The Benefits of Home Economics for High School Students

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Abstract

Academics are a top priority for high schools nationwide as they prepare students for life in the real world after graduating. However, in this attempt to prioritize academia, collegiate-level courses are trumping the classes for general life skills that help make freshly graduated students fully functional adults. Home economics isn’t only about cooking, it’s about budgeting, home management/design, sewing, child development, and health/hygiene. This research analyzes the benefits of home economics for high school students. Home economics is an important aspect of curriculum for high school students as it teaches future generations life skills necessary for success - financial literacy, healthy lifestyles, and political competency. Additionally, the study of benefits in home economics is pertinent to the ongoing battle our country is facing against the epidemic of obesity. The reader will be presented with information from a literature review, two community partner interviews, and a theoretical framework - known as neoliberalism. The findings of this paper are that home economics is deserving of a place in the K-12 curriculum. The hope for this paper is to make permanent changes to the K-12 curriculum to include a mandatory home economics course in high schools nationwide.

Keywords: obesity, home economics, life skills
Introduction

Home economics, which is a subject or class that teaches skills that are useful in the home, is a significant source of adult readiness skills for the future generations of our country. Despite its vital nature, home economics is a dying resource in the K-12 curriculum as budget cuts and teacher shortages push arts programs out and replace them with STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math).

Statement of Problem

The problem of practice that I identified for my study is the positive benefits of home economics courses for students in high school and our wider society. Far too often home economics is thought of as only a cooking class, but it’s about so much including budgeting, home management/design, sewing, child development, and health/hygiene. The problem stems from, both the misconception that home economics curriculum is intended for female learners only and budget cuts. The problem impacts everybody in schools from students and teachers to administrators and society as a whole. However, I’ll focus my research on specifically high-school and newly graduated students. My research question asks what are the benefits to students and society when home economics curriculum is implemented in high school education?

Justification of The Study

This problem is urgent to consider because the longer we go on without home economics courses being taught in high schools, the more students will graduate high school and enter adulthood not knowing how to be competent, fully-functional adults in our society. Additionally, if home economics courses aren’t provided, we run the risk of further contributing to obesity as an ongoing epidemic that Americans face. If every high school student was taught how to
grocery shop effectively, budget for groceries, plan balanced meals, then cook/meal-prep those healthy meals, perhaps we’d have parents who cooked healthier meals for their kids (positively affecting their weight/health in childhood and teaching healthy habits for adulthood). Still, we’d also have adults who continue to eat healthy, balanced meals after leaving home. According to the World Health Organization, over the course of forty-one years, the rates of obesity in children and adolescents between the ages of five and nineteen has risen 14% globally (para. 2).

The topic of home economics is urgent to consider because it affects people’s lives in big-picture ways, not just small pieces. Home economics is also about financial literacy and the critical importance of students understanding things like student debt as they navigate attaining a higher level of education after high school. Additionally, income inequality is an ongoing issue that our society faces, and it won’t be solved without teaching our students to navigate their finances. This work is important because it’s about genuine survival and success for students as they move past primary schooling and enter the adult world.

Personally, I would have benefited greatly from a home economics course. I lived with my mom in high school, and she worked the swing shift, so she left for work as I was getting off school, then came home from work while I was sleeping. I didn’t see her much, and as a consequence didn’t cook/eat with her much. Even if cooking were the only skill taught in home economics, I would’ve been a much more well-rounded, functional adult. As Booth (2016) says, “Nothing contributes to the quality of your work more than your commitment to it” (pp. 34-35). The benefits that I would’ve received from home economics being taught in my school are pretty great, which is why I chose to research this topic.
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Review of the Literature

Nutrition as an Important Life Skill

According to The World Health Organization, “obesity” is defined as, “abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that presents a risk to health” (para. 1) an epidemic that’s all too preventable with the proper nutrition and eating guidelines. Nutrition is a strong point of importance in the home economics curriculum as America battles the ongoing and worsening epidemic of obesity. The World Health Organization notes, “From 1975 to 2016, the prevalence of overweight or obese children and adolescents aged 5–19 years increased more than four-fold from 4% to 18% globally, (para. 2)” which only demonstrates a portion of how impactful the lack of basic nutritional knowledge in adolescents is and can be over time. Lichtenstein and Ludwig (2010) support The World Health Organization, stating, “About 35% of adolescents are overweight or obese, a prevalence that approaches 50% in minority populations,” going on to talk about the programs that are designed to subdue obesity having very little success, saying “…powerful forces undermine these efforts, such as the ubiquitous advertising of foods and beverages high in calories and low in nutrient content” (p. 1).

