, as we move toward a decarbonized society, we would like to consider the optimal approach to introducing such programs in Japanese education settings and investigate how to promote the dissemination of climate change education based on the results of this paper.

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## Finding Home Economics When It Has Never Been Lost: A Journey of Discovery for Pre-Service Teachers

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### Abstract

*The efforts to have home economics recognised as an area of study in tertiary education has been an ongoing struggle. Throughout the twentieth century there were concerted efforts to have departments of home economics in Western university settings. However, the closure of those departments has been a feature of university restructuring since the 1980s. At the same time, home economics education in schools continues but with a reduced capacity to graduate home economics teachers, schools are increasingly facing shortages of specialist teachers (see Smith & de Zwart, 2010).*

*This paper provides insight into the experiences of undergraduate students who are specialising in home economics education in British Columbia, Canada. It explores their ideas about how their undergraduate studies have prepared them for this specialisation, the insights that they gained from their experiences and then what retrospect they would have preferred to do differently. The insights offered by these pre-service teachers also highlight the importance of not just being focused on skill development around cooking and sewing but to also consider ways to induct these young professionals into the home economics field.*

**KEYWORDS:** PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION, PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

### Context

Universities have been viewed as spaces where the educational experience focused on cultivating and disciplining the mind, and where an education was pursued as an end in and of itself (Côté & Allahar, 2011; Miller, 2007). However, since the 1980s there has been continual restructuring projects within universities enabling a shift from this classical liberal-humanist model towards managerialism. Ball (2012) describes how academics work under managerialism needs to attend to knowledge production where the knowledge worker is required to be flexible, malleable, and innovative while also paying attention to productivity. The production of knowledge in this way has a cost, a cost that Inglis argues “is divorced from people, their allegiance to value, their life commitments” (2011). While the change in model from the classic liberal towards managerialism, each with its own principles, both have at their core promulgation of privileged male interests (Ferree & Zippel, 2015; Mifsud, 2019) creating what is described as a “chilly” climate for academics who are women (Britton, 2017; Chilly Collective, 1995; Hall & Sandier, 1982;). An important point is that both models generate and sustain “gendered organizations nested within a gendered hierarchy” (Britton, 2017, p. 5). Interdisciplinarity teaching, learning and research is increasingly being spoken about within the neoliberal university as long as it generates knowledge that can be used as a commodity within

Renwick, K. & Bauer Edstrom, M. (2022). Finding home economics when it has never been lost: A journey of discovery for pre-service teachers. *International Journal of Home Economics*, 15(1), 171-182.

competitive markets (Bergland, 2018). While interdisciplinarity is a key element of home economics professional practice, the knowledge that is generated has little to no value for senior management dominated by masculine culture (O'Connor et al., 2015)

The presence of home economics within university contexts has been the result of a difficult journey with a need to justify its presence (Rossiter, 1997) on a regular basis. Having worked to develop departments of home economics in Western universities through the twentieth century, there has been what seems to be endless engaging in re-labelling including consumer science or human ecology. Rossiter (1997) comments on the repeated forays by American university presidents in the 1960s and 1970s to get rid of home economics. During the 1980s and 1990s Canadian and Australian departments of home economics were an early victim in university restructuring projects to meet neoliberal posturing around corporate need for human capital (Bergland, Shobe & Trinidad, 2018; Côté & Allahar, 2011). They were cauterized and assets were redistributed. If lucky, faculty were relocated to surviving spaces such as family specialists moving into sociology, food studies into dietetics/food systems and textiles into theatre costuming or fashion. Such practice has led Elias to point out that home economics departments “have ceased to exist on American campuses” (2008, p. 172). The loss of dedicated home economics departments has created a vacuum, an absence of academics engaged in research and writing that contributes to a viable and evolving field that focuses on achieving “optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities” (IFHE, 2008, p. 1).

