

## **FAMILY, CAREER, AND COMMUNITY LEADERS OF AMERICA: LEADERSHIP STANDARDS IN FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES CURRICULUM**

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*The purpose of this study was to determine the extent that family and consumer sciences teachers incorporated the Georgia Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) standards for student leadership development in their teaching. Respondents were 163 middle school teachers and 262 high school teachers for a total of 425. Teachers were asked to indicate if they had an affiliated Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) chapter; if they were on extended day; and if the leadership standards were not an objective, an incidental objective, an important objective, or a major objective in their teaching. Findings revealed that less than one-fifth (16%) of middle school teachers and nearly two-thirds (64%) of high school teachers had affiliated FCCLA chapters. Less than a tenth (8%) of middle school and more than half (55%) of high school teachers were on extended day. Results also showed that the leadership standards were identified as important or major objectives when teaching family and consumer sciences classes by slightly more than one-fifth (21%) and two-thirds (66%) of middle school and high school teachers, respectively.*

A plethora of literature exists on leadership as an important topic of discussion and leadership development as an area of research. Several definitions of and beliefs about leadership have been posited and, according to Nall (2005), leadership is rarely defined the same way. Traditionally, leadership is defined as an interpersonal influence directed toward the achievement of a goal or goals. Gardner (1987) defined leadership as the process of persuasion or example by which an individual or leadership team induces a group to pursue an objective held by the leader or shared by the leader and followers. According to Avery (1995), leadership can be conceptualized as providing visionary skills that enable members to provide direction to the profession and empower themselves and others to meet their full potential. Johnson and Johnson (2003) determined that leadership skills were the sum total of one's ability to help the group achieve its goals and maintain an effective working relationship among members. Wheatley (1992) acknowledged that leadership is now being examined for its relational aspects. Leadership is viewed as a skill that can be taught and learned just as you learn academic knowledge and skills which support the statement, "leaders are made not born." Furthermore, Johnson and Johnson (2003) postulate that since leadership takes practice, anyone can learn leadership skills. Although there are numerous ways to define leadership, it is clear that these skills and traits can and should be developed for the purpose of guiding a group or organization

toward its desired goals. Youth organizations in career and technical education are excellent strategies for the development of leadership skills.

The need for the development of leadership skills is germane to the success of youth organizations including those within career and technical education (Seevers & Dormody, 1995). There are 10 career and technical student organizations recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. The student organization connected with family and consumer sciences (FCS) is Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) which is the only national career and technical education student organization with the family as its central focus. FCCLA assists young men and women in becoming leaders and addressing important personal, family, work, and societal issues through family and consumer sciences education (FCCLA, 2000). Career and technical student organizations are an integral part in providing leadership experiences to students, both in and beyond the classroom (Wonacott, 2001).

Georgia's Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) was mandated by the Quality Basic Education Act of 1986 (Georgia Learning Connections, 2005). The Quality Core Curriculum Standards (QCCS) provided a statewide basic curriculum that established standards detailing what students should know and be able to do upon completion of courses within every content area. At that time, common core standards in leadership were established. These common core standards were developed by a committee of public school educators, both secondary and postsecondary, in 1997 and have undergone several revisions. Common core standards were developed for all Technology/Career Education courses and intended to be integrated throughout the instructional course sequence of Technology/Career Education programs. Leadership standards included in the common core were developed to provide leadership skills for secondary students. Since a part of the mission of FCCLA is to promote leadership development through family and consumer sciences education, there is a direct connection between the curriculum and the student organization. Therefore, this study was designed to determine the extent that family and consumer sciences teachers in Georgia included the common core standards for leadership in their teaching.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Leadership theories and strategies which were once successful no longer work (Andrews & Clark, 1996). Nowadays, more and more studies are focused on followership, empowerment, and leader accessibility (Wheatley, 1992). As a result, behavioral and trait theories were rejected and the transformational leadership theory was selected as the theoretical framework for this study. Transformational leadership is a blend of behavioral and trait theories. Behavioral theories identify determinants of leadership so that people can be educated to be leaders whereas trait theories assume that certain physical, social, and personal characteristics are inherent in leaders. According to Bennis and Nanus (1997), transformative or transformational leadership occurs when one commits people to action, converts followers into leaders, and converts leaders into agents of change. When a leader makes positive changes, it can result in followers trusting the leader. As a result, behavioral changes may occur that contribute to the achievement of the organizational goals. Additionally, followers may be motivated to perform at a higher level. Bass (2005), a leading leadership development author, defined transformational leadership in terms of how the leader affects followers. He identified three ways in which leaders transform followers. First, leaders transform followers by increasing their awareness of task importance and value. Next, leaders are able to get followers to focus on team or organizational goals first, rather than their own interests. Last, leaders are able to activate followers higher-order needs. The focus of

