Chapter Five

In What Ways Can We Plan and Implement Home Economics Curriculum?

- What factors need to be considered in developing teaching plans for home economics?
- What is essential for developing technical skills, communicative/interpretive understandings and critical thinking/emancipatory action?

Model of Curriculum Development for Home Economics

Developing Curriculum for Home Economics is a complex process (see Fig. 5-1). It involves considering contextual factors and constraints in developing year plans, unit plans and eventually lesson plans. In addition, planning engaging learning activities and authentic tasks involves taking into account the subject matter, students’ needs, abilities and interest, what resources you have available, and continually assessing and evaluating and revising your curriculum plans.

The Outer Edge - Contextual Factors

Figure 5-1 mentions five possible contextual factors that will influence your planning of Home Economics Curriculum. There may be others as well, but these five will serve to set the macro context for curriculum planning in home economics.

a) Latest Developments in Home Economics Education

Home Economics is concerned with everyday life, with families, and with considering the “home” as our planet and “economics” as the judicious use of resources. These concerns are not static. They are constantly evolving. They have been described as “perennial, practical problems” because they are complex, contextual, continuing, and ever changing. They are not theoretical or academic problems, they demand action, for example, what should we eat, what should we wear, how should we provide shelter, how should we form and sustain relationships, what values should we live by, and so on. Some are procedural practical problems that can be addressed with technical or instrumental curriculum such as methods of food preparation, clothing construction techniques, how to bath a baby, and applying the elements and principles of design. But most are uncertain requiring interpretation and critical thinking. Much of the criticism of home economics education is that often what is happening in schools centers on procedural practical problems maintaining value neutrality. Many of the latest developments in home economics education have focused on ways to broaden home economics curriculum and instruction to take into account the complexity of everyday life.
Figure 5-1. Model of Curriculum Development for Home Economics
1970s and 80s

As mentioned in Chapter Two, two Americans, Dr. Marjorie Brown and Dr. Beatrice Paolucci, revised the mission of home economics to highlight the development of three systems of action:

The mission of home economics is to enable family, both as individuals units and generally as a social institution, to build and maintain systems of action, which lead 1) to maturing in individual self-formation and 2) to enlightened cooperative participation in the critique and formulation of social goals and means for accomplishing them. (p. 23)

Systems of action:
The mission or general goal(s) of the profession must take into account the systems of action which the family has historically had within it and which contributed to personal and family well-being as well as to the ideas and ideals of society:
1. Purposive, rational action (means-end action) or work to secure the animal necessities of life, physical and social, and to secure the goals of civilized living.
2. Symbolic interaction, i.e., language and social norms and values with underlying meaning involved.
   In light of the loss of freedom for the family to act, families need to institute a third system of action:
3. Emancipative action which provides critical consciousness of social forces and which them formulates social goals and values and judges critically the means by which to accomplish those goals and values (p. 22)

A mission statement is an outline of the ultimate goal of a particular field of study and guides the practice of its members. Brown (1980) went on to outline what this mission would mean for home economics education. Some states in the US used the systems of action approach as a way to reframe curriculum and instructional practices making sure that each lesson included: technical/instrumental “how to” information; 2) an opportunity to explore the meaning of the topic especially as it relates to the student’s everyday life (communicative action; and 3) a critical examination of the topic exposing underlying values and beliefs, issues related to power, and concerns related to social justice (emancipative action). Some even went so far as to frame their curriculum and instructional practices around critical science/practical reasoning inquiries where each unit and/or lesson was guided by a practical reasoning value question such as:
   - am I ethically obligated to nourish myself?
   - what should be done about food security in my community?
   - should child labour be allowed?;
   - what values should guide my consumer choices?
   - what should be done to ensure the rights of vulnerable populations?
   - what should be done about homelessness?
   - in what ways can we understand our current clothing practices and textile use?