Teacher education has been a long-standing location for home economics education. Stage (1997) notes American teacher education programs for home economics teachers as early as 1917. Across Europe the adoption of the Bologna Process in higher education offers a standardised approach that enables countries such as Portugal (Vieira et al., 2018) and Finland (Tirri, 2014) to offer a 3-year undergraduate program to be paired with a 2-year professional program for teachers including teacher education in home economics in Estonia (Paas, 2015). In Japan teacher accreditation follows either the completion of a dedicated home economics education undergraduate program or after completing a teacher education program at the master's level (Japan Association of Home Economics Education, 2012). Whatever the modelling of teacher education Kitchen and Petrarca (2016) note that there is a consistency through an interplay between theory, practice and reflection, and elements that McGregor (2020) sees as essential in preparing home economics teachers.

## **Response**

There are consistent calls for the return of home economics (Renwick, 2016; Smith, 2015). These calls are not necessarily drawn from within the professions rather they are by those who are concerned for the loss of everyday skills mainly cooking and what this means for being vulnerable to corporate interests and diet-related illness. The concern for young people not engaging in home economics is in part due to a perception that it is only about cooking and sewing (Smith, 2015; Stitt, 1996) or that it is an area of study only to make “better” housewives (Renwick, 2015). Having said that, young people are interested in engaging in home economics education. There is an unmet demand for home economics teachers (McGregor, 2015; Renwick, 2018) in countries such as Ireland (Donnelly, 2019; Ní Aodha, 2019), Scotland (Seith, 2019), Greece (Stylianidou et al., 2004), Nigeria (Ode et al., 2013), Canada (Kitchenham & Chasteauneuf, 2010; Smith & de Zwart, 2010), United States (Cross, 2017) and Australia (Pendergast, 2001). Home Economics teachers within each local context actively work to support and advocate for home economics programs at the university (see for example Smith & de Zwart, 2010) however apparently immutable internal university restructuring and politics explicitly works against offering home economics programs (Elias, 2008) and therefore why there is a shortage of home economics professionals.

As already noted, teacher education programs remain as space in university contexts where home economics is still evident. Becoming a teacher requires a higher education qualification with a teaching practicum such as a Bachelor of Education or a Master's of Teaching that allows for accreditation to teach in the local context. A teaching qualification can be gained by undertaking curriculum and pedagogy courses alongside content focused courses. In Canada the expectation is that an aspirant teacher completes an undergraduate program focused on content knowledge followed by a teaching qualification that includes a practicum and the development of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) (Berry et al., 2016). In the absence of faculty who are explicitly focused on home economics, it is necessary for teacher education programs to determine ways to identify underpinning knowledge and skills that authentically link to a home economics designation. The interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary nature of home economics (Haapaniemi et al., 2019; IFHE, 2008) has been both its strength and weakness in the university context. This feature has worked against the profession as university administrators were able to pick over and redistribute the pieces to be retained (Elias, 2008). The remainder discarded. As a strength, the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary features mean that the dispersed content can be identified and used as underpinning knowledge that can be rebuilt and reclaimed as home economics (McGregor, 2015, 2020).

Engaging with underpinning knowledge and skills is only one aspect of developing a home economics professional. To consider home economics as a profession, there is a need to engage in practice “that acknowledge[s] not only what is done but why and for what purpose” (Renwick, 2015, p. 30) and thus a claim for *extraordinary knowledge*. According to the IFHE (2008), the extraordinary knowledge emphasises on what occurs in families and households that is cognizant of the of social, economic and environmental context (Renwick, 2015). The challenge in cherry-picking from a range of undergraduate studies around food, family and textiles is that prospective teachers of home economics do not get the opportunity to develop an appreciation of the field, its history and philosophy, and therefore what can be claimed as extraordinary knowledge of the profession (Soljanto & Palojoki, 2017). With this in mind, this study offers insights into the experience of pre-service teachers and what do they have to say about their preparation for and induction into the profession.

## Method

### Participants

This study was undertaken across 2 academic years in a Canadian university Bachelor of Education program. Participants were pre-service teachers who had obtained an undergraduate degree with a specialisation in family, food or textiles or who were chefs with a Red Seal designation<sup>1</sup>. The participants ranged between 22 and 45 years of age, 20 identified as female and the remainder identified as male or other. During the program the 27 participants were engaging with pedagogical content knowledges courses, lesson planning, classroom management in addition to competencies around literacy, numeracy and First Nation studies and a 12-week practicum in secondary schools. All of the pre-service teachers participated in the sessions as they were facilitated within specific classes. However only the comments from those who completed the ethics documentation have been included in the research.

