

# Home economics education in Canada in the elementary and secondary Level

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This paper was prepared for an UNESCO report, "New Trends of Home Economics Education". The paper covers the Canadian field dealing with the areas we have in common to give an overall view of the trends in Canada. The material used to compile the paper was primarily information by each provincial consultant in home economics, along with an ERIC search for data published after 1970, interviews with consultants, and personal experience in teaching. Each province, territory and department of Indian Affairs responded to the following questionnaire and submitted ministry guidelines.

- Relationship of student enrolment and teachers available.
- Qualification, funding, course requirements, and facilities.
- Aims and objectives for home economics in the junior level.
- Course content of junior levels.
- Aims and objectives for home economics in the senior level.
- Course content of the senior levels.

All provinces, territories and Indian Affairs responded, but some did supply more detailed information than others. The article was compiled on the basis of the information submitted, and some general conclusions about education were drawn. After the presentation of the paper at the CHEA conference in Calgary in 1978, some delegates requested that the report be updated. The consultants have been requested to submit current data so that a better review of Canadian home economics education can be represented. UNESCO plans a follow-up for 1980 printing, and a revised report will be submitted.

## **History of home economics trends and need for change**

Began with the American Home Economics Association at Lake Placid at the turn of the century.

Late 1800s-Normal school and domestic science teachers' training.

1906-University of Toronto issued a degree along with diplomas.

1930-As a result of the Great Depression, emphasis was on survival skills. The "vitamin" theory and synthetic fabrics were being developed and incorporated.

1940-1950-Physical and biological principles of feeding, clothing, and housing were applied, along with management and economics. An introduction to the behavioral science was made.

Early 1960s-Home sewing and meal planning based on nutrition, economy, and middle-class standards were established.

Late 1960s and '70s-Emphasis was on family in society, behavioral aspects to the basic needs, along with the physiological and technical. Value clarification and decision-making were introduced. (1, 2.)

### **Trends in home economics in the seventies**

To determine the trends at the present time, I set up charts listing the provinces, territories, and nature groups in one column and the questions from the questionnaire in other columns. The data was compiled on the basis of information submitted, and the following results were established. (3,4,5,6)

### **Analysis of the statistics on the "trends of home economics" in Canada**

*Relationship of student enrolment and teachers available to conduct courses.*

Total student population in Canada: 4,936,740.

Total home economic student population: 443,841.

Total number of teachers (some part time): 4,157 (approximately).

Total number of male students in home economics - data not available nation-wide.

Manitoba indicates 10% male population.

Percent of students in home economics: 11%.

Number of students per teacher: 110-150 students per year.

Number of students per class: 16-24 students.

*Qualifications, funding, course requirements, and facilities.*

Qualifications of staff for teaching home economics:

The provinces that reported indicated that teachers hold a bachelor's degree and a teaching certificate. One province indicated that some teachers hold a diploma in home economics.

Funding:

Generally, the funding is shared by the provincial government and the municipality. The amount varies in percentage from province to province. Expenditure varies from course to course, depending on content. Only one province reported specific figures of \$4 to \$28 per student, depending on the course.

Pre-requisites for course: Only three provinces reported home economics to be compulsory for Grade 8, 9, or 10 level. Most provinces do not have prerequisites in the senior level. Only one province has prerequisites for the senior level, but other provinces recommend it.

Number of students in class requiring laboratory facilities:

Six provinces reported on class sizes. The maximum class size varies from 16 to 24 students per class. However, classes that do not require special facilities can be 35 per class.

Facilities for teaching home economics:

Some schools have three rooms equipped for various courses. Other schools may have one multipurpose room. Most report that more funds could be used, but generally, the funding is adequate.

Bilingual programs:

Two provinces reported to have bilingual program for French- and English-speaking students.

*Aims and objectives of the ministry guidelines for junior home economics.*

The aims are listed in order as to greatest number of provinces that recorded this as an aim or objective for the junior division.

