

A FRAMEWORK FOR LEVERAGING FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES IN CTE

By Reno A. Palombit



IMAGE CREDIT: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE ADMINISTRATORS OF FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES (NASAFACS)

“Family and consumer sciences (FCS) is not supporting career and technical education (CTE) pathways.” This was the misconception that led the National Association of State Administrators of Family and Consumer Sciences (NASAFACS) to develop the Framework for FCS in CTE. It became increasingly apparent that those directing CTE programming might not know how FCS has evolved over the last century; they might not be aware of the ways in which FCS stands poised to serve their economic and labor market needs.

They began the process by asking state administrators which career pathways and clusters were under the direction of, or supported by, FCS in their state. Although variation existed, a consistent set of clusters and pathways emerged. This proved that a framework was needed and would have multiple, positive effects:

- Increase consistency in how FCS is implemented from state to state
- Support CTE decision-makers in developing CTE programs of study
- Promote high-quality FCS programs of study
- Improve professional development offerings for FCS teachers
- Provide targeted resources to students, teachers, and administrators

FCS at the Center

Family and consumer sciences is more than a program area within CTE — it is a global discipline and profession that extends into multiple practice settings including cooperative extension, business and industry, government, and health and human services. There are FCS colleges, schools and departments in postsecondary institutions across the country offering degrees in human development, nutrition, food science, counseling, fashion merchandising, interior design and more! The FCS body of knowledge has been built over the years through science, research and

professional collaboration between researchers and practitioners. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory provide a foundation to the work of FCS. It is from these theories (and others) that four concepts emerge as core components of the body of knowledge: basic human needs, individual well-being, family strengths, and community vitality (Nickols et al., 2009). FCS professionals apply this lens to their work in eight content areas:

- Culinary arts, hospitality and tourism
- Education and training
- Food science and nutrition
- Health management and wellness
- Housing and interior design
- Human/child development and family relations
- Personal and family finance
- Textiles, apparel and retailing

Leveraging FCS as a discipline to facilitate CTE programs of study equips students with the skills to be dynamic community members — optimizing individual well-being and community vitality through three career fields: education and human services, hospitality and food production, and visual arts and design. In the following sections, we are going to explore how FCS can be leveraged to support students’ college and career readiness.

Education and Human Services

Millennials are an altruistic generation seeking employment where they can make a difference in others’ lives. The education and human services career field allows students to explore and prepare for careers where they can exercise their altruistic motivations, easily finding employment in some of our country’s most in-demand professions. Based on analysis of knowledge, skill, and related careers, the steering committee behind the Framework merged Education and Training and Human Services. For exam-



PHOTO CREDIT: ALYSON MCINTYRE-REIGER

FCS students network with teacher educators at Indiana’s Be a Teacher Day.



PHOTO CREDIT: LAUREN DARR

FCS students in NC’s Teaching as a Profession I course learn about library science careers.



PHOTO CREDIT: BRYAN SCHUERMAN

FCCLA members explore food insecurity through a service learning project.



FCS students evaluate their products in a Culinary Arts and Hospitality class.



North Carolina FCCLA members compete.



FCS teachers participate in professional development at NC State University's Plants for Human Health Institute.

ple, careers in counseling and mental health appeared in both career clusters.

Urban and rural communities alike have employers seeking candidates for education and human services positions. Positions such as home health aides, social workers, mental health counselors, personal financial advisers, and social and community service managers represent some of the fastest growing careers, according to the U.S. Department of Labor (2018). The education and human services career field provides increased salary opportunities in higher administrative roles. For example, according to North Carolina's Child Care Services Association (2018), administrators and directors in early childhood education programs can make \$72,220. Early childhood education programs have the power to impact the labor markets exponentially by not only preparing students for careers, but also by improving the quality of pre-K education.

Facing a significant demand for teachers and dwindling resources for college visits and teacher candidate recruitment, Indiana CTE leaders convened a statewide event to connect students in the teaching and training pathway with teacher education programs. In collaboration with Indiana family and consumer sciences teachers, the Indiana Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), teacher education programs, and community stakeholders, the Be a Teacher Day event was established. Entering its fourth year, the event has continued to grow. According to Alyson McIntyre-Reiger, director for Advancing Connections, surveys indicate that the students in attendance increased their knowledge of the various teacher education programs in Indiana; ways to finance postsecondary education; and use of the community college system to reach their career goals.

