‘Home Economics: the missing ingredient in food policy’. The practice and interpretation of food policy in the Irish secondary school education setting

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List of Abbreviations

ATHE: Association of Teacher of Home Economics

B.Ed.: Bachelor of Education

DES: Department of Education & Skills

IFHE: International Federation for Home Economics

M.Ed.: Master of Education

NCCA: National Council Curriculum & Assessment

NCDs: Non-Communicable Diseases

ROI: Republic of Ireland

SCT: Social Cognitive Theory

SEC: State Examinations Commission

UK: United Kingdom

USA: United States of America

WHO: World Health Organisation

Ireland and Northern Ireland

For the purposes of clarity for readers, the Island of Ireland comprises two jurisdictions: Ireland and Northern Ireland with each having separate Governments. In the mid-1800s, Ireland was part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, it was ruled from Westminster, London. Political events and uprising resulted in the establishment of two States on the Island of Ireland – Northern Ireland (six counties in the North of the island) and Éire (Ireland) (remaining twenty-six counties). After the 31st January 1922, authority for education in Ireland was transferred to the Minister for Education based in the Houses of the Parliament (The Dáil) in Dublin. With respect to the jurisdiction of 'Ireland', the terms Ireland, Republic of Ireland (ROI) and the South are often used interchangeably, and this is evident in the research presented in this thesis.

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Abstract

Despite a renewed interest internationally in researching food education in schools, there remains a dearth of published research on the practice and interpretation of Home Economics, from a food policy perspective, in the education setting, particularly in the Irish context. The aim of this thesis was to explore the practice and interpretation of food policy in the Home Economics curriculum in the Irish secondary school setting. To address the research aim, five studies were undertaken. The use of the interpretative paradigm, as the conceptual lens, is reflected through the choice of qualitative methods. Basil Bernstein's theory of 'Pedagogic Device' was integrated with the work by Stephen Ball on policy enactment. This offered a hybrid theoretical lens to gain a deeper understanding of the macro policy level of curriculum development and the interpretation of this policy at the micro level of the school and classroom. Study one analysed the curriculum policy pertaining to food education across seven countries. Study two explored the evolution of Home Economics curriculum policy in Irish primary and secondary schools from the 1800s to the 21st Century. Study three critiqued Home Economics in Irish secondary schools as a food education intervention. Study four examined the macro policy process pertaining to the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics in Ireland. Study five examined the experiences of Irish Home Economics teachers in enacting curriculum policy at the micro level.

By using Bernstein's theory of pedagogic device as the theoretical lens, the findings outline how the reformed Home Economics curriculum policy was developed at the macro policy level. The findings demonstrated how Home Economics education is ideally placed to teach practical and theoretical food education in the secondary school setting. The enactment of this reformed policy was broadly welcomed by the teachers who regarded it as timely, relevant and modern. They perceived the new policy presented opportunities for Home Economics to contribute more effectively to the wider health and food policy agendas. It is evident that the Home Economics teacher nationally and internationally, as an actor in the pedagogic device, plays a critical role in facilitating the empowerment of students with practical food and health skills so that they can develop a positive relationship with food and make sustainable and healthy food choices. Home Economics incorporates nutritional knowledge, practical food skills and scientific theory in an integrated and sequential manner. Therefore, it is ideally placed to deliver holistic, comprehensive, and sustained food education to young people in the education setting as part of the wider food and health policy arena.

Publications and Conference Presentations from this thesis

Publications arising from the research presented in this PhD Thesis

- McCloat, A. and Caraher, M. (20xx) Examining the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics curriculum policy in Ireland. Submitted to *International Journal of Home Economics* in August 2020 *(At the time of submission of this thesis (May 2021), the article was under review by the journal).*
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Presentations / Keynote Addresses / Expert Witness to the Government arising from the research presented in this PhD Thesis

- **McCloat, A**. (2019). Invited ***Keynote*** Address at *Cook and Health Research Conference, Lisbon*, Oct. 2019. Is Food Education on the Burner? The position of Food and Cooking on the Formal Curriculum in School.

- **McCloat, A.** (2019). Building a Healthy Nation: Food Education on the Curriculum – An International Review. *NUI Galway Health Promotion Conference*, June 2019
- **McCloat, A.** & Mooney, E. (2018). ***'Expert Witness'*** to the official Oireachtas (Irish Government) hearing of the *Committee on Children and Youth Affairs on Tackling Childhood Obesity* in Leinster House (the Irish Parliament Buildings) on the 30th May 2018.
- **McCloat, A**. (2017). ***Keynote Address***: Home Economics in the context of Junior Cycle Reform. *Association of Teachers of Home Economics (ATHE) National Conference,* Athlone, October 2017
- **McCloat, A**. & Regan, C. (2017). *Recipes for Success. Healthy Ireland Network Launch in Dublin Castle &* ***'Invited Panellist'*** *along with* the Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister); Irish Minister for Health; and Irish Minister for Health Promotion (May 2017)
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- **McCloat, A**., Davidson, M., Coffey, S. and Doherty, P. (2021). Advancing the teaching of Home Economics on the island of Ireland: a north south comparative study *(Under review at the time of submission of this thesis)*
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Other Conference Presentations

Only those where I was the presenting author are included:

- **Mc Cloat, A**. & Maguire, H. (2017). Transformative Pedagogies for ESD & GCED: Using Visual Literacy. *Third UNESCO Forum on Global Citizenship Education (GCED): The Role of Teachers, March 2017.* International Workshop (by the invitation of UNESCO).
- **McCloat, A**., Mooney, E. & Hollywood, L.E. (2017). Is cooking on the back burner for Irish parents. An Island of Ireland (IOI) study of the food skills, cooking confidence and practices of parents. *Sustainable and Healthy Lifestyles: Policy, Pedagogy and Practice Conference*, St. Angela's College. March 2017.
- **McCloat, A**., Mooney, E., Kelly-Blakeney, E. & Lydon, R. (2017). Recipes for Success: The Promotion of Home Economics in a Community Sports Setting. *Sustainable and Healthy Lifestyles: Policy, Pedagogy and Practice Conference*, St. Angela's College. March 2017.
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- **Mc Cloat, A**., Mooney, E., Coffey, S., Lydon, R. & O'Hara, C. (2014). A community-based food education intervention amongst disadvantaged families in the North-West of Ireland. *IFHE International Home Economics Conference, IFHE Council 2014*, Brescia College, July 2014.
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CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1 Introduction

Background to the problem

There is continued growing concern, with the emergence of cross-national population data, of the consequences of unhealthy dietary behaviours particularly among adolescents (aged 10-19 years). The most recent data, conducted by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2020a; 2020b) in a survey of 227,441 adolescents aged 11, 13 and 15 years across 45 countries, reported 21% of adolescents are overweight or obese and this was more dominant in boys (25%) than girls (16%). Similarly, in Ireland, the Healthy Ireland Survey (2019) of people aged 15 and over, found that 37% are overweight and 23% are obese. For those aged 15-24, twenty eight percent (28%) are overweight or obese and again this is more prevalent in men than in women (Department of Health, 2019). Diet related disorders and a range of chronic diseases are associated with poor dietary habits and non-communicable disease mortality globally (Martin et al., 2019). Therefore, improving the health and wellbeing of populations remains a priority intervention area and researchers have acknowledged that effective food policy actions can play a key role in achieving this as part of a multifactorial approach (Hawkes et al. 2015).

The concept of 'health literacy' refers to the "personal, cognitive and social skills which determine the ability of individuals to gain access to, understand, and use information to promote good health" (Nutbeam, 2000, p.263). Health literacy is inherently linked to the literacy skills of an individual and the concept has been a cornerstone of health education and health promotion for the last thirty years (Nutbeam, 2008; 2009). A key focus of developing health literacy skills is improving self-efficacy and how health related literacy skills are practically applied in an everyday context. In 2004, the US Institute of Medicine further defined health literacy as "the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions" (Institute of Medicine, 2004).

Emanating from the conceptualisation of 'health literacy', the concept of 'food literacy' has been coined. Food literacy is regarded as the knowledge, skills and behaviours a person is required to have in order to maintain diet quality (Vidgen and Gallegos, 2014). It could be argued that the emergence of the term 'food literacy' has given food education a modern legitimacy as a research area. However, there are critiques of food and cooking skills emerging

which relate to the perceived healthism and victim blaming of those who do not conform and a lack of appreciation that this can be symptomatic of enforced situations, including structural determinants, as opposed to a free choice (Caraher, 2016). Furthermore, food literacy demonstrates an attempt by nutritionists and dieticians to colonise an area which has been previously neglected (Condrasky and Hegler, 2010; Begley et al., 2017). The teaching of food and cooking skills was previously led by Home Economists but in recent years those who have been the most vocal advocates are either chefs, celebrities (including Jamie Oliver, Alex James, Jean-Michel Cohen) or nutritionists and dieticians. This is reflected in the individualistic and magic bullet narrative that has emerged whereby obesity, as one example, can be solved by teaching people how to cook (National Post, 2013; Jamie Oliver, 2018). However, there is emerging international evidence of Home Economists and research in Home Economics starting to reclaim and undertake research in this area (Pendergast, 2012; Burton and Worsley, 2014; Vaiteviciute et al., 2015; Nanayakkara et al., 2018; Boddy et al., 2019; Fordyce-Voorham, 2018; Ronto et al., 2016; Renwick, 2016; Smith, 2016; McCloat and Caraher, 2016, 2018, 2020).

The basic social unit of most societies is the family, and it plays an important, influential role in providing the foundations and the milieu for future health and wellbeing in children (WHO, 2013). However, in light of social changes, the traditional role once held by the family has changed significantly in recent times and schools have been identified as influential settings for effective policy actions targeted at promoting a positive and healthy relationship with food (WHO, 2017; Upali, 2017; Hawkes et al., 2015; Gillman and Ludwig, 2013; Bonell et al., 2013; Lichenstein and Ludwig, 2010; Hoppu et al., 2010).

Developing skills, healthy behaviours and attitudes towards food among adolescents has the potential to transition into lifelong patterns (Mikkila et al., 2004) positively influencing their health trajectory in later life (Vaitkeviciute et al., 2015). A renewed interest in food education is evident in research studies over the last 10 years (Vidgen and Gallegos, 2014; Caraher, 2012; Pendergast, 2012; Burton and Worsley, 2014; Vaiteviciute et al., 2015; McGowan et al., 2015; Lavelle et al, 2016; Ronto et al., 2016; Wolfson et al., 2016; Nanayakkara et al., 2017). The school setting has witnessed a plethora of interventions being introduced as additional or 'bolt-on' initiatives to the established curriculum: Food Dudes (Ireland and UK); Cook It (Ireland); License to Cook (England); Jamie Oliver's Ministry of Food (England); Cooking Matters (USA); Chef's Adopt a School (England); Cooking with a Chef (USA); Culinary Nutrition (USA). The interventions are designed to focus on increasing nutritional knowledge and, with

the exception of Food Dudes, developing an individual's technical food preparation and cooking skills. However, they often fail to develop the skills required to engage with food in a more critical decision-making way (Micucci, Thomas and Vohra, 2002; Lichenstein and Ludwig, 2010; Upton, Taylor and Upton, 2015). In many of the interventions, the interaction with the students is limited and the content, often designed and taught by a chef who has little pedagogical or nutritional background, focuses on the acquisition of technical food skills (Condrasky and Hegler, 2010). Additionally, there is limited evidence to suggest that the design of these additional school-based interventions is underpinned by any specific learning theory or pedagogical approach (McGowan et al., 2015). Furthermore, although these are generally well-funded, there is limited robust evaluation and evidence arising from their effectiveness, particularly in the medium-long term. The focus of the evaluation has been on the process with limited impact measures (Caraher, 2012; Rees et al., 2012).