The reliance on school lunches being the main weapon of the school system’s fight against obesity is also noted by Magnus Health (2021). Magnus Health suggests there’s been a large amount of attention directed toward the importance of school lunch and garden programs, but many overlook the idea of the simple curriculum elective of home economics - which can teach cooking and nutrition, and push focus to the prominence of, what Magnus Health (2021) calls, “these permanent life skills will allow for a more organized and efficient household as the students grow older…” (p. 1). Equipping our children and the future of society with the proper tools to feed themselves healthily is a far better tool than just making certain the one or two
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meals they’re fed at school are good for their nourishment. Though, we should be feeding them well, too. Furthermore, Liechtenstein and Ludwig (2010) point out it’s difficult for children to continue eating healthily outside of school. Liechtenstein and Ludwig (2010) argue, “... in the midst of a pediatric obesity epidemic and concerns about the poor diet quality of adolescents in the United States, instruction in basic food preparation and meal planning skills needs to be part of any long-term solution” (p. 1). Liechtenstein and Ludwig (2010), further claim having basic food preparation knowledge can aid in combating chronic disease prevention (p. 2). Prepared snacks and take-out food make up approximately one-third of the calories consumed in a day by children and adolescents, which directly impacts those transitioning from teenagers to young adults post-graduation, thus allowing students the privilege of more time to focus on their education during college years (Magnus Health, 2021), however, prepared snacks aren’t nearly as nutrient-dense as a home cooked meal.

So many students and young ones leave home around seventeen or eighteen years old, entering the real world as they navigate the newness of university, trade school, the workforce, or a new city. According to Delgado (2020), it’s important that both young men and women have the knowledge needed to be successful in the adult world (p. 4). Delgado (2020) continues, “Glorified for being independent, they soon find that they do not know how to cook nutritious meals or create a monthly budget…” (p. 4) which further contributes to the ongoing obesity problem. Shel (2015) alleges that budget is the primary reason schools are abandoning home economics teachings, claiming, “schools have all but diverted their funding into programs that can help children gain college acceptance” (p. 2) due to the costs of education being on the rise and the number of children in public schools increasing. Further supporting the notion of adding home economics curriculum back into high schools to support students as they navigate the
world post-graduation. While nutrition can easily be taught at home, it so often isn’t, which is why home economics curriculum is so important for high school students and freshly graduated adults.

**Home Economics is Critical in Secondary Education**

Teaching life skills to students should be a fundamental building block of high school education (Siagl, 2021). Life skills is an umbrella term for a variety of skills ranging from grocery/nutrition, budgeting/finance, and textiles/design (Erjavšek, 2021). While math, science, history, and English classes are important to the ongoing education and success of high school and post-graduate students, collegiate-level math classes don’t teach students how to prepare their taxes despite the dire need for K-12 curriculum to include financial literacy. Home economics resides in the gray area in the space between academia, curricula, and social realms, and states the connection between the contents of varying disciplines such as healthy lifestyles/nutrition, home/family, economics/consumerism, and textiles/design as they pertain to the need of individuals, families, and societies (Erjavšek 2021).

Sigal (2021) argues that students are clearly identifying that school is not preparing them for the real world, which is exactly the reason life skills or home economics classes are so pertinent to the success of future generations (p. 1). Skills are passed down generationally, and as time goes on, more and more of those skills are being left out. If we were able to look to the future, we would see a general lack of knowledge to pass down as fewer and fewer people are equipped with the skills to pass down (Shel, 2015). Sigal argues that “Home Economics’ importance in preparing students for life outside their parents’ care and supervision” (2021, para. 2). Renner (2019) adds, “[in home economics], you’ll learn some pretty vital life skills, too,
including how to look after children, basic first aid and how to manage your money,” not just, “...how to cook, clean, sew and do other household management tasks” (p.1).

