

Chapter Seven

In What Ways Can We Create a Course Outline and Overview? Getting Ready for the Journey

For our purposes a course overview will be defined as a detailed outline that includes unit titles, references to the mandated learning outcomes, suggested teaching activities, possible resource materials, possible assessment and evaluation strategies. A course overview should not be confused with a course outline which is simply a list of the topics to be covered in a sequence and is often given to students as a handout about the course.

In preparation for creating a course outline and overview you need to think about the most important understandings that you want students to take away from the course, as this will determine the knowledge and skills to be developed that will contribute to the main goal or mission of your course. The following statement of purpose is an example of what the most important understandings of a course might be:

At ... (name of school) we make an important promise to every student—one we know we can keep. We promise our students that when they graduate from ... they will have learned to use their minds—and to use their minds well.

In every class, in every subject, students will learn to ask and to answer these questions:

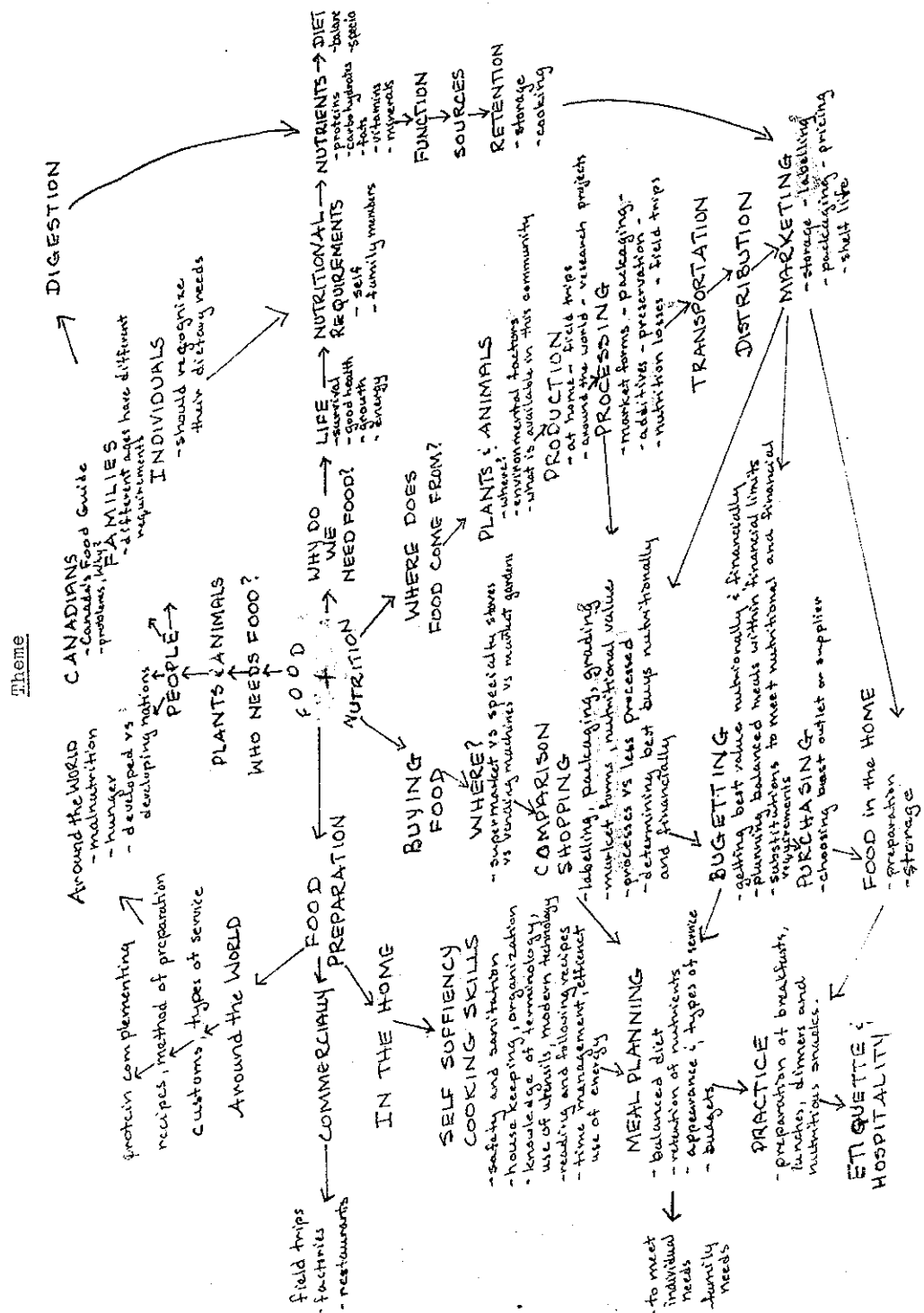
- 1. From whose viewpoint are we seeing or reading or hearing? From what angle or perspective?*
- 2. How do we know what we know? What's the evidence, and how reliable is it?*
- 3. How are things, events or people connect to each other? what is the cause and what the effect? How do they "fit" together?*
- 4. So what? Why does it matter? What does it all mean? Who cares?*