Traditionally, in schools, Home Economics was the established subject on the curriculum through which adolescents, mostly females, learned their food, health and culinary skills. Nevertheless, the subject witnessed a decline in England and the United States during a period of curriculum reform. Home Economics was replaced with food subjects that were more focused on developing skills for industry and had a more scientific as opposed to life skills approach (Owen-Jackson and Rutland, 2016; Caraher and Lang, 1999). A decline which has often been lamented (Caraher and Seeley, 2010; Cunningham-Sabo and Simons, 2012) and consequently, in the United States, public health experts have called for the re-introduction of compulsory Home Economics as a school subject so that students can learn healthy food preparation and cooking skills (Lichtenstein and Ludwig, 2010; Vileisis, 2008). However, in Ireland, Home Economics (in various guises) has been a school subject dating back to the 1800s and remains a popular subject choice with 36% of the total cohort of students choosing to study the subject at junior cycle (ages 12-15 years) (State Examinations Commission, 2019).

Research suggests that a comprehensive, sequential and practical approach which integrates theoretical knowledge with practical skills should form the foundation of any food education programme (McGowan et al., 2015; Condrasky and Hegler, 2010; Condrasky et al., 2011; Lavelle et al., 2016). The philosophical underpinnings, pedagogical approaches, and the curriculum content of Home Economics lends itself to be ideally placed to contribute in a holistic way to educating adolescents about food (Pendergast, 2012; Burton and Worsley, 2014; Vaiteviciute et al., 2015; Nanayakkara et al., 2018; Stage and Vincenti, 1997). Despite this, there is limited acknowledgement of its contribution in wider food and health policy arenas

and in fact there has been many attempts at marginalising the subject and reducing its value to a simplistic and technocratic approach of 'how to cook'. Additionally, there is limited research, and none in the Republic of Ireland (at the time of writing), which examines the contribution of Home Economics education to the wider food and health policy arena. Therefore, this research aims to address this policy gap by exploring the practice and interpretation of food policy in Home Economics curriculum in the Irish secondary school setting and examining the role of Home Economics in providing the philosophical and pedagogical underpinning for food education as a policy action in secondary schools.

Professional Context

In a professional context, I am, first and foremost, a Home Economist. Twenty years ago (2001) I graduated with a Bachelor of Education in Home Economics (B.Ed. Home Economics) First-Class Honours Degree and spent the earlier part of my career teaching Home Economics to students aged 12-18 years in a secondary school in the Republic of Ireland. I also worked, on a part time basis, for the State Examinations Commission as an Assistant Examiner for Home Economics. Through my studies on the B.Ed. Home Economics and my work in schools, I developed a strong passion for, and belief in, Home Economics education and the life skills the subject teaches adolescents. This inspired me to progress my studies further and undertake a Master of Arts (Education). I was then appointed as a Lecturer in Home Economics (Food Studies) where I had the privilege of teaching future Home Economics teachers their food skills (theoretical and practical) along with tutoring them in their research and supervising their practice placements in schools. This ignited a strong interest in furthering my education and I completed a Master of Science (MSc) Food Policy where I focused my dissertation on *"An Investigation into the Contribution of Junior Certificate Home Economics to the Nutritional Knowledge, Attitudes and Food Skills of Adolescents in the Republic of Ireland"*. In 2009, I was appointed Head of the Home Economics Department and Senior Lecturer in Home Economics and being the only School of Home Economics in a higher education institution in the country, I feel very honoured to work with colleagues and students who share such a strong sense of identity and passion for the subject. The School is now one of the largest, in terms of student numbers and specialist staff, across Europe and continues to develop and expand University accredited programmes in Home Economics. This includes a BA/PME Home

Economics (5-year combined undergraduate degree Bachelor Arts and Professional Masters Education) which qualifies graduates to teach Home Economics in secondary school; a BA (Home Economics) undergraduate degree which is aimed at educating Home Economists who want to work in the community/food/health promotion setting; and a Master of Education (MEd) Home Economics which is a postgraduate taught masters. This experience motivated me to advance research in Home Economics and Home Economics education.

Internationally, I am involved at Executive Committee level of the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) and nationally, I am a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Association of Teachers of Home Economics (ATHE). This has resulted in a very wide-ranging perspective of Home Economics and the opportunity to engage with Home Economics professionals nationally and globally. Through my work with these and other national committees, I have had the opportunity to engage and work on policy at national and international level across the fields of Home Economics; health and wellbeing; food; and curriculum.

Since graduating from University in 2001, I have been actively involved in a voluntary capacity in a large number of outreach and community food initiatives that work with a variety of population groups including young children; single parent mothers; adolescents; families cooking together; families with young children; members of society who live in socially disadvantaged areas; and adolescent male sports players. Although the participants vary, the initiatives consistently aim to bring Home Economics education into the community so that we can facilitate the participants to be empowered with essential food life skills.

In practice, I witnessed the strengths of Home Economics as a subject area in teaching a holistic approach to food. However, in contrast, at various national policy committees and in media outlets, I would hear the repeated mantra of the need for funding to teach people 'how to cook' and the necessity of exploring the potential role of chefs in teaching people about food. The reduction of food life skills to 'just cooking' and the absence of any pedagogical underpinnings was something that I and fellow colleagues were concerned with. I also remained discouraged by the lack of acknowledgement in wider food and health policy arenas of the potential benefits of Home Economics education. This led to my curiosity in advancing this as an area of research for this thesis and draws on my experience of Home Economics; pedagogy; food education; food policy and curriculum policy.

Policy Context

Curriculum policy reform of junior cycle education (ages 12-15 years) in the Republic of Ireland took place in 2015. This focused on ensuring students had "quality learning experiences that strike a balance between learning knowledge and developing a wide range of skills and thinking abilities" (DES, 2015, p.29). Within this *Framework for Junior Cycle* (2015) the reform of Home Economics curriculum policy took place between 2015 and 2017 and I played a central role in this policy development. Initially, I was commissioned by the National Council Curriculum Assessment (NCCA), as a subject expert in Home Economics, to write a *Background Paper for Junior Cycle Home Economics* (NCCA, 2016) which would be used to inform the philosophical and pedagogical development of the *Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification*. A public consultation process (online survey and written responses) was initiated on the Background Paper and it elicited a high level of engagement (244 individuals and 2 written responses) across stakeholders including teachers; students; teacher educators; academics; industry and community organisations (NCCA, 2017).

I was then further commissioned by the NCCA to work with a Subject Development Team to develop the *Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification* over a 12-month period. The subject development team comprised twelve people including an independent chair; myself as a subject expert; and representatives from NCCA; Department of Education and Skills; State Examinations Commission; teacher unions; Home Economics subject association; and school managerial bodies. The final Specification for Junior Cycle Home Economics (DES, 2017) was subsequently published in 2017 following a public consultation on a Draft Specification. The new Specification was implemented, for first years, in all secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland in September 2018. It has been one of the highlights of my career to date to work with the NCCA in firstly, writing the *Background Paper for Home Economics* and subsequently, as a member of the Subject Development Team to develop the *Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification* and to see first-hand the development of Home Economics curriculum policy at the macro level of policy development. Consequently, it is not surprising how this policy is enacted in the micro level of the classroom by Home Economics teachers is also of particular interest to me for the research in this thesis.

Theoretical Context

From an epistemological perspective, this thesis is situated within an interpretative paradigm using qualitative research methods as the basis of the thesis. This facilitates the researcher to explore the development and enactment of Home Economics curriculum policy and in doing so, examines the role of Home Economics in providing the philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings for food education as a policy action in secondary schools. Bernstein's Theory of 'Pedagogic Device' (Bernstein, 1990; 2000) is utilised as a theoretical framework in order to provide insights to policy development at the macro level, as in the formal curriculum document. The work of social theorist Stephen Ball and his colleagues (Ball et al., 2011a, 2011b; Braun et al., 2011; Ball, 2012) on 'policy enactment' and 'policy actor' is integrated with Bernstein to facilitate an analysis of policy implementation at the micro level of the classroom by the Home Economics teachers.

Significance and Scope of the Research

This thesis spans the research fields of food education initiatives; philosophical and pedagogical practices; curriculum policy and food policy; with Home Economics situated at the nexus between these areas, this is illustrated in figure 1.

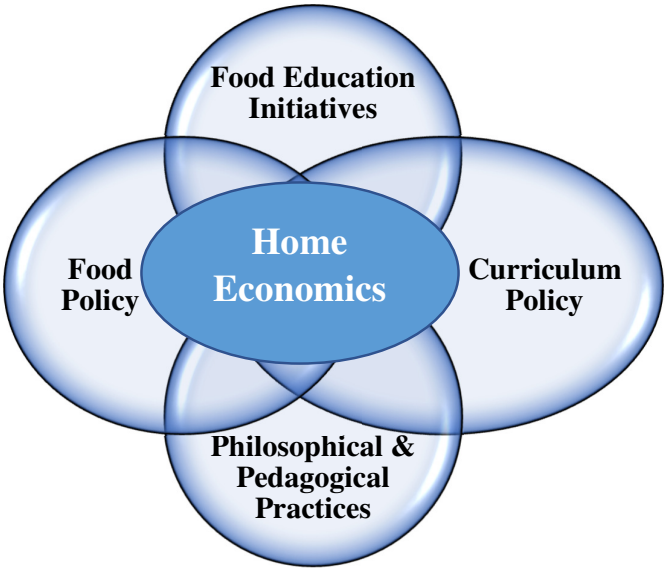

Figure 1: Home Economics at the Nexus

This research is significant because it analyses the development of Junior Cycle (ages 12-15 years) Home Economics curriculum at the macro policy level right through to the enactment at the micro level of the classroom. This is one of the first studies internationally (to the best of the author's knowledge), and the first in the Republic of Ireland, that uses Basil Bernstein's theory pedagogic derive (Bernstein, 1990; 2000) to bridge Home Economics curriculum policy development with policy enactment. In doing so the research explores the practice and interpretation of food policy in the Home Economics curriculum in the Irish secondary school setting and examines the role of Home Economics in providing the philosophical and pedagogical underpinning for food education as a policy action in secondary schools.

Home Economics, as a subject on the curriculum, is offered at both junior (ages 12-15 years) and senior level (ages 16-18 years) in secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland. However, it is most popular at junior level with 36% of the total cohort of students studying the subject (SEC, 2019). Therefore, in order to narrow the breadth of this thesis, the research is focused on junior cycle (aged 12-15 years) Home Economics curriculum policy.