1980s & 1990s

One of the significant writers of this era was Dr. Eleanor Vaines, who at the time was a professor at the University of British Columbia. Her major contribution was exploring ecology as a unifying theme and advocating for home economists to consider an eco-centered reality mode as the philosophical foundation for professional practice (see Fig. 5 – 2).
### Table: Vaines' Reality Modes for Home Economics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EGO-CENTRIC Reality Mode</th>
<th>TENSION</th>
<th>ECO-CENTERED Reality Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World is a place to use.</td>
<td>←--------→</td>
<td>World is our home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power is an end sought and exercised as a commodity</td>
<td>←--------→</td>
<td>Power is a means of bringing meaning, harmony with other global citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanistic world view.</td>
<td>←--------→</td>
<td>Ecological world view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning comes through being the best.</td>
<td>←--------→</td>
<td>Meaning comes through participating and cooperating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional is expert who tells people how to achieve the &quot;good&quot; life.</td>
<td>←--------→</td>
<td>Professional is one of the actors/participants empowered to facilitate emancipatory action.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5 – 2. Vaines' Reality Modes for Home Economics

In articulating ecology as unifying theme of home economics, Vaines (1988) asks us to "imagine ourselves in harmony with air, water, people, plants and events" and to see that "our actions come to reflect our connectedness, our symbiotic relationship with everything and everyone" (p. 10). The meanings are significant for planning curriculum as they compel us to examine our view of the world and professional action. If we move to an eco-centered reality mode then global connections and environmental concerns will become part of our curriculum and participating, cooperating and empowering students to be active citizens would be the criteria for developing authentic learning activities.

Dr. Gale Smith (1990) continued this line of thinking in articulating what curriculum with the goal of developing in students a global perspective would entail (see Fig 5 - 3). She was continuing work initiated by Dr. Linda Peterat in conjunction with the Canadian Home Economics Association to integrate Global/Development Education and Home Economics and develop teaching resources to support that goal. At the time global/development education was being advocated across Canada with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) supporting Global Classroom Initiatives across the country. Smith explained that in terms of content, lessons designed for global education would be less concerned with the accumulation of vast amounts of information and more concerned with understanding and interpreting knowledge and relating it to everyday life. Students would be encouraged to explore topics and issues as deeply as possible, examining different approaches, techniques, and interpretations, detecting bias and recognizing complexity. Controversial issues, instead of being avoided, would become an important part of the curriculum.
WHAT WOULD BE DIFFERENT

Content would be global and connected
a. global in the sense that:
   • it is inclusive, many points of view are presented, as many voices as possible are
     heard
   • it is broad based, includes value issues
   • it is not ethnocentric, fragmented, or trivial (avoids the "museum" or "tourist"
     approach)
b. connected in the sense that:
   • interrelationships, interdependencies, and systems are emphasized
   • it honours students' experiences and backgrounds
   • past, present, and future perspectives are included
   • it emphasizes reciprocal relationships

Lesson planning that would contribute to developing a global perspective in
students thus includes:
a. awareness and knowledge of global issues
   • human rights, peace, development, and the environment
   • racism, classism, sexism, and other "isms"
   • prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, and bias and propaganda techniques
b. the opportunity to articulate and reason about global/value issues
   • expressing empathy, open-mindedness, anticipation of complexity, and inclusivity
   • critical analysis of concepts, e.g., power, control, domination, exploitation
   • media analysis and study, especially coverage of controversial issues
   • problem posing, questioning
   • practical reasoning (deciding what is best to do for long-term, positive
     consequences on self and others)
c. reflection and action for the betterment of society
   • social critique
   • conflict resolution
   • social action

Lesson planning would eventually transform to practical reasoning mode
• lesson objectives would include addressing a value question, e.g., What should
  be done about world hunger? What factors ought to guide our use of the
  environment? Am I ethically obligated to ensure that my actions do not harm
  others? What should be done about bias in our textbooks? Or, what ought to be
  done about racism in our schools?
• emphasis would be given to:
  - problem identification and concept clarification
  - possible solutions and consequences
  - personal and environmental factors and underlying values
    . testing and justifying choices
    . evaluation of, and reflection on, solutions and actions

Figure 5 – 3. Smith's What Would be Different If Developing a Global
Perspective was Adopted as an Educational Goal for Home Economics
2000s