Pendergast (2021) explores home economics curriculum as it pertains to current events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Pendergast notes that understanding global megatrends, such as COVID-19, is a skill taught in home economics and is something we saw during this global pandemic that many don’t fully comprehend. The changes to society from the COVID-19 pandemic are also noted by Erjavšek (2021) as education systems need to constantly change and evolve as society changes, and we’re seeing a huge rush of changes to the school system as we navigate the newness of life post-COVID.

Home economics courses in high school need to be advocated for by adults who have experience with navigating life skills regardless of their exposure, or lack thereof, to life skills in a home economics class (Renner, 2019). Home economics is something you’ll come to appreciate much more with age. Teenagers aren’t going to fight for home economics curriculum because they can’t comprehend truly how beneficial it is, so it’s left up to the adults to weigh in on the debate about whether home economics should be required (Renner, 2019). Home economics education places a distinct noteworthiness on the role of learning skills and developing know-how to help increase the quality of life for individuals, families, and societies (Erjavšek, 2021).

Not only does home economics curriculum help current high school students and recently graduated students to fare better in the real world, but it aids in lifelong learning. According to Sigal (2021), home economics curriculum will benefit those same students and recent graduates throughout the entire course of their adult lives as they make the endeavor into parenthood and family life. Renner (2019) agrees, saying, “Home economics will teach you many of the skills
that can help you become a functioning adult and a thriving part of a community” (p. 2). Renner (2019) makes an additional point in stating, “The pros and cons of home economics in schools mostly depend on your perspective, and the role you believe a school should play in raising children,” but, “If you’re like most people, your parents don’t know everything. The advantage of home economics is that it can fill in those gaps” (p. 2). Of all the proponents of things that correlate to make a student successful after graduation, not everything can be learned outside of school. Sigal (2021) rightly notes that an effective home economics curriculum prepares students for “go[ing] into the real world, [and] they will need to know how to live a smart and successful life” (p. 2).

Given the lack of home economics in the curriculum, we’re, essentially, looking at a future generation of people not equipped to successfully run a household, let alone teach others the basic life skills required to run a household. The idea of the future of my kids being run by a bunch of people who never learned to balance a checkbook, budget a salary, or cook a nutritious meal, is horrifying. Even if we could guarantee that every skill home economics has to offer students would be taught in the homes, how many teenagers really listen to their parents? And while we can’t guarantee every student will absorb the information taught in home economics class, we can at least, without a doubt, say they were given the opportunity to learn!

The Gender Gap in Home Economics

Home economics may have originated as a class for women, however, it’s so much more than that now, as we’re moving towards a society where all families need to have two incomes in order to survive given the skyrocketing costs of living. Despite the history of home economics instruction being focused on women and girls, there’s nothing taught in the modern curriculum that isn’t for either gender to know or understand (Sigal, 2021).
Many people aren’t completely aware of the possibilities home economics has to offer the world as they believe the outdated idea that home economics is purely for women and girls (Delgado, 2020). It’s difficult to see the true value of something when you misjudge the bigger picture of it all. Ellen Richards, the original founder of home economics in 1908, had actually set out to make women feel liberated enough to break the tie from their homes by teaching both genders skills needed to make home life more efficient (Sigal, 2021). Richards’ goal was to free women from the shackles of being homemakers, teaching men basic life skills in addition to women, so they both could be equally valuable in the home.

When home economics is offered as an elective rather than a required course, boys often opt not to take it due to the preconceived notion that women belong in the home, however outdated that may be (Sigal, 2021). However, if we ignore that we’re still battling the misconception that women belong in the home, and women are the ones who are supposed to care for the home, clean, and look after the kids.

Traditional values continue to dominate in the home, despite the overall consensus that most people are in overwhelming support of gender equality (Donner, 2020). As a society, we’ve made excellent progress, granting equality for both men and women in the home, but we’re nowhere near finished yet. Women typically spend four hours a day doing unpaid work, i.e., household chores as compared to men’s two-and-a-half-hour average. Men have doubled the amount of household work they do since 1955, however, women still do more for the home (Donner, 2020). With home economics courses being required, we could continue to eradicate the bias in housework division between opposite-sex couples in our society.