the common core standards are purpose, achievement, and recognition through an organization. Therefore, a leadership theory that focused on engagement and performance/achievement of all members of the organization was chosen for this study.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Family and consumer sciences professionals have a long history of engaging in leadership discourse (Vail, 1995). However, during the last decade, the dialogue has become even more evident as some researchers (Andrews, Mitstifer, Rehm, & Vaughn; 1995; Vail, 1995; Jackman & Swan, 1996; Ley, 1996; Viegas, Brun, & Hausafus, 1998; Jax, 2000) have produced professional development materials, research, and critical thought and position statements on leadership in family and consumer sciences.

A professional development module entitled *Leadership: Reflective Human Action* was conceptualized by Andrews, Mitstifer, Rehm, and Vaughn (1995). The module included the theoretical framework of reflective human action theory, experiential activities for comprehending the theory, leadership issues, and activities for exploring personal leadership skills. This module was designed to be used by both students and professionals for the development of leadership skills. After publication of the module, *Kappa Omicron Nu Forum*, the National Honor Society in Family and Consumer Sciences, published a special issue on leadership. In the special issue, each paper addressed one or more aspects of leadership using the reflective human action theory. In 1995 and 1996, *Kappa Omicron Nu Dialogue*, a publication of Kappa Omicron Nu Honor Society, also featured a five part series on the reflective human action theory. Each issue contained an article focusing on a different aspect of reflective human action and family and consumer sciences professionals. In 1999, *Kappa Omicron Nu*, published another special issue with leadership entitled *Leadership: Up close and personal*. Several deans and department heads in family and consumer sciences authored papers that described their journey to leadership.

Other researchers (Vail, 1995; Jackman & Swan, 1996) in family and consumer sciences focused their attention on the development of leadership skills of inservice teachers. Studying a group of family and consumer sciences teachers in Ohio, Vail (1995) determined the extent that the teacher acted as leaders and identified predictors for the emergence of teacher leadership. Teachers in this study agreed that teacher leadership was important. However, they reported that they seldom performed teacher leadership. A teacher's rating of teacher leadership as important was the best predictor of teacher leadership activity, followed by the teacher's involvement in general education organization and the location of the school. A year later, Jackman and Swan (1996) identified the perceived leadership abilities of family and consumer sciences teachers in North Dakota. They found that teachers held similar leadership ability perceptions regardless of teaching assignment, vocational or non-vocational program, or amount of formal education. Teachers in their study perceived a need for leadership development, yet fewer than half were willing to attend leadership development activities.

The profession faces the challenge to help students in higher education units become leaders (Andrews & Clark, 1996). Ley (1996) and Viegas, Brun, and Hausafus (1998) actively pursued the area of leadership development in preservice teachers. Ley helped develop a capstone course for family and consumer sciences students in which leadership was the focal point. The course utilized the reflective human action theory and built on the model proposed in the module *Leadership: Reflective human action* (Andrews et al., 1995). Additionally, student feedback was used to assist in framing the course. Viegas, Brun, and Hausafus (1998) designed a

curriculum to facilitate the development of qualities, styles, and practices of leadership for undergraduate students. Students indicated that the curriculum motivated them to more seriously consider leadership careers and to recognize the role of leadership principles in their career practice.

