

Note from the Editor: This article and the accompanying tables summarize research and scholarly work from the area of family and consumer sciences education in three journals in the field of Family and Consumer Sciences. The article explains the process, and the tables list information found in the three sources. The tables list a number of articles with brief descriptions. However, it is not a complete list of every article published in the three journals. This review of research will be useful to researchers and practitioners in the field of family and consumer sciences education.

Cecelia Thompson, Editor

## **A REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY WORK IN FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES EDUCATION, 1996-2006**

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*The research and scholarly work from three journals (Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences Education, Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences, and Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal) were reviewed and summarized. A chart was developed by grouping the articles into Research Articles, Review of Literature/Position Paper Articles, and Best Practice Articles. An additional chart was developed for Dissertations and Theses. Each chart was further categorized into major topics covered and other information about the articles. Conclusions were drawn about the literature during this time period, 1996-2006, and questions were identified about the research and scholarly work that should be explored in the future.*

**What was I thinking?** I was asked to give a presentation in which I would review the research in Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Education for the past ten years. This seemed simple enough at the time, but as I began to think about the work involved, I asked myself why I agreed to undertake such a mammoth task.

The presentation was to take place at what we have come to know as the “National Standards Meeting” in Indianapolis, Indiana. The *National Standards for Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences* were finished some time ago but the teacher educators longed to continue this yearly meeting to give them an opportunity share research and explore other information in an intimate setting.

One reason the task was so onerous was that for the past seven years I had chaired a department which had taken me from my usual routine of reading the FCS Education literature. In my new role I had limited teaching and research responsibilities so my need to “keep up” in FCS teacher education was not as imperative as in the past. But I had agreed; and I would be presenting to my peers; so I knew the presentation must be interesting and informative.

The purpose of this article is (1) to review the research and other scholarly work in FCS Education which were found in three professional journals in the field, and (2) to report the process used for the review and a presentation given about the review.

## Methodology

The first decision I faced was to determine which literature should be reviewed. Family and Consumer Sciences Education professionals have the opportunity to publish in a wide variety of journals. Their primary knowledge is related to teaching adolescents, developing curriculum and instruction, assessing students and other topics important in education. In addition to this knowledge, they have expertise in the content they teach, including nutrition and foods, consumer behavior, family financial management, housing, family relations, child development, and other areas. The number of publication outlets they might choose is virtually endless; however, out of necessity, I limited this review. I chose to review three journals directly related to the broad field of Family and Consumer Sciences. The journals and the volumes reviewed included:

- *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal(FCSRJ)*, Volumes 24-35
- *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences (JFCS)*, Volumes 88-98
- *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences Education (JFCSE)*, Volumes 13-24

Because the focus of my presentation was to be on research, the dissertations and theses from 1995 to 2005 were identified from the *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*.

As I read the articles, I began to feel that while the research articles were important, all the articles were interesting and might be useful to the teacher educators in my audience, so I decided I would present summary information on all with a focus on research. I started with *JFCSE*, printing every article from several volumes and then reading and classifying them into (1) Research, (2) Literature Reviews or Position Papers, and (3) Best Practice. I also decided I would need to find a way to organize my own thinking about *how* to present the information and *what* information to present. What would be useful to my listeners? If I were a full time teacher educator, what would I want to know? How would I want to have the information organized? As long as I was reviewing each article, I wanted to present the information my audience could readily use. I would need a way to organize and structure the material so conclusions and implications for future research and scholarly work could more easily be drawn, both by me and by the audience. After deliberating about these questions and potential solutions, I organized the articles into two charts; one chart would include articles organized into (1) Research, (2) Literature Review or Position Papers, and (3) Best Practice. The second chart would include dissertations and theses.

A second dilemma then presented itself. What information would teacher educators find useful? The following items seemed pertinent:

- The topic of the article
- The sub-topic or even more specific identification of the content
- Type of research, e.g., Empirical, Qualitative, etc. (This was not included for the Literature Reviews or Best Practice.)
- The complete citation according to APA
- A short description or purpose
- A brief summary of the results and implications or directions for further research

Charts were then developed and used as handouts for the listeners using author-identified classifications (see Appendix A and B). The charts were color coded to make it easier for the audience to review and use. From the information inherent in the chart, the author identified ways teacher educators could use the charts and information, developed summary statements about the data, and identified the scholarly work needed for the future. This was condensed into a power point for the presentation and activities were designed for the audience to further

explore and identify conclusions from the work. During the presentation, the audience examined the charts, discussed generalizations they might make from the data, and identified research and scholarly work that should be done. Some of the ideas from the discussion are included in the discussion and implications sections of this paper.