However biased some people’s viewpoints of home economics are, it’s imperative not to let any one idea negatively impact such a robust form of transformation for our country. Home
economics is a germane topic when discussing furthering the steps of gender equality. The conception of our society that home economics curriculum is designed only for women and girls is deficient at best. Many of the scholars I referenced during my time researching the benefits of home economics for high school students had similar thoughts and ideas. In compiling them all together, it’s very clear to see that home economics classes and curriculum are beneficial to high school students for a variety of reasons.

Methodology

Positionality

I firmly believe that home economics curriculum should be included in high schools because of the number of life skills implemented in the curriculum. I wasn’t provided with home economics of any sort, so I graduated high school with no financial literacy - no concept of how to do taxes or buy a home, no understanding of credit scores/cards - no cooking background, which promptly explains why after I started having to be in charge of cooking myself dinners, I gained approximately sixty pounds! Those aren’t even all of the skills that I could’ve been equipped with after graduating had I been provided a home economics course in high school.

Theoretical Framework

For my theoretical framework, I chose neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is a framework built around the idea that education should focus on creating cookie-cutter, worker minions (Monbiot, 2016). Weiner (2007) argues, “Neoliberal policies in education, closely aligned with efforts to restructure work and the economy, aim to sharply curtail public expenditures for schooling, replace governmental regulation and oversight of educational quality with the ‘free market,’ and
make schooling serve the demands and contours of the job market as its needs are understood by employers” (p. 3). With my research question and problem of practice being about home economics and the teaching of vocational skills in high schools, I feel the topic aligns well with this theoretical framework. I think neoliberalism is in direct opposition to my topic, though, as neoliberals are more concerned about the push for teachers that will improve test scores rather than teaching practices that improve lives. Neoliberalism argues that “‘the market’ delivers benefits that could never be achieved by [public] planning” (Monbiot, 2016) which speaks to why home economics curriculum isn’t implemented in schools. If neoliberals are pushing an agenda that the public sphere could never deliver the benefits that the market does, it would be a better business plan to train employees rather than citizens, indeed.

**Community Partner Interview**

I chose to do two community partner interviews - the first being a high school English teacher from a local Northern California town, whom we’ll call Rosie Reid. Rosie has been an English teacher on her campus for the last seven years, and before that, she did one year of student teaching on the same campus, so she knows the students, campus, and curriculum of fellow teachers well. Rosie, upon hearing about my topic, then introduced me to the twenty-year-tenured culinary instructor at the local school in which she’s employed - whom we’ll call Alfonzo Allen. Alfonzo was a part of the home economics department at his school before it was closed due to staffing issues, and now he is the sole director of the elective culinary program.

Rosie and Alfonzo’s school is lucky enough to have recently had a home economics course offered, though, the school they work for calls it “Life Skills Class,” which Rosie stated she believes makes it more gender-neutral and represents a more modern take on home
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The benefits of home economics curriculum (personal communication, 2023). Unfortunately, their school lost its life skills class within the last few years due to the teacher shortage we’ve been experiencing. However, they’re hoping to bring it back eventually. When asked what the benefits of home economics curriculum are, Rosie responded:

All students benefit from these classes because they learn the skills needed to be independent and self-sufficient. I think some benefits of these classes are learning skills to take care of oneself that students may not have the ability to learn at home. For example, students learn the basics of cooking, sewing, and applying for jobs. Each of these skills can be essential for a fully functional adult life (personal communication, 2023).

Rosie’s position on the benefits of home economics curriculum is firsthand as she’s spent time teaching in a school where students have access to this curriculum, and can see the dynamics and demeanor changes of the students as they begin accessing these basic life skills. These students are gaining mentors to support them in becoming advocates for themselves.