It is evident from the literature, that family and consumer sciences professionals are actively engaged in dialogue on leadership. However, the missing body of research in professional literature is the development of leadership of secondary students. The focus of the present study is on family and consumer sciences teachers' implementation of leadership standards within the family and consumer sciences curriculum.

### **Purpose**

The main purpose of this study was to determine if family and consumer sciences teachers in middle schools and high schools included the common core standards for student leadership development in their teaching. A secondary purpose was to determine if differences existed on the selected variables of grade level of school (middle or high school), affiliated FCCLA chapter, extended day, and years of teaching experience. Research questions for this study were: 1) To what extent were family and consumer sciences teachers including the leadership standards in their teaching; 2) Were there differences in the teaching of leadership standards between middle school and high school teachers with affiliated FCCLA chapters; 3) Were there differences in the teaching of leadership standards between middle school and high school teachers who were on extended day contract; and 4) Were there differences in the teaching of leadership standards between teacher groups based on years of teaching experience and the inclusion of leadership standards in teaching?

### **Method**

The population of middle and high school family and consumer sciences teachers in Georgia was surveyed. Names and addresses of 255 middle school and 444 high school teachers were obtained from the Department of Education for a total of 699 possible participants. A questionnaire packet including a cover letter and a pre-addressed, stamped return envelope was mailed to teachers. Using Dillman's (2000) survey technique, follow-up postcards were sent to nonresponding teachers approximately 14 days following the initial mailing; a second questionnaire was mailed 3 weeks later to teachers who had not responded to the second mailing. At the end of data collection, 163 middle school teachers and 262 high school teachers responded for a total of 425 or 63% of the participants.

Part one of the questionnaire focused on three standards of leadership found in the common core standards of the Georgia Quality Core Curriculum. For the purpose of this study, FCCLA was added to the questionnaire since leadership is recognized as a purpose of the youth organization. For example, the common core standard on understanding leadership roles was written as: examine the purposes and leadership roles of FCCLA. The Likert type scale was taken from the "Curriculum Orientation Survey (COS)" developed by Hall (1981) where a 4-point scale was used. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which leadership standards were included in their teaching based on the following choices: not an objective = 1, an incidental objective = 2, an important objective = 3, and a major objective = 4. Findings are reported as both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages whereas inferential statistics included chi-

square and ANOVA to determine differences. Part two of the questionnaire requested demographic and program related information.

## **Findings**

Teachers in this study had an average of 14.5 and 16.9 years of teaching experience, middle and high school, respectively. Middle school teachers ranged in age from 23 to 63 with an average age of 43 whereas high school teachers' range was 21 to 62 with an average age of 44. A little more than half of the middle school teachers held a Bachelor's degree (52%) whereas almost half of the high school teachers held a Master's degree (47%) as their highest earned degree.

### Affiliated FCCLA Chapter

When teachers were asked if they had an affiliated FCCLA chapter, 16% of the 163 middle school teachers and 64% of the 262 high school teachers answered "yes." An affiliated chapter has submitted state and national dues along with a chapter affiliation form to the national organization. The national headquarters must process national dues and the accompanying affiliation form before membership is official and the chapter starts receiving services, e.g. as *Teen Times* magazines and chapter mailings. According to Cahill and Brady (1999), more than 1.5 million students were served by the 10 CTSOs which increased enrollment in CTE program areas including family and consumer sciences. Currently, there are over 227,000 FCCLA members in 7,100 chapters in 50 states as well as in the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico (FCCLA, 2005).

Chi-square analyses were used to determine if differences in the teaching of the three leadership standards existed between middle school and high school teachers with affiliated FCCLA chapters. Results of the Chi-square analyses revealed no statistically significant difference for the three leadership standards between middle school teachers and high school teachers with affiliated FCCLA chapters.