### Data Collection

Each group met five times over the 11-month program during one of the courses to discuss their experience of the teacher preparation program. Every student participated in the discussions

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<sup>1</sup> In Canada certified tradespeople may obtain a Red Seal on their trade or occupation certificates by successfully completing an Interprovincial standards examination. It is an official endorsement that the tradesperson has skills that meet the national industry standards enabling them work in any province or territory.

facilitated by the researchers, however only comments from those who had completed the ethics form have been used. No incentives were offered. The questions put to the teacher candidates were intended to explore and critique their experiences (see Table 1). The creation of a *safe space* for the discussions was established through shared understandings about speaking and listening to each other and a willingness to be open to different perspectives (Flensner & Von der Lippe, 2019). Focus questions were provided at the beginning of each session to guide the participants thinking about their experiences in the program and on practicum. The same focus questions were offered to each group however due to the conversational nature of the discussions there was opportunity to follow emerging ideas. Each session lasted for about an hour and was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researchers. The study was run with ethics approval: H15-02314.

Table 1 Indicative Questions

Meeting	Questions
<b>Meeting 1</b> Exploring a priori knowledge about 'the teacher' role	<p>If it is reasonable to expect that every profession has specific skills, what do you think are the skills a teacher needs?</p> <p>Based on your current experience and views of teachers, what do you think would be the main aspects of their work?</p> <p>Given your response what might be the challenges that teachers, in general, contend with as part of their undertakings?</p> <p>What is important to you in joining the teaching profession?</p> <p>What are some of the 'characteristics' that you feel would be part of someone being viewed as a professional educator or a 'good' teacher?</p>
<b>Meeting 2</b> Immediately prior to the two-week practicum	<p>What are the skills and knowledge that you will be taking into your classes?</p> <p>What are your concerns and perceived limitations about your role as 'teachers' on placement?</p>
<b>Meeting 3</b> Debriefing the short practicum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How did you get our expert knowledge content across to students?"</li> <li>▪ What were where your challenges and successes?"</li> <li>▪ Propositional perception (experientially linked) based questions including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What do you consider are some of the learning moments for you as a result of your experience in the teaching and learning environment (school)?</li> <li>▪ How would you describe how you are positioned as a teacher and a learner in the learning environment (school)?</li> <li>▪ In what ways might you be developing a philosophical standpoint towards your teaching?</li> <li>▪ What challenges and 'opportunities' are you engaging with in your role as an educator?</li> <li>▪ How, if at all, do you feel this is providing you with further insights about learning and teaching?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 4</b> Immediately prior to the thirteen-week practicum	<p>What informs your:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pedagogical content knowledge?</li> <li>▪ How you engage your teaching practice?</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 5</b> Debriefing the long practicum	<p>What is your understanding of the following because of your practicum experience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Achievements, Awareness, Authenticity</li> <li>B. Barriers, Breakthroughs, Building relationships</li> <li>C. Curriculum, Classroom Management, Context &amp; Community.</li> </ul>

### Analysis of Data

Using a hermeneutic approach, the data underwent a discourse analysis to interpret meaning (Mercer, 2004) of participants' comments and through natural analogy exploring the relationships between the parts and the whole (Heywood & Stronach, 2005). This is done with

the intent to display coherence in the data and emphasising the social relationships and interactions between individuals and events. The sessions should be seen as conversations between the participants that also included the researcher. The conversational nature enabled the participants to build a common knowledge base in doing so they used “language to travel together from the past into the future, mutually transforming the current state of their understanding” (Mercer, 2004, p. 140) in this case about their evolving professional persona as teacher of home economics.