(from The Promise, the statement of purpose and mission that guides Central Park East Secondary School in New York City, cited in Perrone, 1991)

Although this example comes from a school mission statement, it gives you an idea of the broad understandings that can guide curriculum development. Ideally the most important understandings for home economics, will be related to the challenge of living in harmony with others and the environment, and of contributing to the common good.

You will also want to think about what metaphor will guide your planning – a map that outlines the route across the landscape of the subject area or a map that leads to a journey of discovery.

It is often useful to brainstorm all the topics that could be included in a year plan. You can even create a mind map such as the example in Figure 7-1.



Course Outlines – Maps for the Journey

There are three main ways that home economics teachers map their courses: the traditional concept or product based approach; a theme based approach; and the enduring questions (also called essential questions) or practical reasoning approach. Each has a different philosophical base, different view of the nature of reality, and different views of learning.

The **traditional concept based approach** is based in positivism and technocratic rationality. The teacher manages information and students in a “top-down” manner. The teacher is the expert who dispenses knowledge and skills to passive students. This is frequently called “banking education”, with students being filled up information. Knowledge is believed to exist independently of the learner. The learner’s task is to demonstrate they have the knowledge by repeating it back to the teacher and that they have the skill by making a specific product.

Theme-based planning means organizing unit topics around a general idea or a theme rather than isolated information or skills. Themes are chosen to increase the meaning and relevancy of the topics by focusing on a real life context and encouraging students to connect the knowledge and skills that they are developing to their daily lives. Themes can be narrow. In Food Studies, instead of discrete units on soups, salads, and sandwiches, a teacher may combine them into a unit titled What’s for Lunch. Or, themes can be broad, for example a year plan may be developed on the theme of Eating Green: Reducing the Environmental Impact of My Food Consumption. Theme based approaches begin to move toward a more student centered classroom when they are based on the belief that students learn best when they gain knowledge through exploration and active learning, and when students can make connections between what they are learning and their everyday. Hands-on activities that connect to the theme are used in addition to textbooks and lectures, and students are encouraged to apply their knowledge and skills instead of memorizing and reciting facts.

The **enduring questions or practical problem** approach is linked to critical constructivism. A constructivist classroom is largely student-centered with the students being very active in their learning process. The teacher and students participate together in the learning experiences. Students are viewed as builders of knowledge structures. To know something is not just to have “received” information but also to have elaborated on it, questioned it, examined it in relation to other information they have learned, and use it to interpret new situations and solve problems. Students are encouraged to connect their learning to what they already know and have experienced, and to construct a reality based on experiences and interactions with their environment. In critical constructivism there is also an aspect of contributing to the “common good” by investigating questions related to social justice and ecological issues.

In reviewing course outlines and overviews, you would be able to tell what approach has been used by looking for the characteristics outlined in Figure 7 -2.

For examples of course outlines that have been prepared using the different ways to frame a course outline see the Samples of Topic Outlines for each of the Subject Areas of Home Economics:

Figure 7 – 3. Food Studies

Figure 7 – 4. Textile Studies

Figure 7 – 5. Family Studies

For a family studies course, rather than handing out the course outline on the first day of class, I had the students assist me in designing the course. I began by putting the main curriculum organizers as headings on chart paper around the room and I explained that these were the topics that the ministry specified for the course. Then I had students do a carousel brainstorming of all the things they wanted to learning about that topic. When they got back to where they started I asked each group then to rank the topics on the chart papers indicating what they wanted to cover first and what topics were most important. I then did a second round of carousel brainstorming where the students were asked to indicate what kinds of learning experiences they would suggest for each of the topics. Finally I asked the students to suggest the order of the topics for the course. They chose to do Adolescence first and Aging second which was a bit of a surprise but we ended up exploring the similarities and differences between the two and it was a very interesting way for adolescent students to gain insight into the stereotypical beliefs they held about old people.