The students will be better able to:

- Develop knowledge and skills to improve human relations and basic needs (eight provinces recorded).
- Understand the interdependence of individuals, family, and society to meet basic needs (seven provinces recorded).
- Understand the effect of decision-making on the use of resources for self, family, and community (six provinces recorded).
- Appreciate the interdependence of the individual family and society (six provinces recorded).
- Identify values and quality of life as much as the quantity of production and consumption (five provinces recorded).
- Appreciate the importance of the role of the homemaker (four provinces recorded).
- Consider how individuals or groups can influence society to improve the quality of life (three provinces recorded).
- Discuss personal and family difficulties encountered in growing up (two provinces recorded).

*Course content of the junior division.*

The guidelines from the ministry of education of nine provinces and the Yukon were examined, and results were tabulated. Under the five areas of home economics listing the content in each area in broad terms, one province does not have a program in this level. The overall view in each area is as follows:

#### Nutrition and food:

All provinces included food preparation and nutrition in meal planning to meet the individual needs of the family. This analysis indicates that the student would spend at least one third of the time allotment in the kitchen. Only one province reported on funding for supplies. Grade 7 and 8 receive \$8 per student, and Grade 9 and 10 receive \$16 to \$20 per student.

#### Clothing:

All provinces included clothing and textiles in the curriculum. The amount of time allotted to clothing construction varied from 25% to 75%. Wardrobe planning was listed frequently. Consumerism and management of clothing were incorporated in most programs.

#### Family life:

Most provinces included personality development of the individual and the uniqueness of the individual. Most provinces included the relationship of the individual to the family.

#### Housing:

Only three provinces indicated a section on housing in the junior level. Time allotment in this area appears to be limited in most cases.

#### Management:

The management section is based on values, goals, and decision-making process. Some indicated application of the management principles to food, clothing, and housing. Other provinces included the management principles in the content of the three major areas and not under a separate area.

#### *Aims and objectives from the ministry of education guidelines in the senior level of home economics.*

The aims and objectives are in order as to the greatest number recorded by the provinces. An overall view of the 10 provinces and the Yukon that reported for the senior division is as follows:

The students will be better able to:

- Develop attitudes, values, appreciation, and skills for living in a family setting, for further studies, and for responsible citizenship with the integration of other families and other institutions in our society (eight provinces recorded).
- Use manipulative, creative, and organizational skills for the improvement of the quality of home life in managing dual or triple roles, obtain knowledge for judgment-making in the field of consumerism, and analyze problems based on values and decisionmaking (seven provinces recorded).
- Have the ability to think critically about values, social issues, long- and short-term goals, and their effects on the family (seven provinces recorded).

- Formulate judgments by supplying basic knowledge through food, shelter, clothing, human relations, and management (six provinces recorded).
- Understand the needs, problems, and aspirations of families in the world and recognize the interdependence of humanity (four provinces recorded).
- Understand technological changes and their effect on the family (three provinces recorded).
- Experience satisfaction from independent and cooperative accomplishments (three provinces recorded).
- Develop a philosophy that recognizes the family as a primary transmitter of values to the individual and ultimately to society (three provinces recorded).

### **Summary of course content senior level**

The guidelines from the ministry of education from the 10 provinces and the Yukon were examined, and the results tabulated under the five areas of home economics in broad terms. The overall view in each area is as follows:

#### Nutrition and food:

The curriculum indicates that the nutrients and their functions are applied to meal planning in the early levels of the senior courses. In the advanced senior level, the courses include world food problems, food customs and advanced management of food in the home and social institutions. Indications are that the time spent in food preparation varies a great deal from 75% of course time to almost no time on food preparation, depending on the course implemented by the individual teachers. Specialty courses such as quantity foods are offered in some schools. These are job-oriented courses.

#### Clothing:

The clothing section has advanced clothing construction in the lower levels of the senior courses and advanced tailoring and design in the higher senior level. In the textiles section, care of fabrics and use of fabrics in wardrobe planning is indicated. The sociological and psychological effect of clothing is studied, along with consumerism and economic effects. The time allotment for clothing construction is a major part of the course approximately 60 to 70% of the time.

#### Family life:

Various courses have been developed: human relationships within the family, marriage, child development, family patterns, changing roles in the family, and concerns in the family.

#### Housing:

The two major areas investigated are types of housing and interior decorating. The next field is the problem of acquiring housing in our contemporary society to meet the needs

of our family members. This includes financing, environmental concerns, and the mobility of families.

#### Management:

The principles of management as a separate area are developed by six provinces. Some courses have been developed in finance and consumerism. Some provinces incorporate management into the other four areas and do not present a course called *Management*.