Once transcribed the verbatim texts of the sessions were reviewed through an inductive process where attention is directed towards identifying patterns in the data. Patterns were identified by each researcher and subsequently reviewed by the other through an iterative process. This inductive approach enabled the views of the participants to be analysed to identify three broad themes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

## Data

### Theme 1: Do I Know Enough?

Having been accepted into a professional program on teacher education the participants were concerned that they had the necessary and sufficient content knowledge. There were aware that teaching a class required some understanding about what was being covered. Terminology used in the classroom emerged as a concern as participants recognised a potential gap between everyday vocabulary and use of the “right” term:

Are we supposed to be saying “ok you have to learn the right names for tools in home economics” for example? Do you have to call it a spatula or can you call it a flipper if that’s what you’re used to calling it at home? (Erin)

The concern for using the terminology did not just apply to equipment but also to technical terminology. This included underpinning knowledge:

...just knowing some terms, we might not have learned in food, nutrition and health. (Rani)

or methods and techniques:

There are a lot of home economics terms—like the muffin/creaming method and ... basic recipe demos ... then learning what is made this way. (Sam)

The discussion about what the participants know and did not know then progressed to thinking about whether or not the terminology was the important aspect.

... I have different names for everything ... getting someone to actually learn the skill of cooking is more important than them memorizing a name for something. (Erin)

That perhaps there were other aspects to being a teacher of home economics such as expertise in content:

You’re always learning things but how can someone expect in home economics to be a master in textiles, foods, and family studies? (Rani)

or ways to deliver that content:

And even if you are, isn’t it also more about how you can transfer the knowledge? (Jud)

Participants were prepared to concede that the students in the class have relevant skills and therefore might be either at the same level or actually exceed the skill set of the pre-service teacher. Thus, the participants could see how they did not have to be only teacher in the room.

But it’s always like just being one set ahead of the students. Like you don’t have to be a master, but and at the same time, should you be a master? Or should the students also be teaching you? (Chris)

As emerging home economics professionals, the participants recognised that they would need to engage not only to have enough capability to get into the immediate classroom and that this would need to be an ongoing disposition for lifelong learning.

I think you need to be willing to just put in the extra work on your own time like always pursuing ... um ... like whatever you need to know. Just make that become your passion project and like you know, work on it on your own time. You're always going to be developing skills. (Casper)

If you're presented with something you have to teach. You don't necessarily have the skills behind it. You have to be your own learner. (Erin)

This was acknowledged with some degree of humility in that the participants wondered if they would ever be across all areas within home economics.

It's impossible to know everything. You'll never be a master in that sense that you'll always know everything. (Casper)

The participants' beliefs about the importance of being *knowers* or *masters* appeared to shift as they moved from expert students to emerging teachers. Their understanding of *good teaching* seemed to deviate as they went through their program. Their comments suggest they came to understand that being a *good teacher* requires them to become comfortable in not knowing all the answers, to settle into "the liminal zones between our knowing and not knowing" (Berger, 2004, p. 338).

## Theme 2: Learning Through the Practicum Experience

This second theme emerged from the participants' reflections on their practicum experience. The professional program on teacher education requires the participants to not only spend time observing practising teachers but to also begin to practice under the supervision of their mentor. In doing so, the pre-service teachers spoke about the need to balance off what they wanted to try to achieve and how they managed the classroom against knowing that they were "borrowing" their mentor teacher's class. Classroom practice was being built on the climate that the mentor teacher had already established.

... they've been in foods since September. If they, like don't know their knife skills now from the labs that I've seen them then something's clearly off. (Marcia)

The routine is a good point. They know what is expected through the day. They had like a time limit. (Alfred)

At times the style of the mentor teacher does not necessarily mesh with that of the pre-service teacher.

I try to keep an open mind through it, and I feel like I know they're coming from a good place. I'm going to try it out and see if it works. But if it doesn't I'm going to let it go. (Erin)

The pre-service teacher spoke about how they had to be respectful of the mentor teacher's approach, be willing to try it their way and then evaluating if it was something that worked for them.

Taking note of the mentor teacher was one aspect however the pre-service teachers also needed to cater for different student needs.

