



## 本稿について

家政学原論部会では、(一社)日本家政学会平成30年度第1期活動助成をいただき、2018年8月21日、設立50周年記念セミナー(統一テーマ:家政学の未来を創る—未来の世代の生活の質を向上させるための家政学の使命—)を開催した。

本稿は、特別講演(Keynote Speech)の講師を務めたDr. Myersの講演内容を執筆いただいたものである。

Dr. Myersは、家政学がプロフェッションとして持つ使命の独自性に言及し、家政学の使命の啓発に欠かせないrigor(科学研究の質・内容)、relevance(日常生活との関連性)、relationships(関係性)の3つの視点から、アメリカ家政学とその教育の現状を紹介いただいた。日本の家政学ならびにその教育の未来を考える上で、示唆に富むすばらしい講演であった。

以下、本稿では、Dr. Myersにご執筆いただいた講演内容を、設立50周年記念夏期セミナー発表要旨に掲載された発表要旨の日本語訳とともに掲載する。

(家政学原論部会前部会長 八幡(谷口)彩子)

## 講演題: 家政学および家庭科の使命と未来: 米国の視点

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人口、社会、技術、経済および環境面での課題が、個人や家族の生活に再び広がっている。暴力、消費者負債、地球温暖化、ネットいじめ、劣悪な保育、食料不安、そして肥満の蔓延は、個人や家族のウェルビーイングを悪化させる社会的な病の数例にすぎない。コミュニケーション、医学、情報、交通、食料および農業での技術的進歩によって、私たちの暮らし方や働き方が加速度的に変化している。上記の課題は、個人や家族、そして地域

の人的、経済的および環境的資源に負の影響を及ぼし続けている。

上記の課題に向き合う専門職の未来を描くには、資源の獲得、維持、持続的発展に向けた効果的な戦略が必要である。これらの社会的課題へ積極的に対応できるか否かは、社会や専門職の中で発揮されるリーダーシップの質にかかっている。

家政学はプロフェッションとして、その誕生以来、人々の状況を改善することを目標に掲げ、社会的課題への対応に取り組んできた。個人や家族が直面する現実的で長期的な課題に対応するために、複数の分野からの知識を統合する専門は、家政学の他に存在しない。この複雑な世界で、人々の身体的、精神的、社会的および資源的ウェルビーイング向上を支援するために、個人および共同で責任を担うようにメンバーたちに奨励する専門は家政学の他には存在しない。

本発表では、アメリカにおける社会動向の分析を通じて、家政学にとって極めて重要な影響を検討するとともに、これらの課題に向き合い解決するための総合的で相乗的なアプローチに重点を置いた研究を紹介する。さらに、家政学の使命を啓発するのに欠かせないものとして、rigor(質・内容)、relevance(社会との関連性)およびrelationships(関係性)の原則を検討する。

使命を果たすために家政学が行うのは、課題への対応だけではない。社会制度を批評し、そしてより良い世界を創造する可能性をもつ他の社会的目標を定めるのである。私たちには、世界中の個人、家族および地域の変わりゆくニーズに応え、今後長きにわたり未来を持続させるような研究、教育、ビジネスおよび経済的に価値ある貢献を行う、というアジェンダがある。我々は一体となり、使命を先頭に掲げ、この画期的なアジェンダに取り組むことができる。

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# ■ The Mission and Future of Home Economics and Home Economics Education: A U.S. Perspective

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## Abstract

*Reoccurring demographic, social, technical, economic, and environmental challenges permeate the lives of individuals and families. Violence, consumer debt, global warming, cyber bullying, poor quality childcare, food insecurity and obesity epidemic are just a few of the societal ills that plague individual and family well-being. Technical advancements in communication, medicine, information, transportation, food and agriculture are transforming the way we live and work at an accelerating pace. The challenges create demands on human, economic, and environmental resources that burden individuals, families, and communities. Addressing the challenges and envisioning the future of the profession requires effective strategies for acquiring, maintaining, sustaining, and developing these resources. The ability to proactively respond to these societal challenges depends on the quality of leadership exhibited within society and the profession.*

*Since its origin, the home economics profession has been poised to address societal issues with the goal of enhancing the human condition. No other profession integrates knowledge from multiple disciplines with the purpose of addressing the practical perennial problems faced by individuals and families. No other profession inspires its members to take personal and collaborative responsibility to help people improve physical, emotional, social, and resource well-being in our complex world. The principles of rigor, relevance, and relationships will provide a framework for the perspective. Collectively, with the mission at the forefront, professionals can embrace an innovative agenda to make valuable contributions in research, education, business and the economy that meets the evolving needs of individuals, families and communities around the world therefore sustaining the future for many years to come.*

It is my distinct honor to be with you as you celebrate your 50th anniversary and to recognize your work to promote the mission of home economics. The definition and mission of the profession has been evaluated and modified over the years to address the changing issues and problems facing families. Although a variety of names are often used to identify the profession, the mission and central focus remains the same – to improve the quality of life for individuals and families. Thank you for the opportunity to share a United States perspective on the mission and future of home economics and home economics education. The key principles of rigor, relevance, and relationships will serve as a framework for this discussion.