Junior Cycle Home Economics curriculum policy comprises three inter-connected strands which are: Strand 1: Food, Health and Culinary Skills; Strand 2: Responsible Family Living; and Strand 3: Textiles and Craft. The aim of this thesis is to examine the role of Home Economics in providing the philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings for food education as a policy action in secondary schools. Moreover, there is an emphasis in the research on the food, health, sustainability and culinary skills elements of Home Economics. Other aspects of the subject, such as textiles and craft, and broader family resource management issues are mentioned where relevant but are not the focus of the thesis. The full Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification is available at https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/Home-Economics/

Although this research focussed on Home Economics curriculum policy in the Republic of Ireland (ROI), the findings could be applied to future policy actions and curriculum policy reform in the area of Home Economics and food education internationally. In particular, this research will add to the policy knowledge regarding the development and implementation of food education related policies in secondary schools.

Thesis Overview

Overall aim, research questions and research objectives

The aim of this thesis was to explore the practice and interpretation of food policy in Home Economics curriculum in the Irish secondary school setting. This comprises the development and enactment of Home Economics curriculum policy from upstream at the macro policy development level to enactment downstream at the micro school and classroom level. In doing so, the thesis examines the role of Home Economics in providing the philosophical and pedagogical underpinning for food education as a food policy action in secondary schools.

From this aim more specific research questions were developed:

1. What is the curriculum policy pertaining to food education internationally?
2. How has Home Economics curriculum policy evolved in primary and secondary schools from the 1800s to the 21st Century in the Republic of Ireland?
3. What is the relationship between Home Economics and Food Education in Irish secondary schools?
4. How did the macro policy process pertaining to the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics in the Republic of Ireland unfold?
5. What are the experiences of Home Economics teachers in enacting curriculum policy at the micro level of the classroom?

The following key objectives guided the research helping to address the research questions:

1. Analyse the curriculum policy pertaining to food education internationally.
2. Explore the evolution of Home Economics curriculum policy in primary and secondary schools from the 1800s to the 21st Century in the Republic of Ireland.
3. Critique the relationship between Home Economics and Food Education in Irish secondary schools.
4. Examine the macro policy process pertaining to the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics in the Republic of Ireland.
5. Analyse the experiences of Home Economics teachers in enacting curriculum policy at the micro level of the classroom.

Contributions to Food Policy

As noted in figure 1, this thesis encompasses a number of research areas that are pertinent and relevant to current food policy research including Home Economics education; food education initiatives; and food policy development and enactment in an education setting. According to Lang et al., (2009) food policy is the study of "how policy-making shapes who eats what, when and how; and of whether people (and animals) eat and with what consequences" (p.21). This research explores how food policy is practiced and interpreted in the education setting through Home Economics curriculum policy. Using the theoretical lens of Bernstein's (1990, 2000) pedagogic device, the research combines the perspectives of food policy and Home Economics education from a policy to practitioner perspective as well as being an "insider" account of Home Economics as food policy. The thesis contributes not only subject matter to food policy research but also, from a methodological perspective, focuses on the development of food policy from upstream at the macro policy level to the enactment of the policy downstream at the micro level in an education setting. Food policy in the education setting can play a critical role in shaping how future generations think about food and its value, not only to personal health, but also to the wider environment.

Outline of Thesis Chapters

This thesis, by publication, is set out in nine chapters and a diagrammatic representation is illustrated in figure 2 below. Following the introduction and literature review, the thesis is structured as a series of papers published in international peer-reviewed journals relevant to this research field. Therefore, each paper has been formatted, including referencing, in the style required by the respective journal. Chapters four to eight are sequenced not in chronological publication order but according to upstream policy development at the macro level leading to downstream policy enactment at the micro classroom level.

Chapter 1 sets out the background to the problem; the significance and scope of the research; and the policy and theoretical context. The overarching aim and research questions are stated, and an outline of the thesis is presented.

Chapter 2 presents a critique of relevant literature pertaining to the research area.

Chapter 3 details the overall methodological approach for this research and presents the overall research paradigm; and the design and approach for each of the four studies undertaken to achieve the research questions.

Chapter 4 presents the findings from the international review of food education curriculum policy.

Chapter 5 presents the findings from the historical review on Home Economics curriculum policy in the Republic of Ireland.

Chapter 6 sets out a critique of the relationship between Home Economics and food education in Irish secondary schools.

Chapter 7 details the macro policy process pertaining to the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics in the Republic of Ireland.

Chapter 8 discusses findings from the qualitative study on the experiences of Home Economics teachers enacting curriculum policy at the micro level of the classroom.

Finally, **chapter 9** presents a reflection on the main outcomes of the thesis, their implications for policy and practice. The strengths and limitations of the research will also be discussed along with my reflections on the doctoral research process. The chapter will conclude with recommendations for further research.

Figure 2: Diagrammatic Representation of the Thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background to the problem; significance and scope of the research; policy and theoretical context; research aim, questions and objectives; contribution to food policy; and a thesis overview.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Historical and critical review of Home Economics; philosophical and pedagogical practices underpinning Home Economics; Home Economics curriculum policy in Ireland; food education initiatives; and the relationship between Home Economics and food education.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research aim, questions and objectives; research paradigm; theoretical framework; research plan; design and methods for each of the studies; and methodological rigour in the research.

Chapter 4: An International Review of Second-level Food Education Curriculum Policy

McCloat, A. and Caraher, M. (2020). An international review of second-level food education curriculum policy. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 50(3), 2020.

Chapter 5: The Evolution of Home Economics in Irish Primary and Post-Primary Education from the 1800's to the 21st Century

McCloat, A. and Caraher, M. (2018). The evolution of Home Economics as a subject in Irish primary and post-primary education from the 1800s to the twenty-first century. *Irish Educational Studies,* 38 (3), 2019.

Chapter 6: Home Economics as a food education intervention: lessons from the Irish secondary education context

McCloat, A. and Caraher, M. (2016). Home Economics as a food education intervention: lessons from the Irish secondary education context. *Education and Health*, 34 (4), 2016.

Chapter 7: Developing Home Economics Curriculum Policy in Ireland

McCloat, A. and Caraher, M. (20xx) Examining the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics curriculum policy in Ireland. *(Under peer review by International Journal Home Economics since August 2020).*

Chapter 8: Home Economics teachers' experiences of enacting curriculum policy in the classroom using Bernstein's theory of pedagogic device

McCloat, A. and Caraher, M. (2020) Teachers' experiences of enacting curriculum policy at the micro level using Bernstein's theory of the pedagogic device. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory & Practice*, https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2020.1863210.

Chapter 9: Discussion and Conclusion

Synthesis of the findings and contribution to knowledge; strengths and limitations of the research; reflections on the doctoral research process; recommendations; and recommendations for future research.

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CHAPTER 2

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Introduction

Chapter 2 of this thesis is structured around a historical and critical review of the literature. The thesis extends across multiple research areas of food education initiatives; philosophical and pedagogical practices; curriculum policy and food policy; with Home Economics located at the nexus as shown in figure 3.

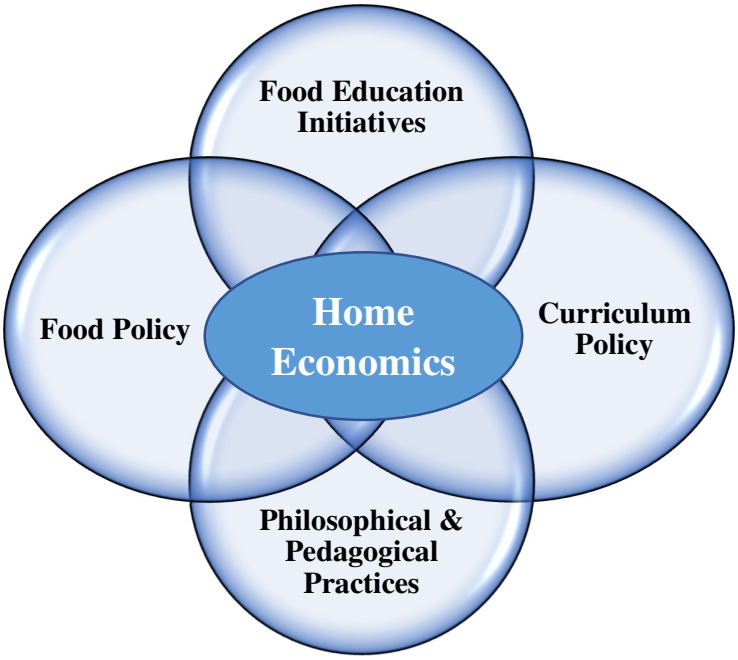

Figure 3. Home Economics at the Nexus

This chapter explores each of these areas and is structured around a number of sub-themes which reflect the areas of research including: a historical and critical review of the literature published relating to the field of Home Economics; the philosophical and pedagogical practices underpinning Home Economics; how the subject Home Economics is represented in curriculum policy in schools in Ireland; and food education initiatives. Finally, the chapter sets out the relationship between food education and Home Economics which is the contextual space for the research undertaken in this thesis. This chapter was written initially in order to inform the design of Studies 1-5 and it was updated as the manuscripts for publication were prepared which reflects the journey from the macro to the micro policy issues.

Historical and Critical Review of 'Home Economics'

Home Economics, as a field of study, formally emerged over a century ago at the Lake Placid conferences which were held each year from 1899-1909 in the United States. However, the roots of the field emerged much earlier and the first known textbook, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy,* was published in 1845 by Catherine Beecher. The book was an attempt to professionalise the area and is regarded as the genesis of modern Home Economics. Catherine Beecher wrote the book after witnessing the "deplorable sufferings" of women and mothers in the home resulting from the "combined influence of poor health, poor domestics, and a defective domestic education" (1845, p.5). She called for Domestic Economy to be "properly and systematically taught (not practically, but as a science) … because it embraces knowledge, which will be needed by young women at all times and in all places" (p.6) and for it to be awarded parity of esteem with other science subjects. Notwithstanding the ideals that Catherine Beecher believed in, Home Economics was perceived by many as having a superior attitude and looked down on the domestic standards of the working-class women (Shapiro, 2009, 2004; Hayden, 1981).

Subsequently, also in the US, Ellen Swallow Richards, often regarded as one of the first founders of the field, recognised in order to gain acceptance by academia, Home Economics needed to be professionalised and standardised. Richards wanted to base the field of Home Economics in science and engage in research around the area so that it would be legitimised by academia and regarded as a "profession". She established the Lake Placid conferences which provided a platform to establish research in the field and attendance grew from eleven in 1899 to over seven hundred in 1908. It was at the Lake Placid conferences that the name 'Home Economics' was agreed on in 1899 and according to Richards, it was selected because the word 'home' is used to mean a place of shelter and nurture and 'economics' concerns the management of the home (Lake Placid Conference Proceedings, 1908, p.22). However, the profession has struggled over time with the name and this will be explored later in this chapter.

The home and the family have always been at the heart of Home Economics since its inception. Home Economics was "portrayed as a broad-based profession that encompassed various sub-specialties, and at the core of the model was the family" (Von Schweitzer, 2006, p.52). However, having a "broad-base" is not always positive and this has led to much debate around the purpose, direction and identity of Home Economics which, from the outside, may often be

regarded as disjointed (Pendergast, 2001). This debate has also fed into the examination of the professional status of the field. As McGregor (2006, 2016) explains, Home Economics is a profession because it has a body of knowledge to call its own, derived from research which requires advance study to obtain, and the main purpose of the profession is for the good of society.