FCS National Standards in education and early childhood, consumer services, consumer and family resources, family and human services, human development, and career, family and community connections can be scaffolded into CTE programs of

study in the pathways identified in the Framework. FCS students can apply skills they have learned through rigorous FCCLA competitive events, such as Interpersonal Communications, Early Childhood Education, Focus on Children, Advocacy, and Teach and Train.

Hospitality and Food Production

Many rural communities across the country are facing population migration, and they are investing in their hospitality industry to retain and attract individuals and families. Additionally, urban communities are investing in their hospitality workforce as tourism dollars provide a key boost to their economy. The industry affords great upward mobility, with 80 percent of restaurant owners reporting their first job in the industry being an entry-level position (National Restaurant Association, 2019).

The Framework incorporates a Food and Nutrition Sciences and Technology pathway with Restaurants and Lodging Services and Travel and Tourism. The steering committee found this to be important, as there are many food-related career opportunities beyond those in Hospitality and Tourism. And while you could connect this pathway to other clusters, nutritionists, dietitians and food scientists share foundational knowledge and skills with chefs and restaurateurs. For example, these professionals learn skills in food preparation, meal planning, nutrition and food safety.

As CTE programs of study scaffold toward more career-specific training, they diverge in specialty, with nutritionists focusing on human nutrition and food security, food scientists focusing on research and development, and chefs focusing on addressing the guests' needs. But there is also a trend toward increased collaboration among professionals in these careers.

Chef Michael Harants, secondary committee chair for the American Culinary Federation Education Foundation Accrediting Commission, shared, "The relationship between registered dietitians and certified chefs is greatly improving; where dietitians would

argue for less fat, salt and sugars, chefs now embrace the challenge. The net benefit is a healthier customer, food as medicine, and more energy. We also see more certified and professional chefs going back to school to get higher degrees to move into the food sciences and corporate R&D environments. These are challenging disciplines with terrific work-life balance many culinary professionals crave.”

Students in FCCLA can apply learned skills in competitive events that offer direct connections to the variety of food-related careers supported by FCS. The Culinary Arts competition provides great experience for students as they work in teams in professional kitchens. FCCLA’s Food Innovations competition allows students to become food scientists, developing food products to meet an annual target-market case study, designing packaging and refining their formula through focus groups. In the Hospitality, Tourism, and Recreation competition, students select an industry sector for which to interview career professionals and design a business concept. In Nutrition and Wellness, students track food intake and physical activity for themselves, their family, or a community group and determine goals and strategies for improving their overall health.

Dr. Ben Chapman, associate professor and food safety specialist at North Carolina State University, discussed the value FCS brings to the Hospitality and Food Production career field: “Over two decades in food safety and I’ve heard a variation on these statements many, many times: People just don’t know how to cook and people don’t know where our food comes from. FCS programs in middle and high schools continue to fill these knowledge and skill gaps — but this isn’t the old approach.

“What has impressed me the most about interacting with education consultants, curricula developers and teachers over the past decade is how much the discipline of family and consumer sciences has progressed, including a refocus on the food system, the science that goes into it, the business needs in the sector, and how these things are all intertwined. The food industry is in drastic need of employees with the skills and knowledge being taught in these courses — and so is public health.”

Visual Arts and Design

CTE students looking for a career where they can express artistic skills and explore design careers can find a place in the Frame-

work’s Visual Arts and Design career field. A September 2016 report on the economic impact of the fashion industry to Congress’ Joint Economic Committee asserted, “Fashion is a highly sophisticated, multitrillion dollar global industry. In the United States alone, consumers spent nearly \$380 billion on apparel and footwear in 2015. The industry, which encompasses everything from textile and apparel brands to wholesalers, importers and retailers, employs more than 1.8 million people in the United States. It relies on workers in a wide range of occupations, including fashion designers, market research analysts, computer systems developers, patternmakers, sewing machine operators and wholesale buyers.”

And while New York City and Los Angeles continue to remain hubs for this industry, the report (2016) goes on to say, “High-value jobs in the fashion industry that pay high wages are spreading throughout the country, meaning that the economic impact of the fashion industry is expanding beyond the industry’s traditional footprint.” Courses in apparel and textile production, fashion design, and fashion merchandising support this huge and expanding market.

