

# **Sustainability of HEEd in the U.S.: Perspectives & Practices**

by

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# Purposes of this Presentation

- \* Provide an historical understanding of how HE & HEEEd came to be as it is today in the U.S.**
- \* Provide a philosophical perspective for a future direction**
- \* Suggest a future direction for H.S.Ed. based on those insights**
- \* Note: I will use Home Economics as the name of the profession historically & globally.**

# History Provides Perspective

- \* Understanding our past, helps us understand our present, & more effectively influence the future.**
- \* As an mission-oriented profession, we are challenged to**
  - \* adapt our practice to meet today's students, families, & society**
  - \* maintain a justifiable philosophical foundation.**

# Our U.S. Beginnings

\* **Mid-1800s:**

\* **Catherine Beecher created girls' schooling**

\* **Develop critical thinking & moral leadership**

\* **In their own homes as wives & mothers**

\* **In their communities as teachers, only men taught**

\* **In 1860s-1870s**

\* **Communicable diseases a primary cause of death**

\* **Louis Pasteur developed the germ theory of disease-influenced the HE movement**

\* **Few professional opportunities for educated women then**

# A Movement Developed

- \* A movement developed to teach women & girls to apply science & manage homes for “right living”.
- \* Late 1800s & Early 1900s:
  - \* Pedagogical given that all girls & boys needed education
  - \* It was taught in some schools
  - \* Many educators’ skeptical about its value
  - \* Belief it was a fad contributing to overcrowded school curriculum
  - \* Various names for the subject developed.

# Similar Influences Then & Now

- \* **Industrialization without regulation**
- \* **Big industry grew bigger & small businesses failed**
- \* **Worker exploitation**
- \* **Pollution**
- \* **New technologies without safety regulations**
- \* **Immigration**
- \* **Urbanization**
- \* **Social Darwinism—survival of the fittest—  
eugenics**

# Members of the Movement Came Together

- \* **Lake Placid Conference on Home Economics (LPC) (1899-1908)**
- \* **Home economics attendees agreed**
  - \* **These conditions were negatively affecting home & families**
- \* **There were many perspectives about how this new field they were creating could respond.**

# LPC Attendees Were Diverse

## \* Men & women (a few examples)

- \* Ellen Richard—Chemist (studied water & air pollution) & Lecturer, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- \* Caroline Hunt—Prof. of home economics, U. of Wisconsin
- \* Melville Dewey—U. of the State of NY, Dir. Of NY State Library & Home Educ. & developer, Dewey Decimal System for libraries
- \* Charles F. Langworthy, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture
- \* Wilbur O. Atwater—Chemist studying human nutrition & metabolism, Wesleyan U., Conn.
- \* Marion Talbot—Assoc. Prof. of Sanitary Sci, U. of Chicago
- \* Anna Barrows—Editor, *American Kitchen Magazine*
- \* Alice P. Norton—Supervisor of Domestic Sci. in Brookline Schools, MA
- \* Members from across the U.S, Canada, & England, also included vocational & secondary teachers, concerned citizens, professional association presidents.



# The Movement Evolves Into a Profession

- \* **Determining an agreed-upon definition**
  - \* **The study of the laws, conditions, principles & ideals which are concerned on the one hand with humans' immediate physical environment & on the other hand with their nature as social beings, & is the study specially of the relation between those two factors (LPCP, 1902, pp. 70-71).**
- \* **Determining an agreed-upon name**
  - \* **Some wanted Ecology, Euthenics, but Home Economics was chosen.**
- \* **Attendees agreed that HE had an important role in the schools.**

# Debate Over Curriculum

- \* **(LPC) debate about school curriculum**
  - \* **Science & art applied to “right living”**
  - \* **Manual training for home & possibly paid employment**
  - \* **Preparation for home, community & civic life**
  - \* **College preparation, meet entrance requirements**
  - \* **Preparation for the many who would not get advanced education**
  - \* **Supporting the industrial economy demanding more workers with skills previously only needed by a few**

# Ellen Richard's Creed

## \* Home Economics

- \* Ideal home life for today unhampered by the traditions of the past.
- \* Utilization of all resources of modern science to improve the home life.
- \* Freedom of the home from the dominance of things & their due subordination to ideals.
- \* Simplicity in material surroundings which will most free the spirit for the more important & permanent interests of the home & of society.