This was a bit of a risk for me to leave the course planning until the first day of school but I wasn't unprepared. In advance I had gathered resources for all the curriculum organizers so I had file folders full of possible learning activities that I could pull from as I developed the outline with the students' input.

	Traditional Concept or Product Based Approach	Theme Based Approach	Enduring Questions or Practical Reasoning Approach
Curriculum Content	Discrete topics determined by the teacher. Emphasis on knowledge and skills in isolation separated from everyday life. Teacher centered.	Integrated and connected to the theme. Theme determined by the teacher. Teacher and student centered.	Curriculum emerges from joint inquiry around a set of practical problems. Integrated with emphasis on deep thinking, critical thinking, critique and problem solving. Teacher and Student determine together.
Role of Teacher	Transmit knowledge and skills. Be an expert.	Transmit knowledge and skills in context making connections to the theme.	Facilitator, guide, and learner. Co-investigator with students. Models critical thinking.
Role of Learner	To learn “about”. Reproduce knowledge or skill.	To relate knowledge and skills to a theme and to their everyday life.	To be an explorer, discovering concepts, applying knowledge and skills, identifying different points of view and consequences of various actions.
Evidence of Learning (Assessment & Evaluation)	Paper and pencil tests measure how well the knowledge has been memorized. Evaluation of a product or project to a standard set by the teacher.	Tests and projects that require students to apply their knowledge to the theme.	Authentic tasks that require students to explain or justify a course of action.
Most Important Understandings	Knowledge as facts and technical skills.	Application of knowledge to a theme and technical skills.	Asking critical questions, determining when technical skills are appropriate, making thoughtful decisions about the challenges of everyday life.

Figure 7 - 2. Characteristics of Different Course Planning Models

Samples of Topic Outlines for each of the Subject Areas of Home Economics (Food Studies)

Traditional Approach	Theme Based Approach [Satisfying Our Need for Food]	Enduring Questions Approach
Unit 1: Safety and Sanitation Unit 2: Nutrition Unit 3: Meal Planning Unit 4: Fruits Unit 5: Vegetables Unit 6: Salads and Salad Dressings Unit 7: Flour Mixtures • biscuit method • muffin method • cakes • pastry Unit 8: Sugar Cookery • icing, frosting, cake decoration • candy Unit 9: Starch Cookery • cereals • rice • pasta Unit 10: Thickeners • starch based • eggs as thickeners • gelatin Unit 11: Protein Cookery • milk and cheese • eggs • meats • poultry • fish Unit 12: Special Diets Unit 13: Specialty Equipment	Unit 1: Feeding Myself - introduction to nutrition - introduction to consumer issues related to the food we eat - food safety and sanitation - planning and preparing meals for myself - breakfasts - snacks - lunches - dinners Unit 2: Feeding a Family - budgeting and planning meals - planning and preparing meals for the family throughout the lifecycle - cultural influences on the food we eat - planning and preparing food for special family events - dealing with special diets - use of special equipment Unit 3: Feeding the World - food security - environmental concerns - investigating possible actions - eating local - growing our own food - dealing with food waste	Unit 1: What factors should we consider regarding food safety? Unit 2: What factors should I consider when providing food for myself? • What role should nutrition play? • What role should global issues, sustainable agriculture, local food production play? • Where does my food come from and under what conditions is it produced? • What is the influence of marketing and corporate control of the food system? • In what ways can I provide food for myself? • What are the consequences of my food decisions? Unit 3: What additional factors should I consider when providing food for a family? • What role should history and cultural values play? Unit 4: What ought to be done about making food available to all? Unit 5: Why should people be concerned about food?