### Extended Day

Teachers were also asked if they were contracted for extended day. Extended day is described as salary compensation to teachers who work with students beyond the normal school day. To that question, 8% (8) of middle school teachers and 55% (144) of high school teachers answered "yes." The purpose of extended day is to integrate subject area instruction or leadership activities into the curriculum and provide students with opportunities to participate in contextual learning. The extended day program is designed for curriculum and leadership activities for students in grades nine through twelve. For some career and technical education teachers, their programs are sequenced to build on previous instruction and the extended day activities complement that instruction (National Association of Supervisors of Agricultural Education, 1987).

Chi-square analyses were used to determine if differences in the teaching of the three leadership standards existed between middle school and high school teachers on extended day. Results of the Chi-square analyses revealed no statistically significant difference for any of the leadership standards between middle school teachers and high school teachers who were on extended day.

### Leadership Standards

The extent that middle school and high school teachers included leadership standards related to FCCLA in their teaching is presented in Table 1. Overall, two-thirds of the middle

school teachers felt that the leadership standards were *not an objective* in their teaching, whereas a fifth of the high school teachers reported the leadership standards were *not an objective* in their teaching. Conversely, one-tenth of the middle school teachers and one-third of the high school teachers reported the leadership standards as *major objectives* in their teaching.

Table 1  
*Middle and High School Teachers' Views of Leadership Development Through Student Organizations Related Content Taught in Family and Consumer Sciences Programs*

Standard	Not an Objective		Incidental Objective		Important Objective		Major Objective									
	MS		HS		MS		HS									
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%								
Examine the purposes and leadership roles of FCCLA <sup>a</sup>	96	64	47	19	16	11	31	12	14	9	77	31	18	12	91	36
Analyze how goals are identified, set, and achieved in FCCLA <sup>b</sup>	98	66	49	20	19	13	34	14	10	7	84	34	17	11	79	32
Demonstrate the process that could lead to recognition in FCCLA <sup>c</sup>	99	66	50	20	17	11	37	15	12	8	82	33	16	11	77	31

Note: Middle School

High School

<sup>a</sup>  $\bar{M} = 1.68, SD = 1.08$

$\bar{M} = 2.86, SD = 1.11$

<sup>b</sup>  $\bar{M} = 1.62, SD = 1.04$

$\bar{M} = 2.78, SD = 1.10$

<sup>c</sup>  $\bar{M} = 1.61, SD = 1.03$

$\bar{M} = 2.75, SD = 1.10$

On the first standard, examining the purposes and leadership roles of FCCLA, 12% of middle school teachers and 36% of high school teachers said that it was a *major objective* in their teaching. On this same standard, 9% of middle school teachers and 31% of high school teachers reported the standard as an *important objective* in their teaching.

Responses were consistent for middle school and high school teachers on the remaining two standards: analyze how goals are identified, set, and achieved in FCCLA; and demonstrate the process that could lead to recognition in FCCLA. Slightly more than a tenth (11%) of middle school teachers and almost a third (32% and 31%) of high school teachers said that these standards were a *major objective* in their teaching. Considering the same two standards, a fraction (7% and 8%) of middle school teachers and a third (34% and 33%) of high school teachers reported these standards as an *important objective* in their teaching.

### Teaching Experience

Teachers varied in their years of teaching experience. Eight teachers reported 1 year of experience while two reported 36 years of teaching experience. In order to better understand the effect of teachers in various stages of their careers, teachers were subgrouped according to number of years of teaching experience. This grouping yielded categories of years of teaching for the participants: 1-10, 11-20, 21-30, and 31 - 40. On the Certified Personnel Data section of

the Georgia Public Education Report Card, teachers are grouped in 10 year increments for years of experience (Georgia Department of Education, 2005). Teachers in this study were categorized accordingly.