At the Lake Placid conferences, the concern from Home Economists of the impact of the social conditions on the family is evident. During the 1899 conference, a resolution was passed which demanded "recognition by the State of the important sociologic problem of the home" and therefore, it requested the State to support the teaching of Home Economics in state schools by providing the necessary resources (Lake Placid Conference Proceedings, 1899, p.7). In later years, this evolved to articulating a position that clearly strives towards improving the quality of life for families; "the field of Home Economics takes a value position regarding the importance of the family and creating a better quality of life for all people" (Engberg, 1979, p.36; Badir, 1991).

In the late 19th century in Great Britain and Ireland, there was concern around the health and wellbeing of families, especially working-class families, due to a lack of formal education. This led to the creation of new roles whereby females trained in domestic economy, later called domestic science, would visit the homes of the poor and instruct them in home management, the care of babies and young children, hygiene in the home, and basic cooking skills (McCloat and Caraher, 2018; Caraher and Seely, 2010). This evolved into the subject Domestic Science, and later Home Economics, on the school curriculum in Great Britain and Ireland (McCloat and Caraher, 2018). An historical analysis of the evolution of the subject Home Economics in Ireland is further discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis and is presented as a peer-reviewed published journal article.

One of the seminal texts in the field emerged in 1978 when Marjorie Brown and Beatrice Paolucci published *Home Economics: A Definition*. This was the first time since the formal emergence of the field in 1908 that a definition and mission for Home Economics was clearly set out. Over the years, this has proven to be an influential text and is one which has informed policy development across the world. They stated the mission of Home Economics is to

> "enable families, both as individual units and generally as a social institution, to build and maintain systems of action which lead (1) to maturing in individual self-formation

and (2) to enlightened, cooperative participation in the critique and formulation of social goals and means for accomplishing them" (1978, p.23).

Brown and Paolucci (1978) based the mission for the field of Home Economics on the idea that Home Economics is a profession and sought to illuminate the nature of the professional practice in the field. In particular, they characterised Home Economics as a practical science and a mission-oriented field concerned with the home and the family which ensures "knowing is for the sake of doing something with the knowledge" (Vaines, 1980, p.112).

However, since the Lake Placid conferences in 1899, Home Economics has been in a constant state of attempting to legitimise its existence. In a time of a "grand domestic revolution" (Hayden, 1981, p.28), domestic work of any sort was "mocked" and viewed as severely hampering women's economic independence and Home Economics was regarded, by these early feminists, as compounding a stereotypical traditional domestic life. Some Home Economists would argue a negative stereotype has beleaguered the profession and discussions around Home Economics often conjures up 'stitching and stirring' connotations or, as Schenider (2000) calls it, "white gloves and white sauce" (p.A18). Attar (1990) referred to Home Economics as a "Cinderella subject" and talks about the "fantasy constructions" that the school subject teaches (p.15). Home Economics, as a school subject, became negatively associated with "middle-class domesticity" and was confused with teaching household skills which the public deemed as non-academic and menial and with preparing working class girls for domestic work in middle class homes (Stage, 1997, p.7). Compounding this, Home Economics has had a tempestuous relationship with the feminist movement, with those within the profession as well as outside, not least because of the central focus of the family to the mission of Home Economics and a perception that it advocated a patriarchal family construct. As Elias (2008) states, feminists regarded Home Economists as "the enemy" who engaged in "sex-directed education" (p.144). Shapiro (2004) identified the rejection by many women's groups in America during the second feminist movement to engage in discussion around the ideals of domesticity which they believed were advocated for by Home Economists. This was further reiterated by St. John (1994) who referred to a "cult of domesticity, so sedulously fostered" that it could lead to "imprisonment in domesticity" (p.210). However, many argued the contrary and believed that Home Economics empowered women in addition to developing professional skills to facilitate work outside the home and indeed, Pendergast (2001) referred to Home Economics as "an early tool of feminism in the fight for equality" (p.15). Thompson (1986), a self-proclaimed feminist and Home Economist, notes that Home Economics sought

solutions for the disadvantaged position held by women in society at the time and through education, offered opportunities for women. Later in her research, Thompson (1994) suggested that Home Economics, through education, technology and science sought to liberate women, and not oppress them, from the cumbersome, every-day, household tasks. Similarly, Apple and Coleman (2003) refer to the social reform agenda of Home Economics and the need to have a "dynamic" education to "the many instead of the few" and identified the "professionalisation" of the field as being important to increase recognition and status (p.121). This is further reiterated by Pendergast (1996) who called for Home Economics to step "beyond the patriarchal structures which are guaranteed to marginalise us" and suggested the field should use the lens of "feminist post structural theory" (p.16). Indeed, Stage (1997) suggests, with the benefit of hindsight, some of the ardent critics are less dismissive of Home Economics and concludes it has taken more than twenty-five years for the realisation that Home Economics and feminism have "something to say and something to learn from one another" (p.13).

Stereotypes, myths and misperceptions are challenging to dispel and the idea that Home Economics is nothing more than "superior common sense" (Attar, 1980, p.14) is a perception that still prevails. In 2008, in marking its centenary year, the 'Think Tank' Committee of the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE), led by Professor Donna Pendergast, engaged in an extensive international consultation to formally set out a modern position on Home Economics. Informed by the consultation process, the IFHE published a *Position Statement – Home Economics in the 21st Century* which strived to capture the diversity and broad spectrum of the field whilst also recognising how Home Economics has evolved for the 21st century. The IFHE defines Home Economics as "field of study and a profession, situated in the human sciences that draws from a range of disciplines to achieve optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities" (2008, p.1). Although the position statement acknowledges the historical importance of the home and the household to the field, it emphasises that a more systemic approach is adopted which considers the local and global impact of individuals and families. This involves taking more cognisance of the impact of our actions beyond local to a more global agenda. According to Pendergast et al., (2012), the position statement provides a platform which challenges to situate the Home Economics profession in a contemporary context and looks ahead to "viable and progressive visions of Home Economics" for the future (p.2). Moreover, Turkki and Vincenti (2008) concludes that Home Economics "has a sustainable mission … we are serving societies in multiple ways and we have created a knowledge base for our profession that is fundamental to society" (p.93).

The IFHE position statement (2008) affirmed the preferred use of the name 'Home Economics' for the field and profession. IFHE stated a commitment to "rebranding and repositioning, not renaming the profession" (p.2). The use of the name 'Home Economics' has resulted in repeated antagonistic discussions among those involved in the profession. Von Schweitzer (2006) notes that the name portrays an identity and image and thus the use of the word 'home' has been a contested space. As noted by Dewhurst and Pendergast (2008), some critics of the name suggested it be changed so that it can shed its "historical shackles and encapsulate its radically changed content and lessening focus on the home" (p.7). However, arising from the Scottsdale Agreement in 1993, the changing of the name to 'Family and Consumer Sciences' in the USA and the change in the UK to 'Consumer Sciences' was widely regarded as leading to the fragmentation of the field (Vincenti, 1997; McGregor, 2010; Pendergast, 2015; Pendergast and McGregor, 2007; Giddings et al., 1996; Hira, 2013; Davis, 2008). Therefore, the affirmation and commitment demonstrated by IFHE in the position statement towards the name 'Home Economics' was broadly welcomed by those working in the field and it was hoped that this would conclude the constant discussion around the name for a significant period.

Philosophical and Pedagogical Practices Underpinning Home Economics Education

Since its inception, Home Economics has been attempting to address practical perennial problems that are concerned with everyday life. Practical perennial problems are those confronting families, generation from generation, which require critical, reflective thinking and socially responsible approaches. Examples include issues concerning diet, nutrition, health and wellbeing; social issues including housing, family concerns, childcare; and environmental issues. Indeed, many argue this approach contributes to the unique positioning of Home Economics education in so far as no other subject has this focus or approach (Renwick, 2016; Pendergast, 2012; McGregor, 2010; Smith and de Zwart, 2010; Smith, 1995; Brown and Paolucci, 1978). Through education, students of Home Economics are afforded the opportunity to develop the requisite skills and knowledge to act in ways that address practical perennial problems in order to optimise everyday life contexts in the home, the family and the community.

The IFHE (2008) identifies four areas of practice for Home Economics: as an academic discipline; as an arena for everyday living; as a curriculum area; and as a societal arena to

influence and develop policy. They further clarify the curriculum area of practice as one which "facilitates students to discover and further develop their own resources and capabilities to be used in their personal life, by directing their professional decisions and actions or preparing them for life" (2008, p.1). Brown (1980) contends that all areas within the field of Home Economics are educative in nature because of the unique philosophical basis that focuses on everyday life. Therefore, although education is an area of practice in Home Economics, professionals working in the mission-oriented field strive to have a positive impact on the everyday life of individuals, families, and society regardless of which area of practice they operate in.

Home Economics integrates knowledge and perspectives from other organised disciplines and teaches multidisciplinary content "through interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary inquiry" (IFHE, 2008, p.1). As Bubolz and Sontag (1988) notes Home Economics is not "a single discipline but integrates conceptual frameworks, theoretical formulations and methodologies used in other disciplines into new and distinct paradigms" (p.3). This sentiment is reiterated by Pendergast (2015) as an essential dimension of Home Economics. For Home Economists, McGregor (2016; 2015; 2020) and Turkki (2015) contends that an interdisciplinary approach involves drawing and synthesising knowledge, processes and skills from multiple disciplines and finding synergies between disciplines; however, transdisciplinarity involves this synthesis between, across and beyond disciplines, thereby transcending disciplines. McGregor argues that the field has not yet achieved transdisciplinarity but rather is something that Home Economics professionals should strive towards in order to have a positive influence on addressing perennial problems (McGregor, 2016; 2008). She contends that we need to still engage in a debate as to whether or not Home Economics involves inter, multi, or trans-disciplinary practices. In contrast, Turkki (2015) contends the inter and transdisciplinary synthesise of knowledge, processes and skills from multiple disciplines is an essential ingredient and thread of Home Economics practice and critical to its conceptual and philosophical underpinning.

The ability to draw knowledge, skills and processes from multiple disciplines but to do so in a holistic, critical, socially responsible way to problem-solve is regarded by Home Economists as being a unique component of the field (Brown and Paolucci, 1978; McGregor, 2010; 2020). Yet, the challenge exists in order to effectively achieve this, and not become fragmented into specialised components, a clear mission and systemic approach is required by Home Economists. This is critical to the future sustainability of Home Economics (Pendergast, 2015;

Turkki, 2015). Accordingly, Home Economics advocates a 'systems of action' approach to practice based on the work of Habermas (1971) and his classification of "knowledge constitutive interests" (cited in Brown, 1980). Home Economics professionals, including Home Economics teachers, are encouraged by Brown and Paloucci (1978) to engage in rational action and they propose three systems of action as a means by which the mission of Home Economics can be achieved: instrumental, communicative and emancipatory action. Instrumental is a system of action to achieve technical aims, for example preparing a food product. Communicative system involves fostering and developing understanding, beliefs and values in individuals to achieve goals and needs, for example, advocating a healthy lifestyle approach. Emancipatory or critical action requires reflective, thoughtful, socially responsible action with consideration to the broader social impact of decisions, for example, reflecting on the wider social and environmental impact of a family's food practices (Brown and Paloucci, 1978; Brown, 1980; Engberg, 1996; McGregor, 2006; Turkki, 2015; Pendergast, 2015). When the three systems of action are integrated to "embrace a holistic conception of society, value reasoning, critical reflective practice, and contextualisation" this is referred to as Baldwin's (1991) integrative paradigm for Home Economics (Baldwin, 1991; McGregor, 1996, p.4).