Figure 7 – 3. Sample Topic Outlines for a Food Studies Course

Samples of Topic Outlines for each of the Subject Areas of Home Economics (Textile Studies)

Traditional Approach	Theme Based Approach [Environmental Sustainability]	Enduring Questions Approach
Unit 1: Introduction to Sewing and Pressing Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic equipment • safe use of basic equipment Unit 2: Hand Sewing Techniques <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic hand sewing stitches • basic embroidery stitches Unit 3: Introduction to the Sewing Machine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parts of the sewing machine • how to thread a sewing machine • safe use of the sewing machine • basic sewing machine stitches Unit 4: Fibres and Fabrics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • natural and manufactured fibres • woven, nonwoven & knits • dyeing Unit 5: Making Products Using Commercial Patterns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • measurements and sizing • ease • reading a pattern envelope • pattern symbols • layout and cutting out a pattern Unit 6: Construct a Garment using woven fabric <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pajama bottoms • pajama top or simple shirt/blouse Unit 7: Construct a Garment using a knitted fabric <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sweatshirt or hoodie Unit 8: Embellishment Unit 9: Element and Principles of Design	Unit 1: The environmental impact of textile production <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • natural fibres • manufactured fibres • what happens to textile waste and old clothing Unit 2: Labour issues related to the manufacture of textiles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working conditions • child labour Unit 3: Elements and Principles of Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • historical, cultural, ecological, and global influences on fashion design • various methods of environmentally friendly embellishment Unit 4: Review of basic hand and machine sewing Unit 5: Recycle Re-use Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make crafts using recycled fibres and fabrics • make an accessory by reusing fabric (either using a commercial pattern or their own design) • make garments by re-making or re-using fabric, both woven and knitted (either using a commercial pattern or their own design) 	Unit 1: What factors should guide our use of textiles? Sub problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What resources should be used to produce textiles? • Should we be concerned about environmental factors? social/cultural factors? aesthetic factors? safety factors? Unit 2: What factors should guide our clothing purchases? Sub problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should be done about exploitive practices in clothing and textile industries? • What should be included on clothing labels? • How should we respond to advertising? Unit 3: In what ways can we understand our current clothing practices and textile use? Sub-Problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should we buy or make our own clothing? • Should we re-use, recycle clothing? • Should we take into account historical and cultural use of textiles and clothing?

Figure 7 –4. Sample Topic Outlines for Textiles Studies

Samples of Topic Outlines for each of the Subject Areas of Home Economics (Family Studies)

Traditional Approach	Theme Based Approach [e.g., A Healthy Lifestyle]	Enduring Questions Approach
<p>Unit 1: Families in Society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changing definitions of family • functions of families • various family structures • families in various cultures <p>Unit 2: Forming Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • various types of relationships • committed relationships • changing relationships • effective communication in relationships • wellness and safety in relationships <p>Unit 3: Child Development and Parenting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decision to parent • pregnancy and childbirth • infant care and development • child care and development • adolescence <p>Unit 4: Family Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating a budget <p>Unit 5: Housing and Living Environments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • past, present, and future housing trends • current housing options • cost and responsibilities of renting • cost and responsibilities of owning • interior design 	<p>Unit 1: Healthy Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structure and composition of families • functions of families • characteristics of healthy families (physical, emotional, social, spiritual health) and a healthy lifestyle • community resources for family health <p>Unit 2: Healthy Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • types of relationships • characteristics of a committed relationships • realistic expectations in a relationship • relationships change over time • effective communication • dealing with loss when an relationship ends <p>Unit 3: Ensuring Healthy Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planning for children • healthy pregnancy • childbirth and development • raising healthy children <p>Unit 4: Financial Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • living on a budget • avoiding unreasonable debt • planning for the future including retirement <p>Unit 5: Healthy Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to meet the basic need for shelter • homelessness and sub-standard housing • Healthy Housing Initiatives (Earth friendly materials, energy efficiency programs, water conservation, reduction of exposure to chemicals, mold and rot, disaster resistant construction, wheelchair accessible, etc.) 	<p>Unit 1: What should be the role of families in society?</p> <p>Sub-Problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How should a family be defined? • What functions should a family serve? • What should be the responsibility of the government and nation states to families? <p>Unit 2: What role should relationships play in people's lives?</p> <p>Sub-Problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a healthy relationship? • How should people deal with healthy and unhealthy relationships? • What should be done about commitment and family breakdown? • What impact should laws and politics have on relationships? <p>Unit 3: How should families nurture human development?</p> <p>Sub Problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the rights and responsibilities of individuals living in a family? • What should be the responsibilities of parenting? • What are the stages of development over the life span? • How should we provide for basic physical and emotional needs? • How should we care for vulnerable populations? • How does/should the media and popular culture influence nurturing human development in families? <p>Unit 4: How should a family manage its resources?</p> <p>Sub Problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What resources do families have available to them? • What are the effects of work on families? • What are the effects of families on work? • What factors should guide the management of economics resources in a family? <p>Unit 5: What should be done about providing adequate housing for all?</p>

