

Challenges and Opportunities

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The early 1960's might be described not only as an era of rapid scientific and technological development with consequent changes in patterns of living, but also as a time when, from all sides, come forecasts of continued rapid change. Most of us have accepted or are accepting the inevitability of moving with and adjusting to life in a rapidly changing world. This need not imply that we discard all previous and present knowledge, principles and values--nor does it imply that change for its own sake is always an improvement. However, we find it necessary in "a world of change" frequently to revise and assess what we in home economics education are thinking and doing in relation to developments in related subject fields, and in relation to the patterns of living and the needs of the people around us.

To some the thought of change may be predominantly exciting, either as an adventure or as a chance to overcome some existing problems or deficiencies. To others the thought of continuing change may bring some confusion, or a reluctance to give up the security of previously established valued methods and procedures.

The more recent changes in secondary education organization, programs, and courses in British Columbia, date from the release of the Royal Commission Report at the end of 1960. However, we cannot be unaware that assessment and changes have been and are taking place in the whole of secondary education in many places throughout North America and in other parts of the world.

With the reorganization of the secondary school program in British Columbia, the introductory year for home economics in the schools became Grade 8. The Home Economics Curriculum Revision Committee compiled an introductory and exploratory course for Grade 8, which was introduced in the fall of 1962. Because it is introductory and exploratory, Home Economics 8 includes all major areas of secondary home economics --management, foods and nutrition, clothing and textiles, childcare, and the house and its furnishings. No one could, or would wish to claim that such a course could go deeply and extensively into any one of the five major areas of home economics. But it is hoped that as an introductory and exploratory course, Home Economics 8 will give a "taste" of the five major areas of home economics -- a "taste" which will create interest in and acquaint pupils with the potential value of more extensive and intensive study of various areas of home economics at other grade levels.

The 1962 Home Economics Bulletin contained not only the new Home Economics 8 Course, but also the overall objectives and area objectives for secondary home economics education. In September 1963 another new home economics bulletin introduced two new courses for Grades 9 and/or 10, namely Foods and Nutrition 1, and Clothing and Textiles I. As the course names suggest, each is an intensive course in a major area along with its

related management. Each of the two courses is organized into two equal semesters, making possible a high degree of flexibility in programming without increasing the number of home economics courses. Throughout the two courses, the Home Economics Curriculum Revision Committee endeavored to provide a progression of principles and learnings, with their practical applications, through a variety of related activities and projects. In setting the scope of FN I and CT I, the committee considered the range of principles, knowledge and skills, which the secondary school girl should have by the end of Grade 10 in the areas of foods-nutrition and clothing -textiles, each with its related management.

Clothing and Textiles I and Foods and Nutrition I have been developed with the two-fold objective of providing a depth study of their respective areas for use in homemaking, and of developing potential interests and abilities in vocations related to home economics. CT I and FN I are listed in the Administrative Bulletin (Preliminary Edition) 1963 as among the three home economics courses of which two are to be taken as qualifying option courses for girls, for home economics at the senior secondary level.

In 1963-64 the new FN I and/or CT I are being used in Grade 9: by September 1964 FN I and/or CT I will be used in Grade 10 classes.

In September 1963 a temporary outline of Cooking and Food Service I (for boys) was made available for schools wishing to offer this course. Cooking and Food Service I was developed for Grade 9 and/or 10 boys who have some serious interest in the food industry as a probable vocation. Along with Record Keeping I or Business Fundamentals I, it was listed as a qualifying option for a vocational service program in foods for boys, in senior secondary grades.

Cooking and Food Service I is intended as a preparatory and introductory course for boys to gain basic knowledge and skills related to food, food preparation and food service. For most occupations in the food industry or food service, further courses and/or on-the-job training will be necessary. It will be recognized that the intent and scope of Cooking and Food Service I are different from the purpose and scope of the Boys' Home Economics Course - HE 26, which approaches home economics from the viewpoint of the young bachelor and of setting up a home. Because of its objectives, HE 26 included all major areas of home economics and was planned on a mature level more suitable for the Grade 11 and/or 12 boy.

By September 1964 it is expected that a temporary outline of Child Care I will be available for Grades 9 and/or 10.

The foregoing are some of the developments over the past few years in the home economics program in our province. At this point, we may be somewhat like Janus, the ancient Roman deity with two faces looking in opposite directions!