Rosie believes there are two major limitations affecting home economics, that being a lack of qualified teachers available and the lack of funding for materials/projects, though she doesn’t believe there are any drawbacks to the curriculum itself - aside from the teacher perspective that it may be difficult to differentiate all that curriculum for the range of students in your program. She later circled back to cite those limitations as the reason she believes home economics courses are a disappearing resource. She also noted that there’s been a strong push for STEM programs, which has eradicated many of the arts programs, “despite their direct connection to applicability outside of high school,” (personal communication, 2023).
On the topic of limitations, I asked Rosie if she felt home economics courses were worth the budget, and she advocated that students need time in their day to not sit in a conventional classroom doing academics, and mentioned that home economics helps build time management, collaboration, communication, and project development skills which are all huge parts of daily life without being directly academic (personal communication, 2023). A few other skills Rosie mentioned come from home economics courses were practical skills such as sewing, cooking, filing taxes, interview/job preparedness, and awareness of community issues/projects.

Moving onto my interview with Alfonzo, being a part of the life skills courses offered at his school he was able to offer me a very niche insight on what is taught and beneficial for students as they navigate home economics courses. He says, “I teach skills that everyone needs to know how to become a proficient cook for home or as a career,” (personal communication, 2023). Alfonzo doesn’t believe there are any drawbacks to home economics curriculum, only poor decisions on the students’ behalf - for instance, not listening or poor attendance.

Alfonzo believes the benefits of home economics are manners, respect/self-esteem, and working with others. The life skills class at Alfonzo’s school is an environment that fosters, “Seeing others' differences and using their strengths to help create better people by nurturing and growing their weaknesses,”” (personal communication, 2023). Though the benefits he listed aren’t the only positive attributes of home economics, Alfonzo lists several skills that he’s seen built throughout the course of his twenty years of teaching, such as:

Leadership, manners, respect for diversity, integrity, soft skills, healthy competition, and the use of constructive criticism to make you better without losing self-esteem points!

The ability to speak about and plate food is better than in most restaurants (personal communication, 2023).
Needless to say, Alfonzo is a huge advocate and supporter of home economics curriculum and believes they’re a truly special form of education.

I asked Alfonzo if he believed home economics classes were worth the budget and to explain why, and he told me, “Every penny spent on home economics is worth it,” (personal communication, 2023). Then he went on to cite the job-related soft skills and general awareness taught as what makes them worth it. Despite the popular belief that home economics courses are worth the budget, and should be present in high school curriculum, Alfonzo admits that he believed home economics is a dying resource, and as a home economics teacher, brings an interesting viewpoint into light. Alfonzo says, “...most majors for Home Ec/ Family Consumer Science are slowly being collapsed, we can not even get one person to apply for the Home Ec. (economics) opening at [the school I work for],” (personal communication, 2023).

Unfortunately for Alfonzo, when he was in high school - in the late 70s and early 80s - home economics courses weren’t provided or offered to male students, so he wasn’t able to take a home economics course, though, he feels his mother's exceptional cooking motivated him to become a culinary teacher (personal communication, 2023). However, the more modern belief, and the belief Alfonzo holds, is that home economics is not gender specific.

Interviewing with Alfonzo gave me a lot of great insight into what it looks like to be immersed in a home economics classroom as a teacher, and provided me with a lot of different insights on how it affects students. My favorite piece of my interview with Alfonzo was hearing his take on why home economics is a disappearing resource - that information was very interesting! Additionally, my interview with Rosie was insightful as well. Rosie has a unique perspective as a teacher working in a school that has/had home economics but isn’t a teacher involved with it directly. She brought forth great ideas about what students can learn and is
well-versed in the importance of life skills in terms of student success. My favorite part of my interview with Rosie was hearing about the limitations she believes affect home economics curriculum in schools.

**Findings and Discussion**

The results of my research have made it apparent that home economics curriculum is a fundamental building block for the success of current and future students. Using a combination of the information I found for my literature review and the feedback I received from my community partners, I was able to determine three key findings.

**Finding One: Nutrition Really Is Important**

Nutrition and cooking knowledge are, arguably, some of the most important aspects of home economics courses as our country is navigating a risky battle with an obesity epidemic. Changing the pathway for children’s eating habits now is imperative to the future of their diets as well as the diets of their children and even, their children’s children - recipes are passed down from generation to generation (Shel, 2015). I imagine that we could rewrite the narratives on these recipes to be more valuable nutrition-wise. Alfonzo was fortunate enough to have learned cooking and nutrition skills from his endearing mother, however, not all students and graduates are so lucky (personal communication, 2023). Ending the obesity epidemic is on our hands, and we may as well be arming ourselves with basic nutritional knowledge to combat this.