... with my grade 9s, I'm dem-ing everything. I'm teaching them how to cut onions. The onions aren't already cut. Like, I'm teaching them everything versus for the Grade 12s where I can have things pre-measured ready and I'm really just teaching them how to do a skill. And even some of the labs I'm not even doing demonstrations. (Marcia)

Another thing that they said to me is like they're grade 7s so make sure the activities you're doing and you can't do like long lessons with them. Their attention span is shorter. So, when I'm planning for

them ... we have this 10-minute activity, but you spend 5 minutes doing this 10, 15 minutes doing this. It's all the same material we're building on, but there's getting into groups, then you're getting out of groups. You are moving around and doing things so they're active. Whereas older groups you can kind of like give them information for a little bit longer period of time. (Erin)

Catering for student needs, their attention span and level of engagement was significant for planning both content and pedagogical approaches.

I find the younger grades you're setting the expectations for them and you're showing them and leading them in a direction, whereas my plans for the grades 11/12 I'm doing a lot of co-creating and facilitating. I'm not only trying to create the assessment and evaluation with them, but also the content. I guess putting more onus on the students and their own learning. (Jud)

The different expectations of students also had to be balanced against what time they actually had in the classroom.

I have my grade 7s for 14 classes. And that's it. You have to get everything in there. To introduce them and try to get them cooking so they have fun. (Erin)

There is constant rethinking about what the pre-service teachers want to achieve in their classrooms that is moderated against available time, being educative while also engaging students.

I had to figure out and read the textbook first, then I had to break it down, then I had to watch videos. I mean I spent so much time, but that's because I wanted to do well, and you have to take on the challenge if you're willing to take on a class. ... I find it interesting, the chemistry of it, my mentor teacher wants me to go over those things. I have to learn all these things (Erin)

Mentor teachers varied in how much latitude that pre-service teachers were able to have in selecting the focus and content of the classes. It ranged from being very prescriptive direction where the pre-service teacher was provided with a folder of program work that there were required to implement to the pre-service teachers coming up with the topic, content and learning activities. In every case the pre-service teacher required an understanding of the content and to be able to do particular tasks before they were in the classroom with students.

Mentor teachers often gave greater license to those pre-service teachers who had substantial expertise in a particular area. For instance, if the pre-service teacher had completed a degree on fashion studies, then they had the opportunity to be more innovative in textiles classes.

My inquiry question was how can I modernize textiles. And what I taught them was how to make chokers which is a really big trend right now. ... And it was awesome—they came into class like ready to work on it like every single day. They were really excited to make their own collections. They could kind of run with it. I let them have total creative freedom with it. And then the week after that we worked on patches. There is a trend right now, having patches on your denim jackets or whatever. (Sal)

The reflective discussions regarding the preservice teachers' teaching practicum demonstrated the intense learning opportunities they experienced. Their comments revealed the oscillation they experienced between being an expert student and emerging teacher. Not only did their practicum put them in front of their first groups of students; they were also confronted with the challenges of time constraints; collaborating with a mentor teacher—whether they appreciated their method of teaching or not; and the sometimes uncomfortable emergence of their own teaching philosophy and practice.

### **Theme 3: Reflections and Possibilities**

This theme emerged in part during all sessions but was particularly evident in the last session. As the program was ending the opportunity to reflect on the experiences and learning meant that these emerging teachers were able to judge the value of their undergraduate studies against their experiences during the practicum and with practicing teachers.

As a collegiate group there was recognition of the variety of experiences that were brought. This expertise facilitated an advantage when teaching but also highlighted the extent of the learning needed.

... that would also be one of my criticisms of this program... The lack of the things we're expected to teach, especially content-wise that not everyone had necessarily had in their undergrad or in this program. ... Everyone came in with a different set... we didn't all have the training to do that. But at the same time, we talked about how you can learn it on the fly. (Jud)

Those with expertise provided support and advice to others. The Facebook page that each group established became a critical point of contact and communal knowledge dissemination.

Specific areas for improvement that the participants identified included content that was evident in schools.

you either have a focus on family studies, textiles, or foods in your undergrad ... the main thing people will be teaching ... I think what I would like is have those courses in this program (Jud)

The dilemma here is that the professional program focuses on teacher education not on content per se. As a result, the participants' concerns for being adequately prepared for the role of home economics teacher has a number of pragmatic features. The restructuring of universities and closing of departments of home economics has meant there is minimal opportunity for practical orientated course a lack that these participants felt.

but it's interesting that like through this home economics program they didn't teach us the basic things and okay we took this textiles course and we learned I felt like I learned a lot in that, but I probably could have used some basic skills. (Erin)

I think that like if you don't have a background in foods, maybe it's a little bit more of a struggle for you. I had to do textiles like it would be difficult, so looking at what's actually in the schools and what's more popular and then making those courses for everyone. (Chris)

The importance of developing core skills was evident.