### Rigor as an Academic Discipline

The term “rigor” is widely used to describe experiences and expectations that are challenging both intellectually and personally (Great Schools Partnership 2014). Often, the term is associated with complex knowledge and concepts that are applicable in various educational, career, and civic contexts. Acknowledging the rigor of the home eco-

nomics profession verifies its important role and valuable contributions as a respected component of the educational system. In recent years, the U.S. has introduced a vision for career and technical education (formerly vocational education) that focuses on graduating students who are successfully prepared for college, career, and life (Achieve 2017). This focus ensures that students have the academic preparation, cognitive preparation, technical (content) skills, and process skills to be successful as a responsible and contributing family member and citizen. Not only are home economics programs focused on teaching related technical skills but they are challenged with integrating academic content and interpersonal skills.

The home economics profession has been described as “an applied field that brings together knowledge from many different disciplines” (Blankenship, Moerchen 1979, 2). In other words, the profession assumes “the responsibility of integrating the contributions from all the sciences, art and philosophy into one functional whole for service to families” (Hoefflin et al. 1987, 101). The integration of academic skills has been part of the home economics cur-

riculum since its beginning. More and more home economics classrooms in the U.S. are emphasizing an educational approach to learning that integrates principles of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM). This approach guides student inquiry, engages dialogue, and promotes critical thinking. As a result, students “take thoughtful risks, engage in experiential learning, persist in problem-solving, embrace collaboration, and work through the creative process” (Education Closet 2014). These students are today’s learners who will become tomorrow’s leaders and innovators.

There are many examples of the integration of science, technology, engineering, arts, and math together in the home economics classroom. For example, home economics programs do not simply teach students to sew but should challenge them to explore the reasons for their clothing and textiles choices, to consider any effects of those choices on the environment, and to examine the dangers associated with clothing and textiles manufacturing and production. To promote healthy living, students can analyze the nutritional content of family recipes and make changes to create and taste healthier alternatives. Students can use the engineering process to design a home to control heat through window placement. With all of these principles involved in baking, the home and classroom kitchen becomes a STEAM laboratory.

Since 1998, U.S. programs have utilized national content standards to guide curriculum and instruction. The standards provide a common direction and process framework for preparing students for technical skills in specific content areas within home economics. Through the years, the standards have been revised to reflect the need to meet the evolving needs of individuals, families, and communities. The *Family and Consumer Sciences National Standards 3.0* (2018) present a vision for the future and provide educators with a structure for identifying program outcomes and encouraging reasoning for action. The standards, based on knowledge and skills needed for personal, home, and family life and for career success, apply to all students regardless of age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, disabilities, aspirations, interests or motivations. The U.S. Department of Education (2015) identified key process or employability skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, resource management, and more, that should be addressed within the classroom. These process skills are embedded well in and are strong components of the home economics education

curriculum.

## Relevance to Everyday Living

The term relevance refers to experiences that are applicable to personal interests and aspirations or are connected to real-world problems or issues (Great Schools Partnership 2014). Reoccurring demographic, social, technical, economic, and environmental challenges permeate the lives of individuals and families and impact communities. Technical advancements in communication, medicine, information, transportation, food and agriculture are transforming the way we live and work at an accelerating pace. Individuals, families, and communities will need to be equipped with the knowledge and appropriate skills to respond to these challenges and demands, which are not easily understood, addressed, or resolved. Many of these challenges have enlightened the way home economics professionals live and work and improve the human condition for individuals and families. Therefore, our home economics professionals are in the forefront to provide the necessary leadership to address these societal issues. There is no other profession that integrates knowledge from multiple disciplines with the purpose of addressing the practical problems that are faced daily.

The *American Family Assets Study* (Syvertsen et al. 2012) identified positive supports and strengths that young people need to succeed. Half of the assets focus on the relationships and opportunities they need in their families, schools, and communities. The remaining assets focus on the social-emotional strengths, values, and commitments that are nurtured within young people. These assets can serve as a guide for working with students and their families. Employers now emphasize soft skills as critical for productive and happy employees and embrace the flexible family/work environment allowing individuals to work from home or a virtual location.

Technology ownership and usage, which has increased among Americans, offers new opportunities and challenges (Pew Research Center 2018a). In fact, the vast majority of Americans (approximately 7 in 10) use social media to connect with others, share information, remain up-to-date on current news, and entertain themselves (Pew Research Center 2018b).