Figure 7 - 5. Sample Topic Outlines for Family Studies

Creating A Course Overview – A More Detailed Itinerary

Once a topic outline has been created, then home economics teachers elaborate their outline to create a course overview using charts like the examples below (note: only the first few units for each are shown):

Food Studies 12 Theme - Nourishing Social Responsibility Course Overview

Unit Topic & Learning Outcomes	Possible Sub-Topics	Possible Teaching Activities	Possible Assessment Activities
1. Food Safety in a changing world <i>A1, A2, A3,</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cause, signs, symptoms and prevention of food borne illness - reasons for the increase of food borne illness - safe food preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food Safe materials - case studies of food borne illness - food preparation that demonstrates safe food handling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analysis of safety videos, case studies - developing food safety cartoons or skits for lower grades - lab evaluation
2. Our Health is related to the Health of the Planet <i>A6</i> <i>B1</i> <i>C1, C2, C3, C4, C5</i> <i>D1</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - nutritional concerns related to food production and soil depletion -Canada's Food Guide, leader nutrients, functions of nutrients -reducing fat and sugar in recipes -substitutions to boost nutrition and fibre -reading food labels -malnutrition vs undernutrition vs overnutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Grocery Bag Game - reading labels (Health Canada Website) -History of the Food guide - "fat" vs "skinny" Brownies - reduce the sugar and fat in a recipe, prepare and do taste test - design balanced meals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - critical comparison of food guides - create a food guide - deconstructing food marketing and advertising - lab evaluations
3. Caring for the Earth through Sustainable Agriculture <i>D1, D2</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -food production & distribution -environmental concerns related to food production -farming vs agribusiness -effects of cash cropping - desertification -inequitable distribution of resources -loss of genetic diversity -GMO's -organic vs non organic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -field trips to local growers (farms and greenhouses) -guest speakers (e.g. Check Your Head) - simulations on food distribution - a taste of BC (exploring and/or developing recipes that feature fresh local foods) - create a school garden, compost, or plant in pots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - issue analysis - lab evaluations - writing news reports
4. Preserving Nature's Bounty <i>B1</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -preservation techniques and principles - safe food preservation - retention of nutrients - reasons for preserving local products - irradiation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -jelly and jam making -canning -pickling -drying -freezing-consumer comparisons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - evaluating the pro/cons of each method - consumer comparisons - lab evaluations

Textile Studies 9
Traditional Approach
Course Overview

Unit Title & Learning Outcomes	Topics Covered	Suggested Teaching Activities	Possible Assessment
Introduction <i>A5 manage time and resources in the classroom</i> <i>A2 identify and know how to respond appropriately to emergencies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course Outline - Grading - Expectations - Lab Routine, Rules, Clean Up - Parental Information Letter: Informing parents about projects and supplies. - Where to shop for supplies - Classroom Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scavenger hunt of the room - Decorate tote boxes - Have students create their own Dictionary and include samples & definitions through out the year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Title Page for Course Binder - Dictionary Assignment
Introduction to Sewing and Pressing Equipment <i>A4 select and use the appropriate type of pressing equipment for a specific task</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic sewing equipment, function, and safe use - Identify basic pressing equipment, functions, safety procedures and maintenance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Place equipment/notions onto trays and have students guess what it might be used for. Demonstrate use. - Demonstrate pressing techniques. - Stations for different types of pressing to take place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sewing Tools and Notions Worksheet - Worksheet on Pressing
Hand Sewing Techniques. <i>B2 construct and repair simple garment and textile items using construction basics – hand sewing</i> <i>C2 use various embellishment techniques</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - variety of hand sewing techniques including how to sew a button and simple embroider stitches - a hand sewing project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrate: how to sew on buttons - Demonstrate: Hand Sewing Stitches (basic running stitch, overcast stitch, slip stitch, back stitch) - Demonstrate: Embroidery Stitches (e.g., satin stitch, blanket stitch) - Possible Projects Needle Kits Pin Cushions Stuffed Animal 	Criteria or Rubrics for samples and projects (teacher and self evaluation)
Introduction to Sewing Machine <i>A3 identify parts of the sewing machine and/or serger and their functions, and apply the basics of operation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sewing machine parts and their function, safety, and maintenance - How to wind a bobbin. - Threading the Machine - Sewing Machine Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - review the parts of the sewing machine - Demonstrate: filling a bobbin, threading sewing machine, sewing seams and seam finishes - Samples – various seams and seam finishes - Projects Quilted pillow or pot holder Stuffed Animal that incorporates a variety of sewing techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Worksheet on Parts of the Sewing Machine - Sewing Machine test - Criteria or Rubrics for samples and projects (teacher and self evaluation)