## Findings

A total of 187 articles were reviewed from the three journals. Table 1 illustrates the number of each type of article and the topics used to classify the articles. Information about each type of article will be summarized.

Table 1

*Number of Research, Literature Review or Position Paper, or Best Practice articles by type of article and topic*

Topic	Type of article			Total
	Research	Literature Review or Position Paper	Best Practice	
Curriculum	32	5	50	86
Adolescent Learner	12	2	--	14
Instruction	12	2	14	28
International	3	--	2	5
Profession	27	7	6	39
Research	1	2	--	3
Teacher Preparation	8	--	4	12
Total	95	18	76	187

### Research Articles

Ninety-five research articles were reviewed for the presentation. The following types of research studies and the number of each were reported: empirical (58), qualitative (13), experimental (3), action research (2), historical (1), phenomenology (2), experimental (3), Delphi (4), content analysis (2), mixed methods (5), and program or curriculum evaluations (5). The qualitative studies included focus groups (4), case studies (2), photos (1), interviews (1), and teacher reflections (1)

Curriculum. The largest group of research articles was related to curriculum. The sub-topics or subject matter/content examined in the articles with curriculum as the main topic included the following: Adult and aging, assessment, character education, child care, clothing, community service, family and marriage, financial literacy and management, food science and nutrition, home-school partnerships, housing and interior design, and parenting. In addition, orientations to curriculum, constructivism, National Standards, effectiveness of FCS, and needs assessment were included in the articles that were categorized as curriculum.

Adolescent learner. Researchers studied widely diverse aspects or subtopics related to the adolescent learner. These included careers, gender and motivation, student dress, pregnant and parenting teens, theft, thinking, the development of empathy and caring and attitudes toward the opposite sex.

Instruction. Tied with *Adolescent Learner* for the third largest number of research articles was Instruction. Subtopics included active learning, block scheduling, critical thinking, pre-reading and reading, problem based instruction, small groups, and technology.

International. Two of the international research articles were related to specific countries, Finland and Zimbabwe. The third article was about teacher efficacy and global education.

Profession. The second largest number of research articles was related to the profession. These included the following sub-topics: change, diversity, history, job satisfaction, leadership, professional development, program change, recruitment, supply and demand of teachers, teacher certification, and technology.

Research. There was only one research article that was identified with research as the topic. It was the only article in the review that described a research methodology (focus groups).

Teacher preparation. The teacher preparation research articles included assessment of student teachers, classroom management, competencies, nutrition education, and student teaching.

### Literature Review or Position Paper Articles

There were eighteen articles classified as Literature Reviews or Position Papers. Curriculum topics included clothing, critical science orientation and problem-based learning. The adolescent learner sub-topics included obesity and resolving conflict using practical problem solving. Instruction-related articles were on technology. Those articles related to the topic of the profession included developing professionals, diversity, effectiveness of programs, gender, mission, and professional development. There were two research literature reviews.

### Best Practice Articles

Seventy-six articles were classified as Best Practice. Using the same categories, the curriculum topic included basic skills, careers, charter schools, clothing, consumer education, curriculum frameworks and reform, decision making, diversity, entrepreneurial, ethics, FCCLA, financial literacy, gerontology, globalization, health, home equipment, interior design, national standards, nutrition, parent education, radon, reform, sexual harassment, teaching as a career, theme-focused curriculum, and technology. The sub-topics under the topic of profession included history, professional development, and sustaining the profession. The instruction topic included authentic assessment, case studies, clothing, consumerism, practical reasoning, diversity, family interviews, literature, motion pictures, poetry, practical problem solving, service learning, and WebQuests. The countries included in the international topics were Trinidad Tobago, and Zimbabwe. Teacher preparation related articles included the sub-topics professionalism and ethics, reform and teacher certification.

### Dissertations and Theses

A similar process of categorization was used for dissertations and theses. In addition to the topics used for the journal articles, *Assessment*, *Image*, and *Teachers' Attitudes* were added to the dissertations and theses chart. Table 2 illustrates the number of articles in each category. The author did not review each study but instead used only the titles to determine the categories. Once again, the curriculum topic had the greatest number of studies. While some of the sub-topics for curriculum were similar to the research articles, others that emerged included abstinence, after school, citizenship, distance education, FCCLA, paternity, occupational, and reform.