# Federal Attention to Educ.

- \* **U.S. school transformation prompted federal lawmakers to create a bill on school technical training.**
- \* **Home economists ignored this, even though some supported both general & vocational education.**
- \* **The resulting 1917 Smith-Hughes Vocational Ed. Act still exerting curricular influence on HEEd.**
- \* **Career pathways are increasingly the federal funding focus for HEEd.**
- \* **Undermined broader scientific & social reform goal**
- \* **Supports belief that HEEd is for non-college students**

# Concerns Then & Now

- \* **Is there danger of sacrificing the subject in order to get it recognized?**
- \* **Companies/industries influencing school funding & job training legislation, gaining strength in the U.S.**
  - \* **Companies prepare teaching materials & other promotions & teacher recognitions supporting their interests.**
- \* **Who is benefiting & who is being disadvantaged?**
- \* **Giving organizations with vested interests influence to determine our curriculum, then educators allowing ourselves & our students to be treated like human capital or pawns.**
- \* **Identity confusion: AHEA commission a definition paper**

# Brown & Paolucci Definition Paper

\* Marjorie Brown: HE teacher educator, scholar & philosopher of HE & HEEEd

\* Beatrice Paolucci: Degrees in HE, Family Life, & Education; teacher, scholar, philosopher, expert in family resource management

\* Emphasized H.E. as a family-focused profession, beyond a focus on individual family wellbeing, but on improving society

# Purpose of Critical Science

- \* Improvement of individuals & families for the benefit of all family members, others affected, & society**
- \* Critical thinking**
- \* Critique of values, interpretations, social structures & assumptions**
- \* Advocates self-reflection & open, honest, respectful dialogue**

# Critical Science

- \* B & P new conceptualization of HE beyond technical field it had become**
- \* Conception of how families could be empowered & how professionals could work differently**
- \* The process of choosing the best course of action taken by individuals & groups to collaboratively examine & critique present social structures for the purpose of their own emancipation (B & P, 1979, p. 23).**
- \* Teaches us not to accept “what is” happening as if it were what should be” happening if it is not rationally & ethically justifiable.**



# **Brown & Paolucci Mission Statement**

**The mission of home economics is**

**to enable families, both as individual units & generally as a social institution, to build & maintain systems of actions which lead**

**1) to maturing in individual self-formation &**

**2) to enlightened, cooperative participation**

**in the critique & formulation of social goals & means for accomplishing them (1979, p. 23).**

# Key Concepts of Critical Science

- \* Problem-posing approach (problematizing taken-for-granted phenomena)**
- \* Critiques ideologies—culturally developed beliefs, attitudes, and forms of social life that contribute to subordination of some people, serving the interests of others. Ideologies allow dominant groups to gain &/or maintain powerful positions at the expense of others.**
- \* Don't confuse “what is” with “what should be”.**
- \* We act based on our motivating interests.**

# Critical Science

- \* Creates agreed-upon ethical guiding vision**
- \* Problem identification from gap between the guiding vision & reality**
- \* Distinguishes problems from symptoms**
- \* Frames problems as broad questions devoid on predetermined facts, values or options**
- \* Problem framing that opens up dialogue**

# Critical Science

- \* **Advocates interdisciplinary knowledge being applied complex problems as in life**
- \* **Diligent search to identify range of options beyond those easily recognized**
- \* **Rational & ethical evaluation of options**
- \* **Chosen option must be rationally & ethically justifiable**
- \* **Meeting lifespan family challenges**

# 3 Human Interests-3 Systems of Action

- \* **Interpretive/communicative/practical action** (seeks cultural, interpersonal, & self-understanding, mutual understanding)
  - \* This interest is to identify what is not working for all affected in a situation.
- \* **Critical/emancipatory action** (change unjust power use)
  - \* This interest creates understanding of how we & others contribute to a problem & what is unjust.
- \* **Technical action** (seeks to get work done)
  - \* This interest identifies & applies knowledge & skills needed to address a problem.

# Critical Science

- \* Situation analysis, differentiate symptoms from underlying problem**
- \* Examine diverse ideas carefully to gain new insights & create new options**
- \* Ethical reasoning & critical reflection**
- \* Consider interests of all who are affected**
- \* Seek to address injustices w/in families & society**
- \* Advocate practical reasoning process**

# The Role of Professional Associations

- \* A professional association seeks to further a particular profession, its mission, the interests of individuals engaged in it, & the public interest.
- \* Joining provides members with a competitive advantage because they become active, informed members of their profession.
- \* Members depend on their association
  - \* To brief them on important trends, new & pending legislation, & advances in technology.
  - \* To set & uphold standards of professional practice
  - \* For networking & collaborative opportunities