Let us look back over the past two years with the new Home Economics 8 Course. Have we heard some misgiving about the standards of skills and techniques reached by the Grade 8 pupils? Have we been comparing the skill standards of present HE 8 pupils

with former HE 8 pupils, or even former HE 7 pupils, on the "old program"? Is such a comparison fair or valid, when one considers the many variables involved? If there appears to be a lesser achievement in skills and techniques of present junior secondary home economics pupils, might it be well to wait a few years before reaching definite conclusions. Might it be that present HE 8 pupils who continue with home economics in secondary school may, in the end, achieve a standard of skills and of techniques equal to that of pupils who completed secondary school on the "old" program? At present no one can prove or disprove such a forecast--we shall have to wait a few years!

As we read the current professional periodicals and books from many sources, we cannot help being aware of certain trends in thinking on this continent concerning secondary home economics education.

There are indications of a new concept of secondary home economics education which would neither restrict home economics to preparation for home-making (important as this is), nor to training for a limited and narrow specific vocation outside the home. For those who are thinking along this new line, home economics may broaden its scope from use in one's own home and/or family to include goods and services needed by individuals and families in the areas of management, food, clothing, housing, furnishing, and care of children, as supplied from outside the home--or carried on in someone else's home.

We read much about the changing role and "dual role" of women--that a larger percentage of women is working outside the home; that it is likely that a large proportion of married women will work outside the home for some part, if not all of their adult lives. If this forecast proves to be true, one may assume that the trend for families and homes to become "consumers" rather than "producers" will continue and increase. It should be recognized that homes and families - -and individuals --are today consumers not of "goods" alone, but also of "services."

Has the potential of a dual objective in secondary home economics education been a possibility and a value which in the past have not been recognized- -or acknowledged? There is, and need be, no implication that preparation for homemaking does not remain an extremely important role of secondary home economics education. But need secondary home economics education be limited to preparation for homemaking? Does not, or could not, secondary home economics education include principles, knowledge, techniques and skills which could be very helpful in preparation for vocations carried on outside one's home and for the benefit of others than one's own family? There are today many kinds of employment related to foods, clothing textiles, housing, furnishing, management, care of children, etc., for which it seems home economics could offer valuable education.

Another trend of thinking which emerges in current publications relates to the rapid technological change within a life-time and its implications for employment and education for employment. An article in the Canadian School Journal by S. W. Sadler, Vice-president, Administrative Service, TCA, Montreal, says in part: "The more highly specialized the training, the greater the likelihood of early obsolescence. Modern technology demands workers with a considerable, amount of basic education as a

foundation on which may be built specialized training in a special technical field.... To teach a student only some narrow specialty may do him no good for the future.”¹

Such brief statements as the above are indicative of a 1963-64 trend in educational periodicals, reports of seminars etc., where one finds references to education for “job clusters”, for “related occupations,” for “occupational patterns,” for a “family of occupations centered around a core area.” The application of such thinking to home economics education might be illustrated by considering, for example, a group of occupations centered around the food area. Such employment might include: selling food; selling food preparation equipment; demonstrating food preparation or food preparation equipment; preparation and/or service of food in restaurants hotels, coffee shops, delicatessens; catering; food processing; working in a bakery; practical nursing; food preparation in small hospitals, or other small institutions; consumers’ advisory services; visiting housekeeper or homemaker's aide; substitute mother in homes or social agencies; social worker; child's nurse; dietetic aide; public health nurse; radio, television, or newspaper home service; registered nurse, etc.

The list above does not presume to be a complete coverage, but indicates, as examples, some occupations related to the food area. It is not intended to imply, either, that secondary home economics education could, or should provide all the education and/or training needed for such types of employment. Many would require additional or further education in educational institutions and/or on-the-job training. Further, the list does not attempt to include the many vocations for which a university degree in home economics is a requirement.

However, the realization that such a number and variety of related occupations may center around a common core may be somewhat reassuring, as indicative that there might be developed patterns of purposeful education which would make possible the changing of one's occupation to meet changing needs, changing location of residence, and changing employment opportunities, as these occur within one's life-time.

Although the prospect of a “world of change” may be somewhat unsettling, of one thing we can be certain--change is a part of our era which cannot be denied by being ignored. To quote again from S. W. Sadler's article: “The idea that what this generation is experiencing is either new in principle or transient in character is a farce. Today's changing scene is our challenge to contribute to progress.”²

1. Sadler, S. W., "New Patterns in Management... A Challenge to Education and Business. Canadian School- Journal, September 1963, p. 19.
2. Ibid., p. 20