Table 2  
*Number of articles by thesis or dissertation and topic*

Topic	Thesis	Dissertation	Total
Curriculum	19	5	24
Adolescent Learner	4	--	4
Instruction	4	--	4
International	--	4	4
Profession	5	8	13
Research	--	--	--
Teacher Preparation	5	4	9
Assessment	4	1	5
Image	1	1	2
Teacher's Attitudes	1	1	2
Total	43	24	67

### **Discussion and Implications for Future Research and Scholarly Work**

One limitation of this review is the number of journals used for the review. Other important journals were not included and could have been good sources of research literature. For example, the *Journal of Vocational Education Research* or the *Canadian Home Economics Journal* might yield research literature important to this time period. This limitation needs to be taken into consideration when reading the implications for future research as some research or scholarly work may have been published in other outlets.

Another limitation may be the way in which the categories were developed and used. The author was the sole developer of the topics and sub-topics used for categorization and another professional may have identified alternative topics. This may have had an impact on the recommendations as well.

Given the steady decline of FCS teacher educators over the past decade, I was pleasantly surprised to discover there were still many research articles in the literature, and while there may be fewer than in the past, they represented approximately half of all the FCS Education-related articles written in the three journals. According to one group in my audience, "The review indicates that we have researched and published articles pertaining to contemporary issues in education and FCS education." To me, this revealed commitment to research that was laudable. One group in my audience, however, felt we needed to "publish articles in other journals to get our name out there and to help new [teacher] educators with tenure."

Researchers and other authors appeared to be "working smart", using their work in a variety of ways. For example, a research study may have been reported in one article, and the application of the research or further exploration of the topic was used in a literature review or best practice article. Researchers appeared to be creating agendas that have depth. They appeared to have a depth of knowledge about a topic and were creating expertise in these areas.

One group in my audience felt, however, that "The publications are limited in scope and more in-depth research needs to be done on issues impacting contemporary educational issues and those related to our FCS teacher standards." In Redick's (1996) review of research from 1985-1995 she, along with the authors of the chapters, identified a myriad of directions for future research. Her review was in greater depth with many authors critiquing research in 29 different areas with authors summarizing and making recommendations for each area. Doing this type of in-depth review again would be extremely useful and would provide up-to-date

recommendations for the future. Some of these suggestions made by Redick were realized in the following decade; however, others still need to be addressed. Highlighted below are ideas related to Redick's suggestions for future research or scholarly work that seemed particularly noteworthy to this 1996-2006 review. Redick suggested a national plan for research themes be developed that would reflect a holistic approach using diverse modes of inquiry. During the 1980s and early 1990s a research committee associated with a national professional organization worked on the discussion and identification of research themes and the professional development of researchers using a systematic plan involving workshops at national meetings. This was effective; however, some of the researchers who participated during this time frame are now retired or close to retirement and nothing has replaced this committee or the professional development opportunities they implemented. The yearly meeting replacing the National Standards meeting could become a natural continuation of these earlier efforts and I would support Redick's suggestion to identify a national plan for this next decade.

- Redick suggested, when appropriate, the complexity of research should be increased and a variety of modes of inquiry be used. While the majority of the research reported in this review was quantitative, it appeared there were a variety of approaches and modes of inquiry. Redick suggested increasing empirical, interpretive, critical science and program evaluation studies. In this decade review, all of these research modes were evident. While the researchers used these modes of inquiry and others, only one research article was design focused and that was an article on using focus groups for research. One group in the author's audience believed teachers and teacher educators should be more involved in action research and the reporting of this research. I believe Redick's suggestion about increasing the types of research is still valid; continuing to expand our knowledge and the use of other modes of inquiry is important. It was not the intent of my review to critique the research or scholarly work as I read it, only to report and summarize it as reported by the author. Because I am a researcher, however, I could not help but critique the quality of the research studies as I read the literature. As a result, I personally believe the quality of the research varied widely with some extremely high quality pieces and some that were of lesser quality. Therefore, I would continue to recommend professional development in the area of research and scholarly writing and a continued focus on increasing our skill and knowledge of conducting high quality research using multiple modes of inquiry.
- Effectiveness studies, studies involving occupational programs, and studies involving audiences in other countries were among those ideas Redick had for further research. All of these topics were covered in this decade's research and scholarly work, however, the number of articles was small and continuing our efforts on these topics would be very valuable.
- Articles related to assessment were few which is troubling because of the emphasis on assessment and testing as a result of the policies related to *No Child Left Behind*. There were many articles related to National Standards, however, and one group in the audience felt there were additional questions that might be posed, such as (1) How are the standards being implemented and used?, and further (2) How are curriculum decisions being made using the standards? In addition, one group wondered about the impact of FCS programs on student

learning and behavior particularly related to reading, writing, math, nutrition, parenting, financial management/planning, and other important curricular areas.