So not a lot of hands on. ... Like it doesn't make sense (Unknown)

... you haven't done a foods demo before or like you know done some recipes or you don't know about the sustainability, so you don't have that many things to pull from and you have to do that research. (Sam)

I think having a class where you could do your first foods dem and get feedback on that would be so helpful. (Marcia)

Learning how to do recipe costing too. Like learning what a recipe actually costs. (Jud)

In addition to skill mastery the participants thought about what would be needed to keep the subject area current and relevant.

I think modernizing it a little bit is important. (Jud)

Modernising included concerns for what was taught in foods and textiles classes.

Having more recipes cater to the students. (Rani)

Catering to students included conversations about including culturally relevant foods and recipes, moving beyond a white European focus and recognition of popular culture that included cooking programs and use of social media such as Pinterest. There was also a concern for textiles.

To have students be interested in textiles... I feel like a field trip instead of going to the fabric store could be literally going to the thrift store and finding something you'd like to remake. (Marcia)

Required thinking about what is timely and relevant.

Textiles is now more about DIYing, upcycling, crafting kind of thing so it's changing the way you're teaching the class for sure. Like yes you should have some programs that are about pattern making for those who really want to go into fashion and fashion design but for the everyday student, it needs to be different. (Sal)

Thinking about contemporary concerns inevitably brought up ideas around sustainability.

Like I can think of some content things that are required around sustainability, around food systems and then likewise for textiles or family studies. (Jud)

This reflected not only their personal concerns and knowledges gained in their studies but also what they were seeing as opportunities within the curriculum.

Sustainability—I think that should be a large, part... actually that is also part of the curriculum. That should be a large crux of what home ec is. ... you don't have to do textiles classes making an apron. ... you could literally teach a class on sustainability. You could have discussions on where does this stuff come from? And not just related to textiles. You could broaden it as well. And I think that might just take a teacher with a different mindset and looking at the content and "how do I do this" rather than just going into the sewing room. (Jud)

The post-practicum dialogue between preservice teachers made it clear that they felt despondent about aspects of their nearly completed teacher education program. They voiced particular disappointment about the lack of content-based home economics specific courses. Their comments communicated a desire for more support in accessing relevant, ethical, and hands-on content to guide them in building their own cogent curriculum and pedagogy.

## Discussion

Responding to the shortage of teachers who are home economics specialists requires an innovative response. The building of underpinning knowledge has to be facilitated by drawing from allied areas such as family studies in sociology, food and nutrition out of agriculture, land and food systems or public health, and textiles from fashion studies. The participants in this study have undertaken their undergraduate education in diverse areas, yet were explicitly focused on becoming home economics educators. This was possible because of the interdisciplinary nature of the field being able to cope with professionals who were specialising but who also had studied at least one of the other areas.

By using a variety of undergraduate courses to build content the teacher education program subsequently builds knowledge that teachers use to "transform particular subject matter for student learning" (Berry et al., 2016, p. 347). They argue that this knowledge is dynamic since it is the result of teachers synthesising and integrating knowledge including how to be an effective educator and what they understand about their students. The pre-service teachers in this study demonstrated a concern for their capacity to be effective teachers as they were going into their practicum and during it. Within the practicum there was both an affirmation of their subject knowledge and acknowledgement of the "gaps" while working with expert teachers to apply their largely theoretical knowledge to the experience. After the practicum the pre-service teachers reflected on not only their teaching but also what content from their undergraduate program was valuable, what was underdelivered and what was missing. This reflection on content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (see Figure 1) is both reciprocal and cyclical, contributing to an ongoing conversation that teachers engage with about their professional practice (Renwick, 2015).