The themes of critical thinking and ecological sustainability continue today. Many of the Americans use the term Critical Science to describe the approach to planning that move beyond just technical skills. Montgomery (2006), for example, in discussing approaches to textile studies, claimed “curricula based on sewing skills only, without any focus on the family or related concepts, is unlikely to prepare adolescents for their current and future roles within the family and society” (p. 48). She provided the following table to show the difference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>View of the family</th>
<th>TECHNICAL SCIENCE</th>
<th>CRITICAL SCIENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Producers of clothing</td>
<td>Consumers of clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family carries out sewing as an isolated action</td>
<td>Family carries our responsibilities &amp; actions in integrative ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasis on technical or “how to” action</td>
<td>Emphasis on multiple actions including technical, communicative &amp; critical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of learning</th>
<th>TECHNICAL SCIENCE</th>
<th>CRITICAL SCIENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sewing skills</td>
<td>Enduring concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Product development</td>
<td>Problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hands-on learning</td>
<td>Active learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of teacher and students</th>
<th>TECHNICAL SCIENCE</th>
<th>CRITICAL SCIENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher as sewing expert</td>
<td>Teacher as facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students receive knowledge transmitted from the teacher</td>
<td>Teacher &amp; students as co-investigators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5 – 4. Montgomery’s Curriculum Models for Home Economics Textile Studies (p. 49)

Smith (2009b) made similar comments regarding Food Studies when she argued that Food Studies teachers consider the the notion of Food Literacy as and educational goal. She outlines what this might mean for home economics teaching in Figure 5 – 5.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Food Literacy</th>
<th>In Home Economics classes this could include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 'functional Food literacy' - some basic factual information on nutrition and healthy eating and food preparation skills | - re-skilling to counteract the deskilling that has taken place with the rise of the global industrial food market  
- basic knowledge about food  
- "how to" purchase, prepare, store food  
- information about where food comes from and how it is produced  
- participating in a growing food  
- activities that show students that how they eat determines how the world is used |
| 'lifeworld Food literacy' - the lived experience of students and others in food production and preparation locally and globally | - opportunities for students to explore and share:  
- their own life experience - growing, obtaining, preparing, experiencing food by themselves and with others; the social/cultural/religious significance of food in their families  
- the general social/cultural/religious significance of food  
- the life experience of themselves and others who in work related to food (e.g., food producers, food transformers)  
- empathizing with others |
| 'interactive/interpretive Food literacy' the development of personal/interpersonal skills in a supportive environment to explore meanings and significance of food | - interpreting food labels  
- determining points of view and value positions in nutrition and food communication  
- exploring cultural norms and expectations around food preparation and consumption practices  
- cooperative learning  
- simulated activities (community kitchens, family meals, special events) |
| 'narrative food literacy' - stories, yours, mine, ours | - using storytelling and narratives to explore the meanings (e.g., cultural, social, geographical) of food  
- exploring stories and creating new stories of growing, acquiring, preparing, using, and celebrating food across generations, within and between cultures, and in the various places we live |
| 'critical Food literacy' reflects the cognitive skills for evaluating and taking effective individual, social and political action | - examining the micro-environments (home, school, etc.) that directly influence their food consumption (e.g., availability of food, size of plates, how much food is eaten and when, influence of small cues such as visuals, smells, what peers are eating, etc.)  
- examining the macro-food environment food policies, the politics of food access and distribution, human labour and food production, |
Education for Everyday Life: Curriculum and Pedagogy In Home Economics (DRAFT VERSION)

| globalization of the food supply, the medicalization of food, food policy, marketing food, biotechnology, etc. |
| - opportunities to develop critical thinking skills and abilities (e.g., anticipation of complexity, systems thinking, identification of ideological oppression, distinguishing fact from opinion, recognize bias, emotional factors, propaganda, predicting probable consequences, open-mindedness) |

**Figure 5 – 5. Smith’s Components of Food Literacy**

In 2008, the International Federation of Home Economics (IFHE) created a new mission statement that stated that 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). Since that time the federation has sponsored two e-books on education for global sustainable development. In the first Smith (2008) argued for having a process for critical thinking about development issues in order to avoid indoctrination.