The Visual Arts and Design career field provides opportunities beyond apparel, supporting careers in housing and interior design. Interior designers work with architects and contractors to build commercial and residential spaces that meet project goals. They bring their knowledge of humans, how they interact, and the environments they need to thrive to create spaces that provide form and function.

High-quality CTE programs are incorporating computer-aided design software and leveraging advanced technology to prepare students for visual arts and design careers. FCS students learn design-thinking, three-dimensional visualization, creativity and communication by interacting with materials and tools through hands-on applications; they address concerns about sustainability and aging-in-place through problem solving.

The FCS body of knowledge allows students to explore how well designed, sustainable buildings contribute to community vitality. It facilitates the understanding of how an individual’s environment contributes to their well-being, productivity, and connection to coworkers, customers and family members. FCS students explore the ways in which apparel and textiles meet basic human needs of self-expression and safety. FCCLA members



FCS Teacher Dawn Harrison learns screen printing techniques.



National FCCLA’s fashion show, featuring FCS students’ original designs

compete in events such as Fashion Design, Fashion Construction, Interior Design, and Recycle and Redesign.

Leadership Development & Employability Skills

Surrounding the career fields are leadership development and employability skills. The Framework emphasizes FCS' unique position to facilitate opportunities for students to develop leadership and employability skills.

FCCLA is the aligned career and technical student organization for FCS, facilitating career development experiences across FCS pathways and serving the whole program. FCCLA also leverages the FCS body of knowledge so students experience leadership in their careers and in their families and communities.

What does community leadership look like?

How can I be a leader in my family?

These are questions FCCLA members explore as they engage in peer education programs such as Career Connection, Community Service, Families First, and STOP the Violence. Students apply the FCCLA Planning Process to a variety of concerns in their careers, family, and community, while developing work-life balance, time management, teamwork and creative problem-solving skills.

Suzanne Lujan, executive director for college and career readiness for Johnston County Public Schools in North Carolina, said, "FCS courses do a great job of incorporating service learning and leadership development. The result is students who are ready to be good community members and a future workforce with the employability skills needed to be successful in all careers."

FCS teachers have specific training that enhances their ability to teach all CTE students employability skills. CTE programs can leverage FCS' body of knowledge to facilitate students' development of critical thinking, systems thinking, applied academic skills, resource management, information and technology use, personal qualities, and interpersonal and communication skills.

"FCS education is unique in that these employability skills are embedded within the content and pedagogy of FCS," said Carol Werhan, teacher educator at Purdue University. "All are addressed to some extent within the FCS National Standards, the FCS teacher education standards, as well as the body of knowledge for the profession."

Consider how you can use the Framework in designing CTE programs of study. It can serve as a tool when organizing career

pathways, planning teacher professional development, and communicating with CTE stakeholders. It should help stakeholders understand that facilitating students' access to FCS programs allows them to graduate with skills for today's and tomorrow's careers and promotes the ways in which family and consumer sciences provides career-specific training for many and employability skills for all. ■

Reno A. Palombit is a CTE consultant for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. In this role, he provides program, curriculum, accountability and stakeholder support for FCS education. Palombit has a bachelor's degree in FCS education and a master's degree in CTE. He holds a North Carolina Professional Educator license for Family and Consumer Sciences Education and Career and Technical Education Director. Email him at reno.palombit@dpi.nc.gov.

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FCCLA state officers meet with Indiana Department of Health about an outreach project for early childhood education.

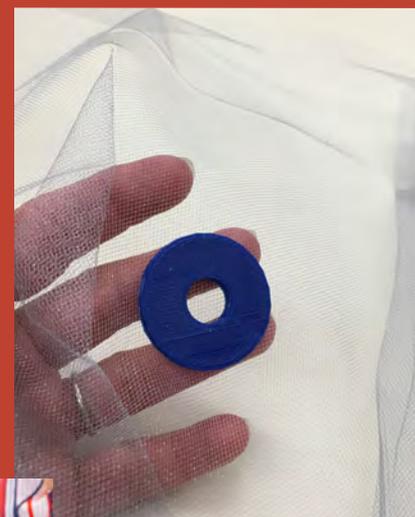
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