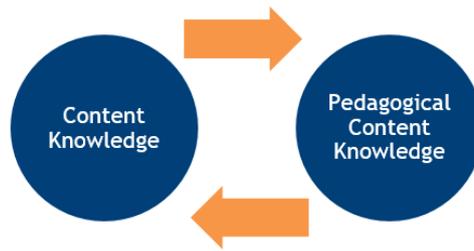


Figure 1 The interrelationship of teacher subject knowledge)

The building up of underpinning knowledge from a range of faculty or departments represents a pragmatic response to the dismantling of home economics departments within university restructuring projects (Côté & Allahar, 2011). This approach underscores how the content knowledge that is home economics is still as viable and relevant as it has always been given that it has not been eradicated from higher education in spite of neoliberal agendas (Elias, 2008). On the other hand, this approach has little to no opportunity for undergraduate students to consider what is professional practice within the home economics field (Renwick, 2015) or to understand how to be in a field that is not just cooking and sewing. Rather it “advocates for individuals, families and communities” (IFHE, 2008, p. 1) it is concerned for empowerment and agency that ensures wellbeing. The challenge for the profession is in this approach is in the capacity for inducting emerging professionals into the field of home economics, and build their PCK (Berry et al., 2016). In the contexts where the neoliberal ideology prevails, opportunities to re-establish department or schools for home economics are unlikely. While universities call for interdisciplinary work that home economics exemplifies, challenges remain for the profession to position itself against favoured academic specialisations that perform well in competitive financial markets (Bergland, 2018; Elias, 2008).

## Conclusion

From the beginning of the twentieth century, Home Economists worked to build a presence in universities to face aggressive moves by senior management to dismantle any visible artefacts of the profession through constant restructuring projects. The interdisciplinary nature of the profession allowed for relocation of dismembered components into other faculties enabling discipline in areas other than home economics to claim the content without interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary features (IFHE, 2008; McGregor, 2015, 2020). At the same time K-12 schools have continued to offer the subject but are doing so with a continuing shortage of home economics professionals. Teacher education programs remain a space that can accommodate home economics because it is a professional program that explicitly offers vocational outcomes.

This paper has described the experiences of participants in a teacher education program preparing to become for home economics educators as they develop their PCK and professional practices. The comments and reflections of the participants provide important insights for bridging differences in undergraduate content knowledge while ensuring that it supports the home economics educator role. It was evident that preservice teachers were engaging with Kitchen and Petrarca’s (2016) theory, practice, and reflection as they developed their PDK and professional persona. However, a missing element is an understanding of the field’s philosophy and focus beyond its visible practices. Making a legitimate professional claim for an area of the K-12 curriculum needed to be both identified and articulated is important otherwise:

...it seems like anyone can teach foods, you don’t have to be a home ec teacher to teach foods. It’s like well, then why am I here? (Marcia)

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## *Part C Executive Summary Paper*

## Executive Summary: Reactors' Commissioned Thoughts About and Subsequent Uptake of Brown and Paolucci's 1979 Definition of Home Economics

McGregor Monograph Series, No. 202202

Sue L. T. McGregor  
*McGregor Consulting Group*

This paper contains an executive summary of McGregor's (2022) monograph that reports an inaugural analysis of reactors' ( $N = 15$ ) commissioned thoughts about Brown and Paolucci's 1979 *Home Economics: A Definition*. To facilitate this analysis, I provided a five-page synopsis of their definitional statement wherein Brown and Paolucci ultimately tendered an inaugural mission statement that was inherently tied to a philosophy-based definition for home economics. The latter comprised

- theoretical and practical knowledge
- a metascientific perspective (i.e., analytic/empirical, interpretive, and critical), and
- three conceptual frameworks based on
  - families as transformative agents,
  - practical, perennial problems addressed using systems of action, and
  - praxis predicated on practical reasoning.

The reactors were the first home economists in the world to read and critique this new contribution to our profession.