Education for sustainability sometimes labeled as sustainability education, education for sustainable futures, education for sustainability literacy is, like many educational concepts, essentially contested. Jickling (1992) for example, takes issue with “for” pointing out that education “for” runs the risk of indoctrination and training rather than educating. For him, educating means enabling students to debate, evaluate, and judge for themselves the relative merits of contesting positions. Components of curriculum reoriented to sustainability have been identified as knowledge, issues, skills, perspectives, and values. However, little attention is given about how to deal with values and ethical issues in the classroom. Pedagogically, aggressive shifts of learning approaches from transmissive and teacher-centered towards learner-centered, collaborative learning, discovery learning and learning that is active, relevant, and interdisciplinary are often recommended. But, many teachers are deeply committed to teacher centered, didactic, lecture style approaches that are not suitable to instruction in ethics and may even increase the danger of imposing a preferred ideology upon students.

In the second e-book Smith (2010) outlined how home economics teachers could begin to work toward integrating activities in their courses to develop consumer/citizens concerned with a vision of sustainability and social justice.

In the beginning awareness activities awaken students to the fact that every decision they make related to everyday life is potentially a moral question. Simple activities like mapping foods in a grocery bag or clothing labels to make students aware of where they came from and how connected they are to the rest of the world could become a part of almost every lesson. Teachers could pose questions and students could be encouraged to pose questions (rather than answer teacher questions), for example, when considering preparing a food product that includes chocolate, they could raise questions like, Did this food involve child bonded labour? Did producing it degrade the environment? Should I still buy it because it is cheap, tasty and an important “good” in my life? Or should I not
buy it because it perpetuates exploitation and enslavement of children? Is boycotting the corporation an appropriate action or should I do something else? Just posing these questions brings students further along on their journey toward being morally conscious in the marketplace. Didactic approaches are not best suited for dealing with controversy. Students need processes that allow them to explore an issue and for making reasoned judgments. Activities that allow them to identify various positions of stakeholders and their underlying values, that teaching them how to deconstruct media and marketing messages, and that have them identifying the pros and cons and consequences of various actions are beginning steps in developing in students the qualities of a citizen consumer.

In order to increase critical thinking, teachers often refer to Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Benjamin Bloom and a group of other academics created this taxonomy for categorizing levels of abstraction of questions that commonly occur in educational settings. The taxonomy provides a useful reference in examining whether our instructional and assessment activities are reaching higher levels of critical thinking and creativity. This taxonomy was reviewed in the early 2000’s and Pickard (2007) explored what this new taxonomy would mean for home economics.

According to the New Bloom’s Taxonomy, the hierarchy for educational objectives is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blooms’ Category</th>
<th>Clarifying Question</th>
<th>Possible Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remembering</td>
<td>Can the student recall or remember the information?</td>
<td>define, duplicate list, memorize recall, repeat reproduce, state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Can the student explain ideas or concepts?</td>
<td>classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate, paraphrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying</td>
<td>Can the student use the information in a new way?</td>
<td>choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch, solve, use, write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing</td>
<td>Can the student distinguish between the different parts?</td>
<td>compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating</td>
<td>Can the student justify a stand or decision?</td>
<td>appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, evaluate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Creating | Can the student create new product or point of view? | assemble, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, write.

Figure 5 – 6. New Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.

The previously mentioned contemporary writings in Home Economics Education are only a sampling of the wide range of articles available. Considering these articles will be one of the contextual factors that will influence the way you develop curriculum for home economics.

b) Society and Community Characteristics

In addition to current developments in Home Economics Education, your planning will be influenced by the characteristics of your community and general societal concerns of the time. Is your school in a rural, suburban or urban area? What is the socio-economic status (SES) of your students? What is the cultural makeup of your school? What do the surroundings of your school offer in terms of out of classroom learning experiences?