Family Studies 11/12
Enduring Question Approach
Course Overview

Unit Topic & Learning Outcomes	Possible Sub-Problems	Possible Teaching Activities (developed with students)	Possible Assessment Activities
Unit 1: What should be the role of families in society? D1 analyse the relationship between societal change and the changing definition of the family D2 demonstrate an understanding of various functions of the family D3 identify various family structures D4 analyse current trends in families in Canada today	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How should a family be defined? • What functions should a family serve? • What should be the responsibility of the government and nation states to families? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a survey or interview schedule to determine current and past family compositions and roles • research families through history • investigate organizations (e.g., Vanier Institute for Families; BC Council for Families) for their perspective on Canadian Families • evaluate social programs available to families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • survey report • past, present, future graphic organizer • +/- chart on Canadian social programs for families • journal writing
Unit 2: What role should relationships play in people's lives? D7 identify factors that influence family dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a healthy relationship? • How should people deal with healthy and unhealthy relationships? • What should be done about commitment and family breakdown? • What impact should laws and politics have on relationships? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • investigate how popular culture portrays relationships • analysis of case studies • research how divorce laws have changed over time • opposing viewpoints on same sex marriage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • issue analysis • structured controversy • journal writing
Unit 3: How should families nurture human development? D6 demonstrate an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of family members D11 analyse a variety of special caregiving issues and challenges A1 explain reasons why people have or don't have children A2 identify various methods of adding children to a family A3 identify methods of family planning A4 demonstrate an understanding of personal qualities and circumstances that	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the rights and responsibilities of individuals living in a family? • What should be the responsibilities of parenting? • What are the stages of development over the life span? • How should we provide for basic physical and emotional needs? • How should we care for vulnerable populations? • How does/should the media and popular culture influence nurturing human development in families? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a T chart with rights and corresponding responsibilities • compare and contrast different parenting philosophies • ages and stages research project • critical analysis of how the media portrays vulnerable populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scoring rubric for research projects • journal writing

indicate readiness for parenting A5 analyse the impact of parenthood on personal and family life A6 analyse the rights and responsibilities of being a parent			
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Hybrid Versions of Curriculum Planning

Often teachers who would place themselves in the traditional camp find it easier to gradually integrate aspects of the theme based or enduring question approaches.

For a Food Studies Course the theme might become A Trip Around the World where for each destination on the “trip” a traditional food topic might be covered and an sub-question of the larger enduring question “What factors should guide our food consumption” might be explored for example, a “visit” to BC might include a stir-fry with BC grown vegetables, covering vegetable cooking principles, and including critical thinking activities linked to the advantages and disadvantages of eating locally and the pros and cons of greenhouse growing; a trip to France might include making quiche, covering the techniques of making pastry, the principles of cooking with eggs, milk, and cheese and a critical thinking activity regarding the labelling of GM foods.

Foods teachers can also design a course around traditional units but make some of individual lessons in the unit based on an enduring question approach. For example, one of the lessons in a traditional preservation unit might involve bringing in a box of produce (apples, tomatoes, etc.) and asking students “what should we do with these to prevent them from spoiling?” then letting them carry out their various plans and evaluate them.

Textiles teachers might have classes they call “Textile Tuesdays” or “Fashion Fridays” that are days that are designated for not-technical activities, for example, experiments to determine the properties of fibres and fabrics, lessons that explore labour, environmental, and other issues related to the production of clothing and textiles so that students are addressing the enduring question, “What factors should guide my selection and use of textile products?”

For Further Reading:

- McGregor, S. (2003, March 10). Critical science approach—a primer. *Kappa Omicron Nu Forum*, 15 (1) at http://www.kon.org/cfp/critical_science_primer.pdf.
- Redick, S., Vail, A., Smith, B., Thomas, R. Copa, P., Mileham, C., Laster, J., Fedje, C., Johnson, J., Alexander, K. (1998). Family and consumer science, a chapter, in G. Carter, M. Terry, J. O’Neil, L. Mann, T. Smith & D. Murray, ASCD Curriculum Handbook. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (1998). *Understanding by Design*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.