

Family and Consumer Sciences---Content and Context

Sixteen content areas of the *National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences Education* detail the body of knowledge and skills in this diverse, synergistic field. The potential for the field lies not only in **CONTENT**, but also in **CONTEXT**.

The primary context of Family and Consumer Sciences may be expressed in two words --- real life! Certainly, there is no more authentic field of study than this! All of the content revolves around relevant applications --- to individuals, families, work groups, the community, etc. Inherent in each content area is the potential for an infinite set of real-life applications and opportunities for meaningful involvement.

One of the most relevant sources of contextual learning is the student-led career and technical student organization, Family, Career and Community Leaders of America.

Family and Consumer Sciences Education and Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) Partner to Address Personal, Work and Societal Issues

Since 1945, FCCLA has functioned as a co-curricular part of family and consumer sciences/home economics classes. Members in the 50 states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia take part in student-centered leadership at local, state, and national levels. Every quality Family and Consumer Sciences program has an active FCCLA chapter. The FCCLA Mission affirms the central partnership between Family and Consumer Sciences and FCCLA and identifies the key skill areas developed among its members:

To promote personal growth and leadership development through Family and Consumer Sciences Education. Focusing on the multiple roles of family member, wage earner, and community leader, members develop skills for life through ---

- Character development
- Creative and critical thinking
- Interpersonal communication
- Practical knowledge
- Career preparation.



FCCLA provides leadership opportunities both inside and beyond the classroom. Students plan projects that focus on the needs of the local community, state, nation, and world. Through the implementation and follow-up phases of planning, they develop self-confidence, address current issues, use problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and learn to manage resources and achieve goals.

What does Family and Consumer Sciences Education contribute? How could this contribution be optimized?

Family and Consumer Sciences professionals are in the business of human literacy. The target market is humankind. The Family and Consumer Sciences investment portfolio is built around development of human capital. The Family and Consumer Sciences toolbox contains universally relevant processing tools --- leadership, thinking, management, and communication. Family and Consumer Sciences Education gives “value-added” by providing contexts in which to apply reading, math, science, and social studies concepts. As the national economy goes global and dropout rates continue to rise, Family and Consumer Sciences professionals are committed to making an even greater contribution to the yield of middle and high school programs. With increased support, assets could be more efficiently used to realize greater individual achievement, national stability, and worldwide progress.

What is human literacy and how is it achieved?

Family and Consumer Sciences content is a complex set of knowledge and skills that builds human literacy in individuals and leads to quality of life for individuals and families. Human literacy is achieved in three main ways---through individual empowerment, life span development, and career preparedness.

Knowledge is power! Family and Consumer Sciences courses teach essential knowledge and skills that **empower individuals** to make informed decisions in everyday living and working, as when they are:

- ◇ Evaluating the reliability and relevance of information,
- ◇ Analyzing pros and cons of alternatives, and
- ◇ Applying information to novel situations.

Family and Consumer Sciences focuses on skills and strategies for meeting human needs---from such basic needs as food, apparel, housing, and safety all the way up Maslow’s Hierarchy to respect and self-actualization. Individuals become the best they can be as they plan for **life span development** and high quality of life.

Family and Consumer Sciences Education **prepares for careers** in a rapidly changing workplace and global economy. Individuals learn to access professional opportunities to meet human needs and demonstrate career preparedness through:

- ◇ Employability skills and technical expertise,
- ◇ Strong work ethic and willingness to continue learning, and
- ◇ Competence in resolving work-life issues.