In Chapter 1 you learned that the early pioneers in home economics education advocated for the subject area to be included in schools because they were concerned with the health and well being of family members. Many of their concerns continue to exist today, for example, access to safe drinking water, food insecurity, poverty, impact of industrialization and globalization, international and domestic conflict, homelessness, impact of environmental destruction, and so on. In addition, there is concern about an impending health crisis caused by obesity and overweight. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2003) the impact of this increase in obesity and overweight on non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, and cancer threatens to overwhelm health systems. The recent economic downturn has brought financial literacy to the forefront. These are examples of contextual factors that will influence your curriculum planning. They are always changing.

c) Current Educational Initiatives

Another contextual factor that will influence your curriculum planning is current educational initiatives. The education system is continually evolving and changing often due to the influence of current education and movements. For example, the rise in obesity and overweight mentioned in the previous section, has given rise to many Healthy Schools Programs such as the Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program, and Guidelines for Food and Beverage in Schools. Environmental concerns have prompted many variations on the theme of “Green Schools” with initiatives such as school gardens and composting programs. As new technological advances become available, for example, smart boards, they influence curriculum and instruction. Often schools adopt a school wide themes or goal such as literacy or social responsibility with the expectation that all subject areas, including home economics, will include these in their curriculum planning. Responding to current educational initiatives contributes to the dynamic nature of curriculum planning.

d) Your Philosophy of Teaching and Learning
In Chapters 2 and 3 you had the opportunity to explore the values and beliefs about education in general and about home economics in particular. What you believe about the purposes of education, about the goals and aims of home economics, about your role as teacher, and how students learn will influence the way you plan courses, units and individual lessons.

e) Current Pedagogical Theories

Pedagogy is frequently defined as the art and science of teaching. What we believe about the art and science of teaching is influenced by various theories. So considering the most current pedagogical theories is the last contextual factor we will consider.

The mission of home economics of Brown and Palucci (1979) and the critical science approach mentioned above are based in critical theory. Critical theory, if nothing else, is a moral construct designed to reduce human suffering in the world (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2010). Critical theory influences both the content and the process of teaching. Critical pedagogy is a teaching approach which attempts to help students question and challenge the underlying causes of human suffering and the beliefs and practices that give rise to various forms of human suffering. So such topics as racism, gender discrimination, bullying and abuse, poverty, and homelessness are examples of what would be included in curriculum planning.

One of the most prominent current theories in education is constructivism, a learning theory that explains human learning as an active attempt to construct meaning in the world around us. Constructivist methods have been described as “instructional templates for lessons and units that encourage students to be critical thinkers and independent learners, with the teacher acting as a mentor and facilitator” (Gabler & Schroeder, 2003, p. xvii). Gabler and Schroeder (2003) state, “a constructivist classroom must be an ACTIVE environment that features the following dimensions:

- Assessment through performance, using a wide range of assessment methods.
- Curricula that emphasize big ideas, depth over breadth, and interdisciplinarity.
- Teacher as a guide/facilitator/coach and student as worker/independent thinker.
- Interaction, with value placed on teacher- and student- generated questions, and consistent use of methods that promote student-student interaction.
- Variety in teaching methods, even within a single class period.
- Engagement of students in the subject matter, with students becoming historians, writers, scientists, mathematicians, etc. (p. 17).

Another prominent theory is placed based education. It is sometimes called pedagogy of place, place-based learning, experiential education, community-based education, education for sustainability, environmental education, and sometimes, service learning. It is an educational philosophy that promotes learning that is rooted in what is local—the unique history, environment, culture, economy, literature, and art of a particular place, for example, the neighborhood, town or community in which the school is located. This is not to say that international and domestic issues are peripheral to place-based education, but that students should first have a grounding in the history, culture and ecology of their surrounding environment before moving on to broader subjects. Understand of place functions as a bridge between the local and the global, allowing students to comprehend the ways that global processes, affect local places.

These three are examples of pedagogical theories that are fairly prominent currently but they will also change over time and other theories will surface that will impact your general approach to developing curriculum in home economics.
The Inner Layer - Contextual Constraints

Contextual factors are the first layer of consideration. They serve to set the context for your curriculum planning, however, your planning is also constrained or inhibited by various conditions. Figure 5-1 mentions five possible contextual constraints that will influence the way you develop home economics curriculum.

a) The Current Ministry of Education Curriculum Guides in Your Jurisdiction

No matter where you teach you will need to be very familiar with the mandated curriculum for your province, territory, state, country, whatever the case may be. The document will spell out exactly what learning outcomes must be met by the lessons you offer in your school. As well, the curriculum guides often contain other valuable information such as sample teaching activities, assessment and evaluation strategies, directives regarding the time required for certain credits, and so on. You are required to plan your curriculum within the guidelines of these documents (called IRPs in BC).

b) School Facilities

What facilities you have available will affect your planning. Do you have foods labs, textile labs, regular classrooms available for your use? When are they available? How are they equipped? You curriculum planning for a textiles lab that has only 10 sewing machines will be different from one that has one sewing machine per student. Is there a supply of items like knitting needles, crochet hooks? Is there an embroidery machine? Are there sergers? The answers to these questions will assist you in determining what projects you may include in your program.