The U.S. is facing an obesity epidemic. In 2016 in 46 states, 25% or more adults self-reported themselves as obese, an increase since the 2015 survey (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation 2017). Obesity rates for children and

youth continue to rise. As more and more obese children become obese adults, the diseases associated with obesity, such as heart disease, cancer, and especially diabetes will increase. Home economics education has been described as the most cost effective way to address the childhood obesity issue by teaching basic food preparation and meal planning skills (Lichtenstein, Ludwig 2010). More and more schools are participating in “Farm to Table” and “Farm to School” initiatives. These programs offer students access to healthy, local foods as well as education opportunities, such as school gardens, cooking lessons and farm field trips, and encourage students to make informed food choices while strengthening the local economy and contributing to vibrant communities.

How is this relevant to the mission of home economics? Family mealtime is a perfect example of the importance and value of togetherness. This time together provides families with the opportunity to practice interpersonal and communication skills. Further, individual family members can participate in meal planning and use safe and sanitary techniques to prepare healthy dishes. The Family Dinner Project (2015) suggests that children who take part in family meals are less likely to be overweight, eat more healthy foods, be less likely to engage in disordered eating, and have less delinquency, greater academic achievement, improved psychological well-being, and positive family interactions. Thus, family mealtime benefits the whole family and serves as an illustration of the mission of the profession at work in everyday life.

### **Relationships Create Meaning and Collaboration**

Relationships can be the most meaningful part of people's lives. Connecting with others through personal relationships promotes positive mental health and well-being (Sharry 2018). Those relationships should extend to community groups and fellow colleagues to establish a professional and personal network. Ideas need input and development and benefit from leveraging the perspectives of others. One's professional network can greatly contribute to fostering ideas and growth. Successful collaborative projects require an investment in relationship-building. Organizations in a collaborative partnership share common goals. Relationships can empower organizations to become more effective and to advance their vision and mission.

The creation of the Alliance for Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) is an example of a collaborative effort. The

Alliance, founded in 2006, is a coalition of 26 organizations who represent academic institutions, business and industry, professional associations, youth organizations, honor societies, government agencies, and related content areas (Alliance for Family and Consumer Sciences 2018). All of these organizations share one goal to unify their diverse organizations in common purpose by advancing the value of the profession globally. Their collaborative efforts have enhanced the visibility and viability of the profession to improve the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities in a diverse and global society.

Working together collaboratively can also lead to problem solving. For example, the U.S. is facing a critical educator shortage where the demand for home economics educators is far greater than the supply (Werhan 2013). The shortage increasingly results in educator positions going unfilled or being filled with unqualified individuals. In many cases, the shortage of students enrolled in educator preparation programs has resulted in closure of those programs. The future of the profession is in jeopardy when programs are closed. What should be done about recruiting, preparing, and supporting home economics educators? Is it possible to be innovative in an approach to resolve the issue? The answer is YES! After collaborative discussions involving individuals, groups, states, and other relevant networks, the “Say Yes to FCS: Filling the Educator Pipeline” campaign was launched (Duncan et al. 2017). The national educator recruitment campaign is a collaborative initiative of ten national organizations that focus on celebrating educators, sharing the story of the profession's importance and effectiveness in the United States, and encouraging individuals to consider a career as an educator.

Another collaborative partnership involves the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE). As the only worldwide organization focused on home economics, the ultimate goal of the Federation is the improvement of the quality of life for all individuals. The World Congress is held every four years. At the 2020 World Congress in Atlanta, Georgia, home economics professionals from around the world will focus on the theme, Home Economics: Soaring Toward Sustainable Development (IFHE 2018). The Congress schedule will include plenary speakers, workshops exploring global concerns, and professionals sharing best practices and research. Professionals in Japan are invited and encouraged to attend the event filled with many collaborative educational opportunities.

## Conclusion

For more than a hundred years, the profession has been an instrumental force in serving individuals and families through an integrative, holistic approach to education, research, advocacy, and public policy. So, who will take the lead for the next 50–100 years to tackle life’s most basic questions and societal ills? It is evident that the relevant issues facing today’s family and our society cannot be solved alone. . . they require a rigorous approach that is relevant to the mission and that promotes collaborative relationships. A rapidly changing society desperately needs professionals who are able to address complex issues and build partnerships. Home economics professionals are in the forefront to provide the leadership necessary to address these societal issues. The profession is charged with preparing and equipping future professionals to be leaders who can operationalize the integrative nature of the profession and accomplish the profession’s mission. To do so will contribute to the central goal of improving the quality of life. The continued viability of our profession depends on our ability to instill a unique passion in those who will follow us. That passion fuels the commitment necessary to lead the profession and your organization into another fifty years and beyond. Through your efforts to inform your professional practice, you will improve the human condition, strengthen individual and family well-being, and promote community vitality. In closing, I challenge you to envision a positive future where we as home economics professionals lead the way and make contributions in research, in the classroom, in our family, community and our world.

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