# Professional Leadership

- \* **AAFCS says it is dedicated to FCS students & professionals from both multiple practice settings & content areas.**
- \* **Changes in structure disempowered member engagement**
- \* **Structural changes discourage engagement of confident leaders with administrative experience addressing political & professional challenges, holistic, integrated, historical perspective of the profession**
- \* **Loss of specialized professionals who understand & value the interdisciplinary, integrated mission & practice**
- \* **Narrowed focus primarily to HEED, its not the only org.**



# Loss of Advocacy Role & Benefits

- \* We had a *COALITION* of 3 HEEd organizations to unite their message to legislators.
- \* It designed sample legislation to educate legislators before bills are drafted.
- \* It lobbied policymakers for a broader curriculum.
- \* Collaboration essential to influence legislation relevant to our mission of improving individual & family wellbeing
- \* Currently the *ALLIANCE for FCS* has 26 U.S. FCS-related organizations collaborating to advance the value of FCS globally, BUT it does NOT lobby for such issues.

# Value of Advocacy

- \* Advocacy for support for the profession & programs & for solutions to social problems**
- \* Consistent staff to lead the effort & organize the members to support the resolutions to address social problems related to our mission**
- \* Provide data on the impact of our programs & their connection with addressing or preventing recognized social problems**
- \* Decision makers (policymakers) recognize our field as having expertise they need to address these problems**

# Current Challenges to HEEEd

- \* **Public perceptions**
- \* **Funding—federal, state, & local demands & restrictions**
- \* **Emphasis on preparation for work/careers rather than education for life**
- \* **Interdependence of secondary & higher education**
- \* **Shortage of teacher ed. programs & students**
- \* **Need male & female teachers to encourage boys to prepare for family life**

# Current Challenges to HEEEd

- \* **Elective status of some secondary programs**
- \* **Inconsistency between what we think HEEEd curriculum should be & what will attract students & gain acceptance in school systems.**
- \* **Specialization w/o integration that fragments knowledge, inhibits complex problem solving & weakens our effectiveness**
- \* **Need for more critical thinking & ethical reasoning**
- \* **Need more program evaluation research**

# **Critical Science Model for HE & HEEEd**

- \* Recognizes that addressing individual, family, & societal problems requires collaboration among many disciplines & professions**
  - \* E.g. my current research on elder family financial exploitation**
- \* Rejects the banking model of education/working with people**
- \* Applied to teaching**
  - \* 1) Critical thinking**
  - \* 2) Consideration of unrealized possibilities**
  - \* 3) Taking action**

# Critical Science Model for HEEEd

- \* **1) Develop Critical thinking/a questioning consciousness**
  - \* **Problem-posing**
  - \* **Self-reflection**
  - \* **Ideologies**
  - \* **Identify false consciousness**
  - \* **Misuse of power to marginalize, silence, oppress, & exclude**

# Critical Science Model for HEEEd

- \* 2) Develop ability to consider unrealized possibilities**
  - \* Encourage imagination of what could be/possibilities**
  - \* Seek diverse perspectives**
  - \* Believe you can make a difference**

# Critical Science Model for HEEEd

- \* 3) Develop knowledge & skills for taking action—authentic learning experiences**
  - \* Dialogue, conversation, dialectic, questioning (use questions based on the 3 interests)**
  - \* Consensus-building**
  - \* Taking collective action, collaboration**
  - \* Caring & ethical reasoning**



# What Should We Do?

- \* Let the challenges become opportunities.**
- \* Open & imaginative discussion followed by data, reasoned & ethical action**
- \* Question taken-for-granted assumptions**
- \* Collaborate to address issues/solve problems**
- \* Build relationships with other Faculties & professions-courses that draw non-HS**
- \* Together we are stronger & smarter: speak up & advocate for positive change.**

# What Should We Do?

- \* **Professional Association: provide what individual professionals cannot do alone**
  - \* **Substantive work that can clearly demonstrate expertise, e.g. grants that bring membership collaboration**
  - \* **Political savvy to understand how to address challenges collaboratively**
    - \* **Leaders with historical & philosophical understanding & experience with the profession as a whole**
    - \* **Strong, consistent voice for the profession with trusted relationship development with decision/policymakers**

# Who are the Change Makers?

- \* Those who engage in & commit to an agreed-upon, ethically justified philosophy & vision**
- \* Stay focused on the ultimate vision**
- \* Lead respectful & rational dialogue**
- \* Discuss differing views & conditions to create justifiable agreed-upon options**
- \* Develop & implement curriculum consistent with an empowering vision**

**We in the U.S. must make some changes to be truly sustainable.**

**What in our experience could be useful to you?**

**Your thoughts & questions?**