Encouraging teachers, during their teacher education, and students of Home Economics to engage in systems thinking by considering how their everyday actions relate to, and affect, the local and global systems is an essential pillar of Home Economics education. It requires Home Economics teachers to facilitate students to 'see the bigger picture' and expose underlying conventions so that they can engage in "questioning of taken-for-granted assumptions about the culture in which a person lives" (Hultgreen, 1991, p.16). Home Economics education, in the classroom setting, responds to practical perennial problems from a circular causality perspective which ensures issues are considered, not in isolation, but rather in the context of broader local and global systems. This is further affirmed by Turkki (2005) who explains Home Economists' "speciality knowledge is based on seeing the whole, having an integrative knowledge base and understanding and being able to work with specialists from other fields" (p.281).

Vaines (1991) outlines how Home Economists live and work with problems and portray themselves not as those with the answers but with the ability to draw on knowledge from multiple disciplines and convert it for practical use in a variety of real-life contexts. Smith and de Zwart (2010) contend that modern Home Economics education has moved away from a technocratic approach of skill-development to more of a focus on critical thinking within a

global, socially responsible context. As Brown (1980) asserts, Home Economics education is concerned with the action of educating people from a problem-solving orientation which requires students to be critically aware and seek out ways for deliberative action to solve problems. Although Home Economics education has evolved over the years, many argue that it still preserves its early roots of being focused on a mission which strives to be preventive and educative in approach (McGregor, 2010; Smith and de Zwart, 2010; Engberg, 1996). Brown (1980) suggests the aim of Home Economics education is not to train people in skills and how-to knowledge to achieve a specific goal but rather it aims to develop "values other than instrumental, a breadth of knowledge based on reason and wholeness of perspective" (p.104). This results in students who have the ability to use skills beyond the instrumental or basic technical know-how to more critical application of the skills.

Smith and de Zwart (2010) notes a teacher of Home Economics operates at the nexus drawing the knowledge and transforming it for application to the practical problems faced in everyday life. To facilitate the empowerment of students of Home Economics in metacognition and critical reflective decision-making, a constructivist pedagogical approach to teaching and learning is exemplified. The theory of constructivism suggests that learners construct their own knowledge through engaging with and reflecting on their experiences in their socio-cultural environment (Vygotsky, 1978). The practical nature of Home Economics education, integrating theory and practice, demonstrates the core philosophical teaching of Dewey (1938), a constructivist, who emphasises the practical application of knowledge and situates the learner at the epicentre of the learning process. Home Economics' content knowledge, along with the experiential and practical pedagogical approaches, can enable learners to develop an understanding as to how knowledge is constructed and thus embedding learning in complex, real world learning situations (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978). As Pendergast (2003) asserts, Home Economics education "does not teach a skill for the sake of that skill, it teaches for application, it teaches for informed decision making in endless scenarios, it teaches evaluative and critical thinking skills, and it empowers individuals – no matter what their context" (p.333).

Kolb (1984; Kolb et al., 2000), through his Experiential Learning Cycle, identifies optimal learning occurs when students move through four stages of the Cycle which are Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualisation, and Active Experimentation (figure 4). Although this was not developed specifically for Home Economics, teachers of the subject, particularly in Ireland, are encouraged, through their initial teacher education (St Angela's College, 2020) and professional development, to utilise the experiential learning

cycle in their pedagogical approaches in the classroom. As noted earlier, St Angela's College is the only provider of Home Economics teacher education in Ireland. Home Economics education aspires to facilitate students to reach the more cognitively challenging aspects of the cycle through developing their evaluative skills and the ability to reflect on the experience so that they can transfer their learning to other scenarios.

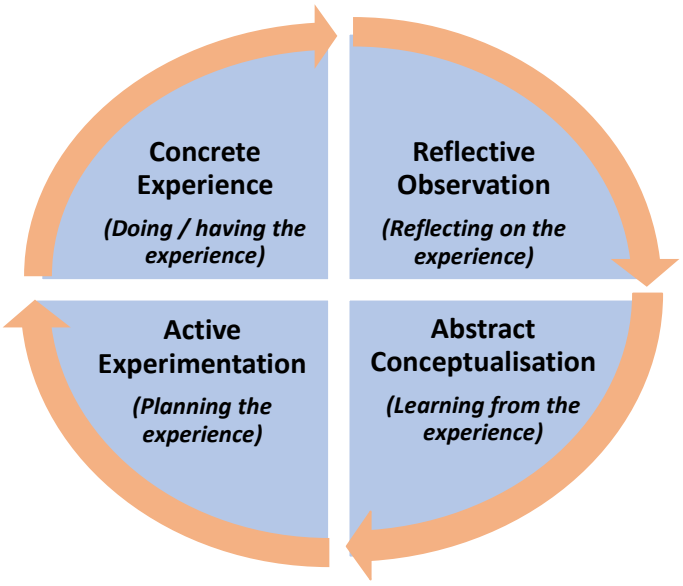

Figure 4: Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle. Diagram developed by the author adapted from Kolb (1984).

In a practical classroom setting, it can be said that the Home Economics teacher exemplifies the work of Kolb (1984, 2000), and his theory on experiential learning. The teacher facilitates students to contextualise and consolidate learning and encourage them to develop a means for addressing practical perennial problems faced in everyday life. Practical classes in Home Economics in the areas of food, cooking, resource management, textiles and craft provide an ideal opportunity for experiential learning through problem-based learning approaches and therefore, optimising students' higher order thinking skills and metacognition. However, there are critics of Kolb and his work on experiential learning with some considering it a "fad" and query the ability of a student to achieve deeper understanding of complex scientific concepts (Lehane, 2020).

As mentioned previously, facilitating the empowerment of students with essential life skills is a core tenant of Home Economics education. Part of this is to strive to develop students' self-

efficacy so that they will adopt positive behaviour to achieve healthy and sustainable living now and in the future. This approach can be underpinned by Bandura's Social Learning and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (1977). When applied to a Home Economics practical food classroom, students learn a behaviour or skill through complex interaction between observing a teacher perform the behaviour (modelling/demonstrating) and then undertaking the behaviour themselves (imitation and mastery). This is repeated until the student develops self-efficacy and a sense of mastery in the learned skill or behaviour. According to Bandura (1998) self-efficacy, or belief in one's own ability, is the major basis for action and he notes "unless people believe they can produce desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties" (p.3). A key focus of SCT is the reinforcement of behaviour which is required to develop self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is the focus of many health promotion interventions which aims to change behaviour (Condrasky et al., 2006; Levy and Auld, 2004; Bandura, 1998).

In designing and planning a Home Economics lesson in Ireland, Bloom's Taxonomy is the dominant approach utilised in curriculum policy support documents (NCCA, 2019; 2015); Home Economics initial teacher education (St Angela's College, 2020); and professional development seminars to formulate learning outcomes and assessment for lessons. Benjamin Bloom developed a taxonomy of educational objectives in 1956 which represents a hierarchy of cognitive learning and is regarded as a seminal text by teachers for lesson planning, teaching, assessment and curriculum development (Anderson et al., 2001; Pohl, 2000; Bumen, 2007). The original taxonomy (1956) consisted of three domains: cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitudes) and psychomotor (skills) which was hierarchical in nature and moved from lower-order skills, which require less cognitive processing, to those which are higher order and require a deeper level of cognitive processing. Within the cognitive domain, there are six levels identified – knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Bloom, 1956). The taxonomy was revised by Anderson in 2001, a student of Bloom, to include a change in terminology which was hoped would broaden the use of the taxonomy. As a result, the terminology of the six levels in the cognitive domain changed from nouns to verbs – remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating and creating (Anderson et al., 2001). The revised taxonomy is now widely used by education professionals and teachers for curriculum and policy development, lesson planning, delivery and assessment (Anderson et al., 2001; Pohl, 2000; Bumen, 2007). When used in Home Economics lesson planning to set out learning outcomes, the Home Economics teacher is articulating the essential learning that the

student will be able to achieve and as they progress their learning, the teacher facilitates the student to reach the higher-order or the more cognitively challenging processes.

Home Economics Curriculum Policy in Ireland

Home Economics is a curriculum subject in secondary schools in Ireland at both junior (ages 12-15) and senior (ages 16-18) cycle. In Ireland, Junior Cycle is the first three years of post-primary school which culminates in students sitting the Junior Certificate examination and senior cycle is the final two years of post-primary school when, on completion, students take the Leaving Certificate examination. Home Economics, in various name guises, has been part of the curriculum from the 1800s and was once an established subject at primary school, although this is no longer the case (McCloat and Caraher, 2018). A historical analysis of the evolution of Home Economics in Irish primary and post-primary education from the 1800's to the 21st century is presented in the form of a published paper in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

Home Economics is a popular school subject at junior cycle and was studied by 36% (n=23,043) of the total cohort of students (n=64,330) sitting the Junior Certificate examination in 2019 (State Examinations Commission, 2019). A new Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification curriculum policy commenced in September 2018 in all schools in Ireland. The subject aims to "develop students' knowledge, attitudes, understanding, skills and values to achieve optimal, healthy and sustainable living for every person as an individual and as a member of families and society" (DES, 2017, p.5). The Specification is a three-year course of study and the learning outcomes are set out in three inter-connected strands: Strand 1, Food, Health and Culinary Skills; Strand 2, Responsible Family Living; and Strand 3, Textiles and Craft. Each of the strands are underpinned by four cross-cutting elements outlined in figure 5. The learning outcomes are designed giving due cognisance to Bloom's Taxonomy (1956, 2001).

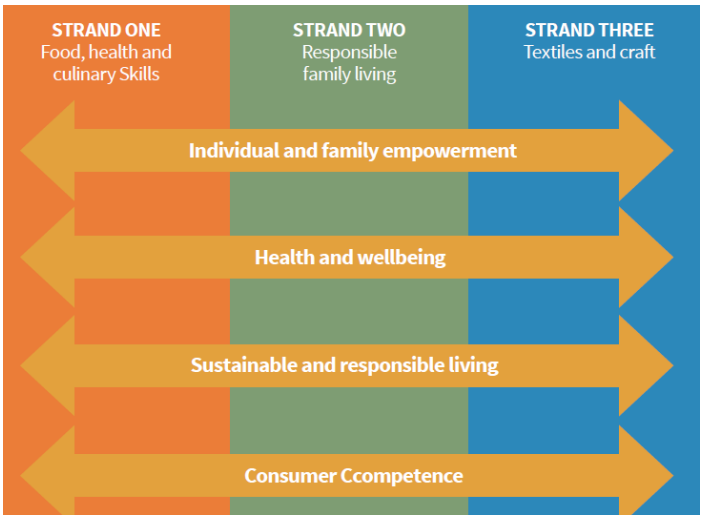

Figure 5: The structure of Junior Cycle Home Economics (DES, 2017, p.12).

The Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification (2017) is based on a practical, experiential pedagogical approach to teaching and learning. This approach is reflected in the assessment whereby 50% of the externally assessed marks are weighted towards a practical food skills examination. Using a problem-based approach, 'briefs' are issued by the State Examinations Commission and students are required to demonstrate their food literacy skills to meet the specific requirements of the brief. Examples may include prepare, cook and serve healthy family meals; healthy school lunches; resourceful cookery; alternative to a commercial meal (DES, 2017, p.22).

At senior cycle, students choose less subjects to study and consequently, Leaving Certificate Home Economics has considerably less students choosing to study the subject. In 2019, 21% (n=12,002) of all students (n=56,071) studied Home Economics (State Examinations Commission, 2019). Subject choice is also very heavily influenced by matriculation requirements for entry to third level (Smyth and Calvert, 2011; Davies et al., 2008; Darmody and Smyth, 2005) and this can have a negative impact on the uptake of the subject at senior cycle. According to the Department of Education and Science (2001), Leaving Certificate Home Economics "focuses on the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills and attitudes that will enable students to take control of their own lives at present and in the future" (p.2). The structure of Leaving Certificate Home Economics is presented in figure 6.

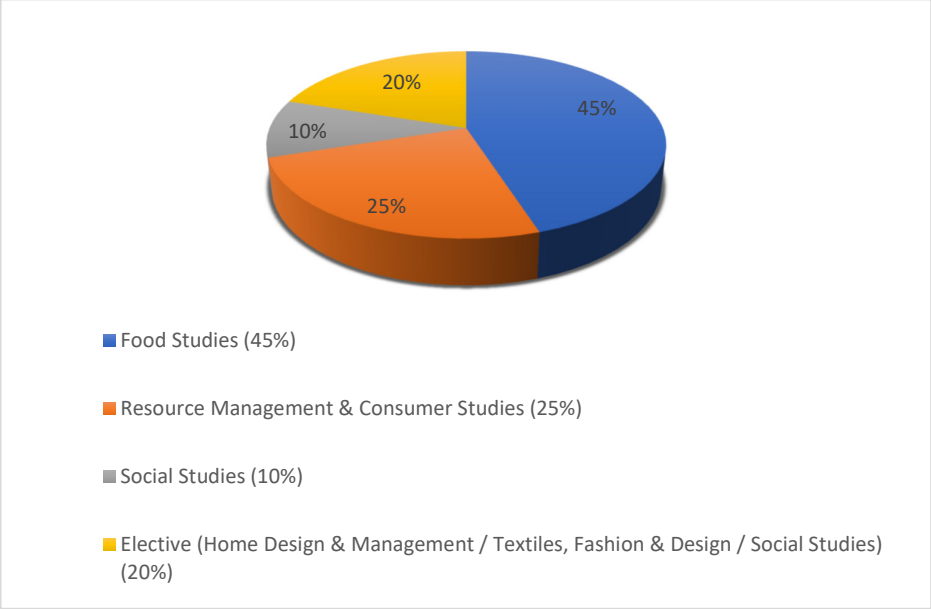

Figure 6: Syllabus Structure Leaving Certificate Home Economics (figure adapted from DES, 2001)

The Department of Education and Science (2001) recommends that Leaving Certificate Home Economics is taught within a framework that integrates theoretical and practical work across the areas of the syllabus. In order to achieve a grade for their Leaving Certificate Home Economics, students sit a written examination which is worth 80% of the total marks available and they complete a food studies practical coursework journal worth 20%. For the coursework journal, students are asked to complete four tasks, from a selection of five, which are developed and issued annually by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). The tasks are developed based on broad thematic areas such as the Application of Nutritional Principles; Food Preparation and Cooking Processes; Properties of a Food; and Comparative Analysis including Sensory Analysis. The students research and prepare the dishes or products to meet the four tasks in their class time and then write up the journal entry which is externally assessed by the SEC (DES, 2001).

Food Education Initiatives

A proliferation of food education initiatives has coincided with a surge of calls in the media by professionals working in public health, medicine, food policy, education and celebrity chefs to teach children and young people 'how to cook'. Over the past decade some examples of these include: the New York Times, 2011; Washington Post, 2012; the Lancet, 2013; the Guardian,

2014; CBC News, 2015; Independent Australia, 2015; Daily Telegraph, 2016; the Guardian, 2016; Washington Post, 2017; RTE, 2018; Irish Examiner, 2018; I News, 2018; the Guardian, 2019; Irish Examiner, 2019; Irish Mirror, 2019; the Telegraph, 2019; the Conversation, 2019; Global News Canada, 2019; the Guardian 2020. Academic research published over this time supports the premise that there is a renewed interest in food education, food literacy and cooking skills (Vidgen and Gallegos, 2014; Caraher, 2012; Pendergast, 2012; Burton and Worsley, 2014; Vaiteviciute et al., 2015; McGowan et al., 2015; Lavelle et al., 2016; Ronton et al., 2016; Wolfson et al., 2016; Nanayakkara et al., 2017; Lahne et al., 2017; Trubek et al., 2017; Fordyce Voorham, 2018). Evidentially, much of the research attempts to define food skills and cooking; devise models for evaluation and assessment of cooking skills; report on the implementation of food education initiatives or investigates the importance of food education. However, this research does not examine the long-term sustainability of such initiatives; the pedagogical practices underpinning the research or the knowledge and skills of those teaching the classes.

Amidst public health concerns in relation to an increasing prevalence of diet related disorders, and a range of chronic diseases associated with poor dietary habits, schools are being targeted as an effective environment to deliver nutrition and food education (WHO, 2017; Hawkes et al., 2015; Contento, 2015; Vander Schee and Gard, 2014). This is premised on the rationale that developing healthy food behaviours in children and adolescents can positively impact their future lifelong food patterns (Mikkila et al., 2004; Fitzgerald et al., 2013; Hawkes et al., 2015; Gillman and Ludwig, 2013; Bonell et al., 2013; Larson et al., 2009, 2006). Therefore, implementing food education policy in schools is identified as a key health promotion strategy (Contento, 2015; WHO, 2017). In the absence of any social initiatives, schools are a captive audience to be used.

A renewed interest in food education has been associated with a change in food skills and the ability of people to cook for themselves and a perceived ‘deskilling’ of generations. Traditionally, the mother was the gatekeeper of food and cooking skills in the home, and the primary educator of younger generations in this regard (Caraher and Lang, 1999; Wolfson et al., 2017; Lavelle et al., 2016). A decline and a devaluing in cooking skills is associated with the demise of Home Economics in some States in Australia and in the UK where people no longer have an opportunity to learn practical food skills in schools (Begley et al., 2017; Pendergast and Dewhurst, 2012; Slater, 2013; Slater et al., 2018; Ronto et al., 2017; Caraher and Seely, 2010). Moreover, it is suggested, if a lost generation emerges, it will have a negative

impact on the ability of current and future generations to prepare food for themselves and their families (Caraher and Lang, 1999; Lang et al., 1999; Short, 2006; Meah and Watson, 2011). However, as Coveney et al. (2012) asserts, "cooking skills interventions are now also seen as the new practical modality for improving individual eating behaviours" and are at the centre of "moral panics" (p.629) and this is further corroborated by Murcott (2012, 2019). Too often, food education is situated within a technocratic and narrow, simplistic view of cooking and suggests, inappropriately, that learning to cook can be a panacea to solving the obesity issue. Smith (2016) views this approach as placing an unwelcome burden which associates learning to cook as a moral obligation and she argues this reduces a more complex process to a very simplistic narrative. This linear approach is noted by Earl (2018) who disputes the association of teaching people how to cook as a solution to the "dilemma of fatness and ill-health" (p.48). Indeed, the very definition of 'cooking' is subject to much interpretation. This can vary from preparing food using all fresh ingredients to taking a pizza out of a box and cooking it (Shapiro, 2004; Short, 2006; Earl, 2018). Wolfson et al. (2016) identified a significant variation, but a perceived hierarchy nonetheless, as to what people regarded as cooking in their homes. In this study the perception of cooking was influenced by the time spent; the effort and love put in; whether the food was heated or not; and if any convenience foods were used. The challenge of defining food and cooking skills is reflected in research publications, as McGowan et al. (2016) laments, the lack of consensus in relation to the components, how they relate to each other and the measurement of cooking and food skills results in limited conclusive empirical evidence.

Learning food and cooking skills is multi-faceted and complex, and this is further evidenced in research which attempts to capture this by providing a more comprehensive definition. Food literacy, as Vidgen and Gallegos (2014), asserts "has emerged as a term to describe the everyday practicalities associated with navigating the food system and using it in order to ensure a regular food intake that is consistent with nutrition recommendations" (p.50). The prevalence of this term has increased in policy and research (Vidgen, 2016) and from an education policy context, is evident in the 2017 Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification in Ireland (DES, 2017). Food literacy encapsulates a broad range of knowledge, skills and behaviours associated with food. This includes being literate in four domains, as identified by Vidgen (2016), of firstly, planning and managing food; secondly, selecting food; thirdly, preparing; and fourthly, eating food which incorporates an understanding of the social, environmental and functional aspects of the food system. Although it covers the broad bases of food, it does not consider how the self-efficacy of the participants can be developmentally

and incrementally built upon. Vidgen and Gallegos assert that food literacy is regarded as an integrative framework which reflects the dynamic process of how we engage with food. It aspires to provide the "the scaffolding that empowers individuals, households, communities or nations to protect diet quality through change and support dietary resilience over time" (2014, p.55).

In applying models of food literacy to education settings, Fordyce-Voorham (2011) identified essential food skills, across knowledge, skills, information, and resources, for healthy eating programmes in schools. A critical approach to food and health literacy is advocated by Renwick (2013) who identifies critical food literacy developmentally spanning operational, cultural and critical levels whereby engagement in the critical level ensures students develop higher-order thinking and have an opportunity to consider the upstream influences on the food system. This concept is further developed by Slater et al. (2018) who posits a critical 'Food Literacy Competencies for Young Adults' framework. This approach identifies a set of firstly, functional competencies which relates to confidence and empowerment with food; secondly, relational competencies referring to the joy and meaning of food; and thirdly, system competencies which are categorized as equity and sustainability through food systems (p.552). According to Slater et al. (2018) these competencies are essential for young adults as they transition to adulthood so they can develop a positive, healthy relationship with food within a complex food system to enhance their own health and well-being.

Palumbo et al. (2019) asserts food literacy is regarded as a current and opportune subject in international food policy research because of the perceived ability of policy developed using food literacy as a framework to work at an individual and a collective level. However, as West et al. (2020) notes, developing food literacy alone cannot effectively address many of the food insecurity 'upstream' determinants including access to safe, nutritious food and the affordability of healthy food. Although Earl (2018) refers to the "holy grail of food education" (p.17) as being an amalgamation of healthy eating, nutrition, growing and cooking food, she acknowledges the importance of food education initiatives taking cognisance of the wider sociological and cultural food environment within which the student operates. This is somewhat reflected in the concept, coined by Wolfson et al. (2017), who suggest food literacy can be developed further as 'food agency'. They assert a food agency approach moves beyond "technical skills and nutrition information to teaching individuals how to successfully navigate the many daily barriers that might prevent them from achieving their provisioning and nutrition goals" (p.1153). However, this is not underpinned by a pedagogical approach or learning

theory. Moreover, Trubek et al. (2017) identifies the empowering and transformative potential of having food agency principles underpin food education interventions. However, notwithstanding various definitions and concepts, ultimately it is the design, development and sustainability of the food education initiatives or policies and how they are enacted by the teachers which is critical to its success.