**Finding Two: Home Economics Is Critical**

Home economics courses teach students how to take care of themselves as they grow older and stray out of their parents’ homes and into the real world. Pertinent skills that pertain to
being on their own in life are taught and developed in these classes as children experience small stints of parenthood, cooking, financial studies, and more. Not only is it apparent from the outside looking in that children aren’t learning these valuable life skills in high schools without the help of home economics curriculum, but the students are also voicing complaints that they aren’t feeling prepared enough for the world after graduation. Rosie stated the benefits of home economics were, “Learn[ing] the skills needed to be independent and self-sufficient. I think some benefits of these classes are learning skills to take care of oneself that students may not have the ability to learn at home,” (personal communication, 2023). Fully-functioning members of society aren’t produced by force-feeding students collegiate-level STEM courses, rather, they’re created by introducing fundamental life skills during the early stages of adolescence and young adulthood. Home economics resides in the gray area in the space between academia, curricula, and social realms, and states the connection between the contents of varying disciplines such as healthy lifestyles/nutrition, home/family, economics/consumerism, and textiles/design as they pertain to the need of individuals, families, and societies (Erjavšek 2021).

**Finding Three: Home Economics Isn’t a Girls’ Class**

Men and boys aren’t the only ones who benefit from home economics courses, but likewise, women and girls aren’t the sole beneficiaries, either. Home economics was originally created in 1908 to allow women the opportunity to exist outside of the home as homemakers, and while it was successful in getting women out of the house, the workload is still unequal amongst men and women in opposite-sex couples (Donner, 2020; Sigal 2021). However, home economics is designed to be taken by both genders, so the household chores work is doable by either partner in the home (Donner, 2020). Alfonzo mentioned in his interview, “Home Economics is not gender specific, I teach skills that everyone needs to know how to become a proficient cook for
home or as a career.” (personal communication). Some schools have even made adjustments to the names of their home economics classes to make them more gender neutral, Rosie stated, “I do believe that home economics can be an impactful class for all students,” when asked her opinion on whether the curriculum seems gender-targeted.

**Conclusion**

Schools have a responsibility to their students to teach these pertinent life skills as there’s such inequality in the society in which we live. Life skills aren’t always being taught in the homes - either due to inability, a lack of knowledge, or other traumas. We need to equip our students with the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful adults and fully functioning members of society. The barriers to offering home economics in schools are budget, teacher shortages, and political views, but these are all things we can overcome with proper advocacy and modern advancements. The benefits of home economics curriculum far surpass the drawbacks. Value in our society is placed on outcomes, and the positive outcome of student lives after participating in home economics are worth far more than a few budget cuts.

**Implications and Recommendations**

During the course of my research on the benefits of home economics for high school students, I found that nutrition is one of the most valuable skills we can learn at young ages, the importance of life skills in adulthood, and that home economics is imperative for both genders' success. The implications of this study should hopefully prove that home economics curriculum is dire for high school students and freshly graduated students as they navigate the real world without parental supervision and support for the first time in college, trade school, or career tracks. I can only hope that my research will help bring to light just how necessary home
economics is to the lifelong success of students, and will make changes to further implement home economics classes, so children can graduate high school with all the life skills required to be financially free, independent and successful.

If I had the ability to make changes at the admin level locally or nationally, I’d immediately implement a mandatory home economics curriculum crash course for any current high school seniors as well as make it a graduation requirement for future students. I believe the information taught in home economics classes is pertinent to the success of students. I’d like to see home economics come back in a way that is modern, revitalized, and perhaps, even, more insightful.

After doing the research in this study, I will continue to look into how the value of home economics has to do with socio-economic background. This study answered a lot of my questions about what the benefits are to home economics, however, I still have so many questions about other aspects of home economics!
References


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Appendices

Rosie Reid Interview

1. What’s your role in your school? How many years of experience do you have?
   a. I am an English teacher at my school site and I have been here for 7 years, plus one year of student teaching.