If you have only one foods lab and it has to be shared by three teachers during the same day, your planning will be quite different from when you have a foods lab available for every class you teach. Some foods rooms have just the basic equipment while others have food processors, bread machines, crock pots, and so on. What your room has will have an impact on what food products you decide to include in your program.

What other resources are available to you? Smart Board? Projector? Overhead Projector? Black or White Board space? Bulletin Boards? These are some questions related to school facilities that you will need to take into considerations when developing your curriculum for your home economics classes.

c) Budget

How much money will you have to work with and from what sources? We’ve all heard the horror stories of teachers who blew their budget by Christmas. This shouldn’t happen if you learn early how much money is allotted for your courses. Unfortunately there is no standard formula. In some schools teachers get a flat amount per course. In others the amount is based on the number of students in the class. In some cases the department is granted a budget and how it is distributed is a department decision. In some schools there are different budgets for consumable supplies, for replacement items, for textbooks and resources, and for capital costs so you need to be aware of what is available in your school. In some jurisdictions, teachers are able to collect course fees that help to finance consumable supplies in others (such as British Columbia) no fees are allowed. How well or how poorly your program is financed will definitely constrain your planning.
d) Class Size and Composition

Standard food labs are designed as suitable space for four students. In a lab that has 6 kitchens 24 students is the ideal number, with 8 kitchens, 32 students. The ideal number is determined by the size of the room and the equipment available and this applies to Textile Studies and Family Studies as well. Whenever your numbers exceed the ideal number, your planning is constrained. Considerations related to class composition are conditions such as the number of students in the class with IEPs [Individual Education Plans], the number of ESL students in your class, the number of enrichment students in the class, whether the class is a single grade or multi-graded, and so on. All of these have implications for the type of learning activities you plan.

e) Staffing

Staffing is contextual constraint for the home economics department. For example, if you have no one in your department with a strong textiles background you might not be able to offer senior textile courses. Staffing also refers to support staff. For example, do you have Educational Assistants to help you with students with IEPs?

The Center - The Planning Process

The center of the hexagon outlines the steps in planning process.

Once teachers are familiar with the contextual factors and contextual constraints, they begin to conceptualize their year plans, unit plan and lesson plans. They take into consideration students needs/abilities/interests, the subject matter content that they need to cover, the curriculum resources available, and begin to design a series of learning activities or authentic tasks that will fulfill the learning outcomes of the mandated curriculum. As they implement their plans they constantly gather evidence of learning through informal and formal assessment and evaluation and use this to determine the success of their programs and modifications that are require during revision. This is not a linear process as indicated by the arrows on the diagram. But the center is the key.

Learning Activities/Authentic Tasks

The key to curriculum development in home economics is designing active, engaging, authentic learning activities. This vision of learning is concerned with developing learners who take responsibility for their own learning. Whenever possible, students become problem solvers and critical thinkers. They become food scientists, historians, reporters, researchers, product developers and testers. To this end teaching/learning activities endeavour to involve students by presenting them with challenging tasks that connect them to the real world. This means that students are given choices, they are encouraged to construct meaning from their research and investigations, and they are required to apply their understanding to a task, situation or a problem. Students learn to identify, describe, investigate, compare, discuss, plan, create, communicate, apply, share and evaluate. This is highly relevant learning that equips students with life-long learning skills. It means moving away from teaching as telling and students as passive recipients of knowledge. The role of the teacher then becomes one of facilitating learning, coaching students in their inquiries, and modeling critical thinking.

References and Further Reading


Smith, Gale (2009b). Unexamined Food is Not Worth Eating, Proceedings of Canadian Symposium X Issues and Directions for Home Economics/Family Studies Education, Saskatoon, SK.


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