The two-phase research design included a thematic analysis of the 100+ pages of reactors' comments as well as a secondary analysis of the thematic findings from phase one. Secondary analysis is useful when first-phase data aid researchers in answering research questions that differ from but are related to the original question. The overall research question was *What can be learned from analyzing reactors' invited thoughts about Brown and Paolucci's (1979) definition of home economics?* Phase one concerned whether the definition resonated with reactors. If so, in what ways, or why not? What, if anything, was proposed instead? Phase two queried whether any of Brown and Paolucci's or the reactors' ideas were subsequently taken up and embraced by the profession. This analysis affirmed that reactors' commentaries are just as valuable as the original definition offering historical insights with contemporary resonance.

McGregor, S. L. T. (2022). Executive Summary: Reactors' Commissioned Thoughts About and Subsequent Uptake of Brown and Paolucci's 1979 Definition of Home Economics. *International Journal of Home Economics*, 15(1), 184-186.

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Overall, regarding phase one, reactors were truly appreciative of Brown and Paolucci's effort, but they did not necessarily agree with the process, end result, or how it was communicated. Seven themes (with multiple subthemes) emerged. Reactors expressed

- kudos to the definitional effort while sharing a range of adverse reactions (e.g., subthemes of struggle, resentment, rejection, alternate definitions, denial),
- their opinions about
  - the merit of the definitional exercise itself,
  - the document's accessibility and
  - the profession's readiness to embrace the ideas (six subthemes),
- agreement with
  - some elements of the proposed definition (six subthemes),
  - issues and concerns around other elements (six subthemes), and
  - suggestions for new lines of thought for future definitional initiatives (12 subthemes).

From a statistical perspective, the reactors ( $n = 9$ , 60%) who did comment on the merit of the exercise felt it was timely with two exceptions. Some reactors' ( $n = 4$ , 27%) resistance was so strong, they were moved to tender their own definition. Reported as hearsay, one reactor said some forum participants felt that no definition had been proffered at all. Nearly half (47%,  $n = 7$ ) of the reactors agreed that the document was not accessible and needed translation, so they could internalize it let alone interpret (explain) it to others or operationalize it. Half (53%,  $n = 8$ ) identified aspects of the definition that resonated with them. A nearly identical complement of reactors ( $n = 7$ , 47%) responded strongly to ideas that did not sit well with them with two people especially vociferous.

Inverting these statistics reveals that 40% of the reactors did not comment on the merit of the initiative to define home economics. Nearly three-quarters (73%) made no effort to tender their own definition. Half of the reactors did not comment on the readability of the document or the accessibility of ideas nor did they say concepts should be better defined and operationalized. That said, nearly all (80%) reactors tendered some ideas for augmentation and improvement to Brown and Paolucci's (1979) definition.

Secondary analysis of thematic findings suggested varying degrees of uptake and entrenchment of their ideas in our collective psyche: ecosystems, integration, transformation, social needs, critical science, life course (human) development, family strengths, autonomy and self-determination (capacity building), and basic human needs. Other ideas have not been widely embraced: human condition, human action, the Hegelian method, and transdisciplinarity. Subsequent definitional initiatives resulted in the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences' (see current version at AAFCS) formalized definition of the profession (2022) as well as a published body of knowledge (BOK) (Nickols et al., 2009). AAFCS' BOK progressively included ideas not contained in the reactors' thoughts: community vitality, wellness, global interdependence, and sustainability. The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) released its definition of home economics in 2008. These efforts are profiled and critiqued in the monograph.

In short, reactors wanted an operational definition not a philosophical one. They wanted concepts defined and operationalized instead of taken for granted. They wanted assumptions acknowledged and made transparent instead of undeclared and not accessible for critique. They wanted something they could immediately use rather than having to critically reflect.

They resented being told, preferring instead to be consulted. They wanted a message they could easily internalize, so they could use it and communicate it to others. Indeed, a *major* finding was that reactors fervently believed messaging and managing expectations is everything. Definitions should be accessible, translatable to self, interpretable to others, respectfully messaged, operational, and philosophically/pragmatically balanced.

To wrap things up, I introduced *metapractice*, with *meta* meaning more comprehensive practice that transcends to a new space. To that end, home economics practitioners would create a part of their practice wherein they *think* about their practice. Part of that thought process is what defines us as a discipline and a profession—individually and collectively. This is exactly what Brown and Paolucci envisioned nearly 50 years ago when they tendered their philosophical definition of home economics.

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

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