Frequencies for years of teaching experience were disproportionately distributed among the four groups for both middle school and high school teachers. The category representing 11-20 years of teaching experience was the largest group for both levels of teachers, middle and high school, 58 and 98 respectively. The second largest group for middle school teachers (50) represented participants who had taught 1-10 years, while the second largest group for high school teachers (68) represented participants who had taught 21 – 30 years. The lowest count was reported for the 31 to 40 years of teaching, 1 and 15 for middle and high school teachers respectively.

One-way ANOVA was used to determine if there were significant differences in teaching leadership standards based on years of teaching experience. Analyses indicated no significant differences on the three leadership standards between any teacher group for middle school or high school teachers.

## **Conclusions and Discussion**

One major finding resulted from this study. Both middle school and high school family and consumer sciences teachers included the common core standards for student leadership development in their teaching.

On the major finding, both groups of family and consumer sciences teachers include leadership standards in their teaching with middle school teachers to a lesser degree than high school teachers. The inclusion of leadership standards related to FCCLA in the family and consumer sciences teachers' instruction suggests that these standards can be achieved through in-class activities. Especially noteworthy was the finding for middle school teachers where the number who included leadership in their instruction almost doubled the number who had affiliated FCCLA chapters; this does illustrate that leadership standards are a part of the regular classroom activities. According to Erickson (1978) and Rotheram and Armstrong (1980), an appropriate time to teach leadership skills is during adolescence when students are enrolled in grades 7 through 12. Furthermore, these authors contend that middle school was an appropriate time for students to begin to develop such skills as character building, creative and critical thinking, interpersonal communication, practical knowledge, and vocational preparation. High school teachers included leadership standards in their teaching at an extremely high rate. That is, two-thirds of the teachers stated the standards were *an important* or *major* objective. Jax (2000) maintained that the profession requires leadership to thoughtfully carry out its mission as it approaches the new millennium and beyond. Furthermore, predictions for the future suggest a need for more emphasis on leadership development for family and consumer sciences (Viegas, Brun, & Hausafus, 1998). Therefore, it is promising that students are beginning to develop leadership skills before leaving high school and entering the world of work or postsecondary education. High school teachers are encouraged to continue promoting and implementing leadership skills in students.

## **Implications for Practice**

FCCLA chapters can give growth experiences to students as well as improve family and consumer sciences programs through goal setting, critical thinking skills, group work, and exploring skills, as well as other activities (Anderson & Wooldridge, 1995). In this study, middle

school and high school family and consumer sciences teachers have affiliated with FCCLA. Teachers are encouraged to make full use of the national programs of FCCLA to achieve leadership standards and strengthen class activities while transforming followers into leaders. The national programs within FCCLA such as Leaders at Work, Power of One, Families First, Financial Fitness, and Student Body provide a structured medium for developing leadership skills and giving both personal and group experiences.

Although it was beyond the scope of this research to determine how teachers integrated the standards into their teaching, it was clear that they were being included. The inclusion of leadership standards in both middle and high school teachers' curriculum suggests an integrated program. An integrated FCCLA, formerly known as co-curricular, is a method of blending classroom and FCCLA activities (FCCLA, 2000). Professionals in the field have long recognized that promoting personal growth and leadership through family and consumer sciences are central to the mission of FCCLA. For example, family and consumer sciences education and FCCLA are intertwined as illustrated in Virginia's middle school curriculum. Family and consumer sciences teachers in Virginia developed an innovative curriculum that included basic skills, elements of family life education, standards of learning for middle school, and leadership skills through membership in FCCLA (Batten & Feldt, 1989).

This study explored the extent that the common core standards for student leadership development were included in the teaching of family and consumer sciences curriculum as one way to actively engage learners in individual growth experiences. Findings from this study show that family and consumer sciences teachers have placed importance on leadership development and, according to Andrews and Clark (1996), leadership is critical for the profession of family and consumer sciences. It also attests that leadership standards can be achieved through an integrated program of family and consumer sciences and FCCLA. These writers support and encourage an integrated curriculum whereby FCCLA becomes an established part of the teaching of family and consumer sciences content.

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