Leahy and Wright (2015) note an intensification of food education initiatives over the past 10 years in schools. Examples of these initiatives, which are outside the mandated curriculum policy, include Food Dudes (Ireland); Cook It (Ireland); Incredible Edibles (UK); Food for Life (UK); Jamie Oliver's Kitchen Garden Project (UK); License to Cook (England); Jamie Oliver's Ministry of Food (Australia and England); Countryside Classroom (UK); Cooking Matters (USA); Chef's Adopt a School (England); Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation (Australia); Taste Education (UK). However, much of the evidence around the effectiveness of this approach is related to research conducted on piecemeal interventions, often in a community setting, as opposed to long-term policy strategies (Reicks et al., 2014, 2017). Research conducted by Herbet et al. (2014), on the Jamie Oliver's Ministry of Food initiative, identified a "small but positive sustained effect on intervention participants' attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and enjoyment around cooking and healthy eating" (p.11). This is reiterated by Hutchinson et al. (2016) who identifies further positive impact on cooking confidence and food choice. Caraher et al. (2013), although acknowledging the small scale of the intervention, still identified significant changes in children's eating patterns and cooking confidence and the short-term impact of the intervention.

However, criticism is often levelled at some of these initiatives because firstly, the lack of a coherent valid assessment tool for food education interventions means that comparing the impact and sustainability of short-term initiatives is challenging (Wolfson et al., 2017; Lahne et al., 2017;) and secondly, many researchers assert the limited, methodical evaluation process of the interventions casts queries over the assertions of their effectiveness (McGowan et al., 2015; Caraher, 2012; Rees et al., 2012; Reicks et al., 2014; 2017). Furthermore, they are sometimes fronted by a celebrity chef or sponsored by industry which can influence the focus and mission of the initiative. As Gray et al. (2017) notes, on a study relating to three celebrity chefs (Jamie Oliver, Stephanie Alexander and Sesame Street character the Cookie Monster), that although it "appears that our three food pedagogues offer benevolently inspired propositions, we understand such posturing as deeply political" (p.1). From a pedagogical perspective, the initiatives are predominantly focused on increasing knowledge and adopt a

limited, technocratic approach to food preparation and cooking skills. The design of the interventions in schools are not explicitly underpinned by a pedagogical approach or learning theory (McGowan et al., 2015; Wolfson et al., 2016; Short, 2006; Condraksy et al., 2011). Thereby, limiting the opportunity for the participants to engage in critical, systemic thinking around food and cooking over a sustained period of time (Lichenstein and Ludwig, 2010; Micucci et al., 2002). Moreover, due to resources or the design of the intervention, experiential learning is often limited for the students, for example the Cooking Bus initiative in Scotland only visited schools every 2 years. Additionally, the content is delivered by a chef, who, although has expert technical skills, often has no pedagogical training or nutritional background (Caraher and Seeley, 2010). In countries, like the UK and some States in Australia, where Home Economics no longer exists on the curriculum, these initiatives are delivered in the community setting as short-term interventions (Begley et al., 2018).

Relationship between Home Economics and Food Education

Research suggests the integration of food and nutritional knowledge with practical skills, delivered in a sustained and sequential manner, should form a core tenet of food education policy initiatives (Condrasky and Hegler, 2010; Lavelle et al., 2016; McGowan et al., 2015; Fordyce-Voorham, 2015; Ronto et al., 2016). Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is often associated with food and health education interventions as an accepted model of behaviour change theory which can underpin such policy. As Hawkes et al. (2015) asserts, the provision of knowledge alone is not effective unless food education aims to "stimulate learning, literacy, skills, and action" (p.2414). Evidentially, empowering young people with critical food skills to engage with, and in, a complex food system requires an inter-related range of knowledge, skills and behaviours which culminates in developing their own food self-efficacy.

Traditionally, Home Economics teachers have had the responsibility of teaching food education to young people in schools (Caraher and Lang, 1999; Pendergast, 2012; Cunningham-Sabo and Simons, 2012; Begley et al., 2017; Owen-Jackson and Rutland, 2016). With the demise of Home Economics, in its traditional format, in some countries (for example UK, USA and in some States in Australia), there have been public health calls for the re-introduction of Home Economics in schools. Most notably, an article in the Journal American Medical Association in 2010, called to "*Bring Back Home Economics Education*", suggesting

it “may be among the best investments society could make” (Lichenstein and Ludwig, 2010, p.1858). Media, particularly in America, emulated this call for Home Economics education as they lamented the demise of traditional cooking skills in the home; an increased dependency on convenience food and parallel public health concerns around a rise in food-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) (for example The New York Times, 2011; The Wall Street Journal, 2013; Washington Post, 2017).

Home Economics, however, cannot be allowed to be reduced to a simplistic, technocratic view of solely teaching cooking skills. Smith (2016) notes this reductionist approach demeans the profession and reinforces the stereotypical notion of the subject as ‘stitching and stirring’ which was discussed earlier in this chapter. In many countries (for example, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Malta, Japan, Canada, China, South Korea, Finland, Norway), the subject Home Economics in schools provides an opportunity for students to be empowered with the requisite knowledge, skills and behaviours so that they develop food-related self-efficacy. As asserted by Pendergast and Dewhurst (2012), Home Economics education has been “confidently and knowledgeably” supporting young people to develop transferable, broad-ranging, food skills required for healthy and sustainable independent living. Research identifies the critical role Home Economics teachers can play to facilitate the development and enhancement of students’ food skills, because they have the required pedagogical expertise to effectively educate young people (Boddy et al., 2019; Burton et al., 2017; Worsley et al., 2015; Nanayakkara et al., 2018; Ronto et al., 2016). However, many researchers outside the field of Home Economics, whilst advocating the role the subject and teachers can play, argue it is in dire need of modernisation (Cunningham-Sabo and Simons, 2012; Wolfson et al., 2017; Peregrin, 2010; Trubek et al., 2017). Although there is some truth in what is being advocated for, much of the criticism is based on a dated, often personal, experience of Home Economics education which is not reflective of the emergence of reformed Home Economics curriculum policy in many countries internationally (Hoijer et al., 2011). Understandably, a confusion around the subject and a lack of understanding may be prevalent because there has been limited published up-to-date research in the academic field of Home Economics and more so, in Home Economics education which has been predominantly conducted by authors such as Donna Pendergast, Sue McGregor, and Kaija Turkki. However, research is emerging, most notably in Australia, (Boddy et al., 2019; Fordyce-Voorham, 2018; Burton et al., 2017; Worsley et al., 2015; Nanayakkara et al., 2018; Ronto et al., 2016; Renwick, 2016; Smith, 2017) which is exploring the relationship of Home Economics education to food literacy and food and health education.

Home Economics professionals argue, for the potential of Home Economics in teaching food education to be acknowledged, a concerted effort around evidence-based research on Home Economics education and curriculum policy must conducted (Smith, 2016; Pendergast et al., 2012; Pendergast, 2013; Caraher, 2019; Christensen, 2019; Fordyce-Voorham, 2018).

Concluding Remarks

Anecdotally, and through teaching Home Economics and developing Home Economics curricula at secondary and on initial teacher education programmes at university level, the author of this thesis has experienced a practical experiential pedagogical approach to Home Economics education. Although learning theories form a core component of education modules taught to undergraduate Home Economics student teachers, through researching for this thesis it became acutely apparent that there is a dearth of published or unpublished research which posits Home Economics education from a learning theory perspective. Fordyce-Voorham (2018) agrees and notes, more broadly, the lack of evidenced-based research in relation to the practices of the Home Economics profession. Despite emerging research (Nanayakkara et al., 2017; Fordyce-Voorham, 2018; Ronto et al., 2016; Pendergast et al., 2011; Burton and Worsley, 2014; Vaitkeviciute et al., 2015) in relation to Home Economics teachers and their role in food education, few of the studies published have situated Home Economics education in the context of food education and learning theories. Therefore, as part of this thesis, in examining how the pedagogical practices of Home Economics can contribute to food education in schools, an attempt was made to situate Home Economics alongside two constructivist learning theories namely, the work of David Kolb (1984) and Albert Bandura (1986; 1977).

This chapter critiques relevant literature in the field of Home Economics exploring the philosophical and pedagogical underpinning of Home Economics. It analyses the concepts of food and cooking skills and explores food policy education initiatives in schools. It then sets out the relationship between food education and Home Economics which is the contextual space for the research undertaken in this thesis. This literature will now form the basis for the design of the research methodology which will be presented in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter details the aim of the research; the research questions and objectives; and the research paradigm which influenced the methodological approach of the thesis and the individual studies. The overall research plan is outlined along with details on how the five studies achieve the research objectives and the research questions. Each of the five studies are then explored in detail including the methodological approach, the analysis of the data and the limitations of the study. Finally, the methodological rigour applied to the research overall is outlined.

Aim

The aim of this thesis was to explore the practice and interpretation of food policy in Home Economics curriculum in the Irish secondary school setting. This comprises the development and enactment of Home Economics curriculum policy from upstream at the macro policy development level to enactment downstream at the micro school and classroom level. In doing so, the thesis examines the role of Home Economics in providing the philosophical and pedagogical underpinning for food education as a food policy action in secondary schools.

Research Questions

From this aim specific research questions were developed:

1. What is the curriculum policy pertaining to food education internationally?
2. How has Home Economics curriculum policy evolved in primary and secondary schools from the 1800s to the 21st Century in the Republic of Ireland?
3. What is the relationship between Home Economics and Food Education in Irish secondary schools?
4. How did the macro policy process pertaining to the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics in the Republic of Ireland unfold?
5. What are the experiences of Home Economics teachers in enacting curriculum policy at the micro level of the classroom?

Research Objectives

The following key objectives guided the research in order to address the research questions:

1. Analyse the curriculum policy pertaining to food education internationally.
2. Explore the evolution of Home Economics curriculum policy in primary and secondary schools from the 1800s to the 21st Century in the Republic of Ireland.
3. Critique the relationship between Home Economics and Food Education in Irish secondary schools.
4. Examine the macro policy process pertaining to the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics in the Republic of Ireland.
5. Analyse the experiences of Home Economics teachers in enacting curriculum policy at the micro level of the classroom.

Research Paradigm

This research is situated in an interpretive paradigm and this epistemological approach has implications for the research study design and methods. A research paradigm is a 'worldview' or a basic set of guiding beliefs that influences the research design (Creswell, 2018; Morgan, 2007) and importantly, how the information is gathered and analysed (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). As MacKenzie and Knipe note the choice of a paradigm will establish the "intent, motivation and expectations" for the research (2006, p.2). Therefore, for this research study, the interpretive paradigm is the "conceptual lens" through which the researcher determines the methodological approach (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). The use of the interpretative paradigm, as the conceptual lens, is reflected in this research through the choice of research methods in each of the five studies including: historical document analysis; case study; policy analysis; and in-depth interviews.