The author has identified below other research or topics for scholarly work particularly important to continue or initiate in the next decade. The list was generated by the author and groups from the audience who critiqued the charts.

- Supply and demand of teachers – While there were articles related to this topic, this continues to be a concern and should be monitored continuously in order to take action when there are teacher shortages. What is the state of the nation/states regarding supply and demand? What are effective strategies for recruitment and retention?
- Alternative certification – Because of the current shortage of FCS teachers, alternative certification programs are being developed. What is the impact of alternative certification strategies on teacher recruitment and retention? How effective are they? Are they making a difference in the number of available certified teachers? Are the new teachers prepared through alternative certification changing the nature of the field?
- Technology – What technology is being used in classrooms? How are teachers being prepared to use technology as a teaching method and management tool? How has this changed the classroom environment and the effectiveness of instruction?
- Distance Education – What models of effective distance education can be described or developed? How do the current alliances operate and how effective are they? How is it being used, to supplement or replace existing programs and how effective are they for individual institutions? How does distance learning impact learning outcomes at the secondary level?
- Curriculum Examples -- What curriculum examples do we have in the multiple content areas? What examples need to be developed? What kind of program or curriculum evaluation is being used? How effective are the programs? What is the impact of FCS curriculum on changing students' knowledge?
- Adolescents – What are learners like in today's world? What strategies are the most effective? How should programs be changed to reflect today's learner? How does technology affect the way learners think and learn? How can we improve the classroom climate for learners?
- Diversity – What are the best practices for diverse learners? What is the broad spectrum of diverse learners being served by FCS teachers (economic, racial, cultural, ability, etc.)? How do teachers implement best practices for special needs or other diverse students?
- Problem Based and Critical Science Practice – What are some examples or programs that are using problem based learning or incorporating critical science? How effective are these programs? How does the learning change and why is this approach important?
- Professional organizations and their structure – Are FCS teachers being served effectively by the professional organizations they belong to? How are they involved and what is the impact of their involvement?
- Teacher candidates and new teachers – What are teacher candidates and new teachers like? What motivates them to become FCS teachers? What helps them to

grow and develop professionally? How can we retain and increase the effectiveness of new teachers?

- Teacher education programs – What are the current models of teacher education being used? How effective are these models? What should be included in the teacher preparation curriculum?
- Career clusters and pathways – There were only a few articles related to careers in this review; more are needed that relate to career clusters; how this concept has been implemented; and the changes that have resulted.
- Sustainability – One of the groups in the audience felt this was a very important topic for inclusion in an FCS course. What is the effect of student learning when sustainability is included in a FCS course? What curriculum examples do we have of this content area?
- National Standards – Is it time to assess our standards and revise these standards based on today’s educational, cultural, and social climate? What process could be used to revise the standards and how might we improve the effectiveness of their use?
- Nutrition and Wellness -- What is needed in today’s nutrition-related content? How does the media impact what we should teach? How does the focus on eating out and the convenience foods of today impact how and what we should teach?
- Collaborations – How should teacher educators and teachers collaborate with professionals in other disciplines and with each other? What is the result of this collaboration? How can we improve this process? To what end are these collaborations useful? What role does mentoring play in our professional development?

### **Summary and Conclusion**

An invitation to do a presentation resulted in reviewing the FCS Education literature from three journals using the articles published from 1996-2006. A total of 187 articles were reviewed, summarized and categorized. Sixty-seven theses and dissertations were categorized and charts were made to summarize and illustrate the review. During the presentation, the audience was given the opportunity to identify generalizations that might be drawn from the charts. In addition, they identified research or other scholarly work that should be initiated or continued. The results of the author’s review and the audience’s suggestions are reported in this article.

The information in the charts and article could be used as a reading list to assist teacher educators and teachers in their own professional development. The articles could be selected as readings for FCS education teacher preparation classes. Articles related to a researcher’s own work could be identified and used to supplement the researcher’s knowledge base. The articles might be used to stimulate interest in a variety of topics or sub-topics. Professionals might share FCS research and other scholarly work with professionals in other disciplines.

Literature reviews are useful to professionals in the field. They can identify the current state of the field and can provide a foundation for the continuation of research and scholarly work on the same topics. As other reviews have done in the past, this literature review has revealed gaps that exist in our knowledge base and has given suggestions for future study.

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Note to reader: The charts referred to as Appendix A and B are in separate attachments.