2. Do you believe home economics classes have an impactful curriculum for both genders?
   Why or why not?
   a. I do believe that home economics can be an impactful class for all students. At my school site, our home economics classes are called “Life Management”, which I think is a designation that can represent a more modern take on home economics. All students benefit from these classes because they learn the skills needed to be independent and self-sufficient.

3. What are the benefits of home economics curriculum?
   a. With a limited knowledge of the exact curriculum for these classes, I think some benefits of these classes are learning skills to take care of oneself that students may not have the ability to learn at home. For example, students learn the basics of cooking, sewing, and applying for jobs. Each of these skills can be essential for a fully functional adult life. In these classes, students also gain mentors who help support them with learning to be advocates in their lives.

4. What are the drawbacks of home economics curriculum?
   a. To me, there are two major drawbacks of a home economics class. One is the lack of qualified teachers available to teach the class and two is funding for the
materials and projects that students will be doing. I don’t know if I would consider these drawbacks, as much as I would say they are limitations for a home economics class to be successful. I guess a drawback would be that it may be tough to develop curriculum that is applicable for a variety of students taking the class.

5. Do you believe home economics classes are worth the budget? Why or why not?
   a. I think these classes are definitely worth the budget. Students need time in their school day where they are not sitting in a conventional classroom doing academically focused work. Home economics, or life management, provides information to students about creating a self-sufficient life, which for many students is extremely valuable because they lack the support at home for those skills.

6. Did you take a home economics course during school? How did it affect you?
   a. When I was in school I did not take a home economics class. I chose not to take it at the time because I had family who taught me many of the skills I thought I would learn in that class. Towards the end of my senior year, I felt like the class offered a lot of opportunities that I felt I missed. Even with the skills I had learned, I know taking the home economics class could have honed those skills much better.

7. Would you like to be invited to the capstone symposium?
   a. I am not sure what this capstone symposium will include but I am always open to new experiences and professional development opportunities.

8. What skills are built in home economics classes?
a. The skills that are developed in home economics classes include things like time management, collaboration with peers, communication with peers and teachers, and project development. Additionally, students learn practical skills like sewing, cooking, tax documentation, interview/job preparation, awareness projects for community issues, and so much more.

9. Why do you feel home economics courses are a disappearing resource?

   a. Like many of the arts programs, home economics is getting caught in the web of not enough funding and a lack of teachers available to teach the class. There has also been a strong educational push for STEM programs, so classes like home economics are starting to lose support when there is a direct connection to its applicability outside of high school.

Alfonzo Allen Interview

1. What’s your role in your school? How many years of experience do you have?

   a. I Have been working as a Culinary School Instructor for 20 years and I am the sole Director of the Las Plumas HS Culinary program!

2. Do you believe home economics classes have an impactful curriculum for both genders? Why or why not?

   a. Home Economics is not gender specific, I teach skills that everyone needs to know how to become a proficient cook for home or as a career.

3. What are the benefits of home economics curriculum?

   a. Manners, respect, and working with others. Seeing others' differences and using their strengths to help create better people by nurturing and growing their weaknesses’.
4. What are the drawbacks of home economics curriculum?
   a. The only drawbacks are poor decisions, students not listening, and poor attendance! I am there to help everyone no matter what the issues are!

5. Do you believe home economics classes are worth the budget? Why or why not?
   a. Every penny spent on Home Economics is worth it! Self-esteem building, learning job-related soft skills, and overall awareness of life skills!

6. Did you take a home economics course during school? How did it affect you?
   a. My Mother is an exceptional cook and I was motivated and inspired by being in the kitchen with her! Home Ec classes in the late ’70s and early ’80s were not classes really offered to males.

7. Would you like to be invited to the capstone symposium?
   a. Yes, I am always looking to build the Home Ec department, but I am only one person in a one-person department!

8. What skills are built in home economics classes?
   a. Leadership, manners, respect for diversity, integrity, soft skills, healthy competition, use constructive criticism to make you better without losing self-esteem points! The ability to speak about and plate food better than most restaurants.

9. Why do you feel home economics courses are a disappearing resource?
   a. YES…..I believe you can acquire a degree through the CSET test, but most majors for Home Ec/ Family Consumer Science are slowly being collapsed, we can not even get one person to apply for the Home Ec. opening at Las Plumas HS.