#### *Indian and Inuit students of Canadian native families*

Federal schools under the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs offer basically the same programs operated by the provincial ministry of education in the home economics department according to the location of the federal school. For example, if the federal school is located in Alberta, the Alberta home economics guideline is used. If the native children attend the regular provincial school, they follow the same basic program as other ethnic groups in the area. The teachers of native children are encouraged to adapt the guidelines to the needs of the native children. To aid teachers in program planning, publications are available through Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Education Branch.

#### **Conclusions on the trends of home economics in Canada, 1977**

The guidelines in all provinces and territories that were developed in 1964-9 were replaced in 1975-7 or are in the process of being replaced. (6)

The guidelines are to be adapted by the classroom teacher to the needs of the student in the school.

The enrolment in home economics is approximately 11% of the total student population. The number of males in the class is increasing. Only one province reported a male student population of 10% in home economics.

The class sizes vary from 16 to 24 students, but they could be 35 students if the "practical" is removed, and a regular classroom is used.

The prerequisites for senior courses are not stressed in most areas.

Most teachers hold a bachelor or an honors degree in home economics plus a teaching certificate.

The program in the junior division is designed for knowledge and skill on the basic areas of food, clothing, and family relations based on management and decision-making. (7)

The program in the senior division is designed on value clarification, attitudes, and skills on improving the quality of life. The process for accomplishing this is the principles of management developing judgment skills based on values, and goals for decision-making. The student is directed to analyze problems and do critical thinking. (7)

## **The Canadian home economics education trend compared to the international perspectives**

The trend of home economics philosophy and content was outlined in a paper by Dr. Beatrice Paolucci at XIIIth Congress of the International Federation for Home Economics at Ottawa 1976 as follows: (8)

Home economics content should focus on values, goals, judgment, and decision-making, with the decision-making process as the core. There should be more equitable distribution of limited resources. There should be a recognition of the interdependence of people and the environment, family, community, national and world systems.

In view of the aims and objectives and the course content of the elementary and secondary guidelines in the Canadian program of home economics that have been published in the late seventies, this philosophy and content is being initiated into the 1977-78 curriculum for Canadians. (6)

### **Footnotes**

1. Newsletter November 1975, Family Studies Home Economics, Corporate Affiliate Ontario Educational Association.
2. "Home Economics in Canada," 1976, Elizabeth Hepworth Feniak, M.S., Ph.D., *Illinois Teacher*, Mar.-Apr. 1976, Illinois, U.S.A.
3. *Statistics Canada Catalogue 11-00 IE* May 18, 1977.
4. *Perspective Canada 11* -507.
5. *Elementary-secondary school enrolment 1974-75*
6. Statistics Canada 18-210 annual Nov. 1976.
7. Guidelines for home economics, Ministry of Education.
8. Home Economics- Relevant Program a Changing World, Barbara Nelson, University of Manitoba, Manitoba Education Research Journal, May 1977.
9. *Evolving Philosophy and Content of Home Economics*, Dr. Beatrice Paolucci, XIth Congress of the International Federation for Home Economics, final report Ottawa, Canada, July 1976.
10. Ministry of Education, Division of Educational Programmes, Home Economic Branch, Victoria, British Columbia.
11. Department of Education, Secondary School Curriculum Guide, Edmonton, Alberta.
12. Department of Education, Home Economics, Regina, Saskatchewan.
13. Province of Manitoba, Department of Education, Home Economics, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
14. Ministry of Education, Family Studies, Toronto, Ontario.
15. Government Du Quebec, Ministere De L'Education, Direction Generale De L'Enseignement Elementaire et Secondaire, Province of Quebec, Quebec.

16. Department of Education, Program and Implementation Branch, Home Economics Education, Province of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick.
17. Department of Education, Home Economics, Halifax, Nova Scotia.
18. Department of Education, Curriculum Branch, Home Economics, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.
19. Department of Education, Division of Instruction, Home Economics, St. Johns, Newfoundland.
20. Government of the Yukon Territory, Department of Education, Whitehorse, Yukon.
21. Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Education, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.
22. Indian and Northern Affairs, Curriculum Services, Education and Cultural Development Branch, Ottawa, Canada.