Interpretivism, which is often combined with social constructivism, offers an alternative paradigm to post positivism or hard/natural scientific research which usually aligns more readily to quantitative methods. Cohen et al., (2011) contend that an interpretive paradigm focuses on understanding the human experience from a subjective perspective whereby an effort is made by the researcher to "understand from within" (p.19). In this way, interpretivists

develop an understanding and meaning that is complex and varied; meanings which are often formed through social interactions and historical norms and through the specific contexts in which the participants in the research work and live (Creswell, 2018; Creswell and Poth, 2018). This facilitates a future oriented focus on actions which are meaningful (Cohen et al., 2011). The interpretive paradigm is widely used in social sciences research particularly, in an education context because it is an "approach to knowledge generation that straddles the chasm between objective neutrality and abject theorising, extending a form of understanding that is of practical importance to the applied disciplines" (Thorne, 2008, p.26). For the research in this thesis, this approach enabled the author, as the researcher, to be positioned within the research, which is subjective, and therefore, the author's values and beliefs are integral to all stages of the process.

A naturalist methodology is usually employed as it is assumed that the research will involve an interactive process (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). This requires an openness in the methodological approach whereby the choice of methods emerges as the researchers' understanding evolves (Angen, 2000). Additionally, it is important to recognise past and present interactions and how this can influence our understanding and interpretations. Interpretive research leads to knowledge that is uniquely linked to the context of the research and therefore, although it leads to "rich and contextually situated understandings", it is not "universally applicable" (McChesney and Aldridge, 2019). In this study, in order to develop an understanding of the research area, a mix of methods and approaches were utilised including historical document analysis; case study; policy analysis; and interviews, which will each be further discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Theoretical Framework

As noted in Chapter 1, from an epistemological perspective, this research is situated within an interpretative paradigm. Figure 7 demonstrates how the thesis extends across multiple research areas with Home Economics situated at the nexus. Positioning the research within the interpretative paradigm enables the researcher to explore the practice and interpretation of food policy in the education setting through Home Economics curriculum policy from upstream at the macro policy development level to enactment downstream at the micro school and classroom level. This is justified as Home Economics is the focus of the study and there have

been calls for the subject to be at the centre of enabling changing food habits and practices (Lichenstein and Ludwig, 2010).

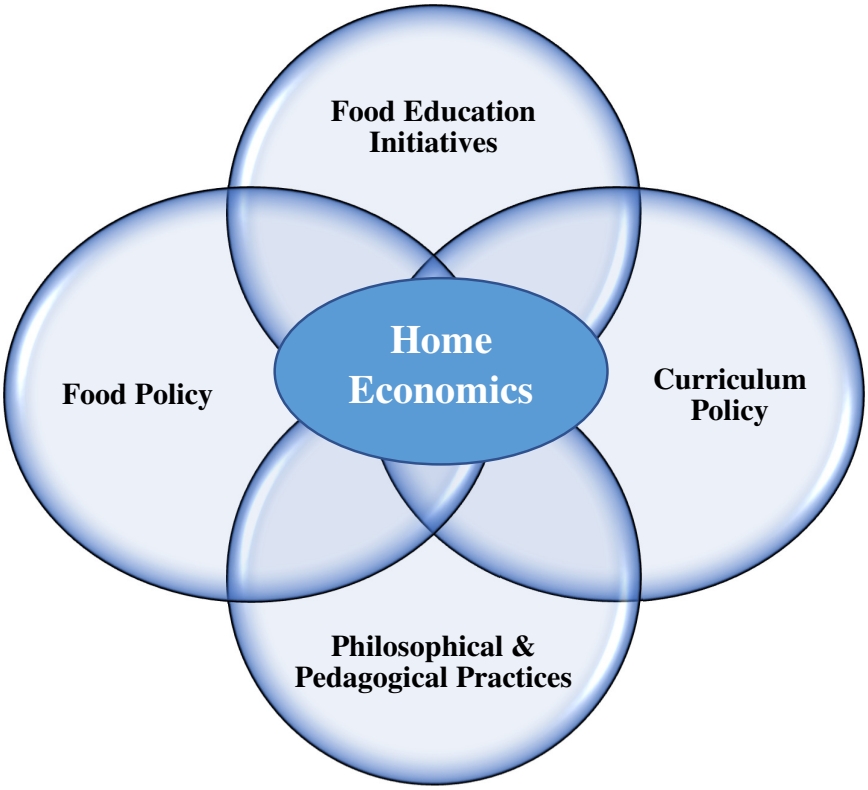

Figure 7: Home Economics at the Nexus

Choosing a theoretical framework that transcends these areas and was compatible with the research objectives was challenging. Various policy frameworks that are linked to food and health policy were initially investigated for compatibility, including Multiple Streams Theory (Kingdon, 2003); Punctuated Equilibrium Framework (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993) and the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993). Although all these frameworks could be utilised to examine the theoretical aspects of Home Economics curriculum policy, the inherent pedagogical focus coupled with the process of policy development and enactment, from upstream to downstream, meant that none of these frameworks were suitable for underpinning this research. Furthermore, many of these frameworks assume a logic-deductive approach which is not per se exploratory and therefore, did not fit with the exploratory nature of the research questions and objectives. Due to the multi-faceted nature of the research which extends across several discipline areas (see figure 7), it was inevitable that a hybrid theoretical lens would be adopted to underpin the research. The aim of this thesis was to explore the practice and interpretation of food policy in Home

Economics curriculum in the Irish secondary school setting. This comprises the development and enactment of Home Economics curriculum policy from upstream at the macro policy development level to enactment downstream at the micro school and classroom level. The research encompassed exploring the development of Home Economics curriculum policy, as set by the Department of Education and Skills, in secondary schools, and how Home Economics professionals interpret and enact this at the school and classroom level. Further investigations in education policy research resulted in Basil Bernstein's theory of 'Pedagogic Device' (Bernstein, 1990, 2000) as a compatible theoretical framework to underpin this research. The pedagogic device sets out the general rules and principles by which policy knowledge is interpreted, translated and evaluated as it is developed (produced), recontextualised and reproduced in the school setting (Singh, 2015; Bernstein, 1990, 2000). The work of Basil Bernstein is widely used in education policy and research. Moreover, Bernstein's theory of pedagogic device facilitates a deeper understanding of the macro policy level of curriculum development and the interpretation of this policy at the micro level of the classroom. Singh et al., (2013) notes, "education policy, even when centrally mandated, is interpreted, translated, adjusted and worked differently by diverse sets of policy actors, in processes of enactment in specific contexts" (p.466). This was further integrated with the work of social theorist, Stephen Ball and his colleagues (Ball et al., 2011a, 2011b; Braun et al., 2011; Ball, 2012) 'policy enactment' and 'policy actor' to form a hybrid theoretical lens to enable an analysis of the interpretation of food policy in the education setting through Home Economics curriculum policy.

Research Plan

As noted, the research methodology was informed by the interpretive paradigm. This was underpinned by using Basil Bernstein's (1990, 2000) 'Pedagogic Device' as a lens to examine the macro curriculum policy development and the micro policy enactment in the classroom. Qualitative methods were employed in this study as these facilitate the researcher to gain a "complex, detailed understanding of the issue" (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p.72); however, as Silverman (2013) cautions this approach can be "complex and sometimes downright chaotic" (p.15). Qualitative research, as outlined by Silverman (2013, p.6), "consists of many different endeavours, many of which are concerned with the 'objective' study of realities". Therefore,

in order to achieve the aim and objectives of the research, qualitative methods were chosen as the most appropriate to responding to the research objectives and research questions. Having a broad range of methodological tools available to choose from was of benefit to the researcher in this qualitative study (Punch, 2014). As Cohen et al. outlines, adapting an approach based on qualitative methods in a study, because of its holistic nature, "strives to record the multiple interpretations of, intention in and meanings given to situations and events" (2011, p.202).

The research comprised five studies. A diagrammatic representation is presented in figure 8 and table 1. The studies are sequenced in the thesis and in the diagrammatic representation below not in chronological publication order rather according to upstream policy development at the macro level leading to downstream policy enactment at the micro school and classroom level.

Study 1: Comparative case study analysing the curriculum policy pertaining to food education internationally.

Study 2: Historical document analysis exploring the evolution of Home Economics curriculum policy in primary and secondary schools from the 1800s to the 21st Century in the Republic of Ireland.

Study 3: Literature review critiquing the subject Home Economics in Irish secondary schools as a food education intervention.

Study 4: Official curriculum policy development examining the macro policy process pertaining to the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics in the Republic of Ireland.

Study 5: In-depth interviews with Home Economics teachers to examine their experiences of enacting curriculum policy at the micro level of the school and classroom.

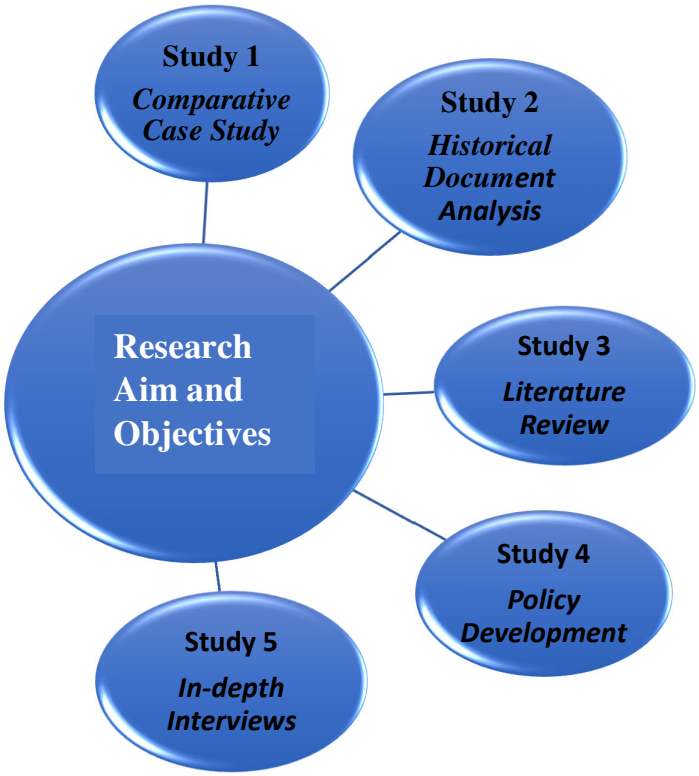

Figure 8: A diagrammatic representation of the research design

Research Question	Research Objective	Aligned to Study Number:
RQ 1: What is the curriculum policy pertaining to food education internationally?	***RO 1:*** Analyse the curriculum policy pertaining to food education internationally.	Study 1
RQ 2: How has Home Economics curriculum policy evolved in primary and secondary schools from the 1800s	***RO 2:*** Explore the evolution of Home Economics curriculum policy in primary and secondary schools from the 1800s to the 21st Century in the Republic of Ireland.	Study 2

to the 21st Century in the Republic of Ireland?		
RQ 3: What is the relationship between Home Economics and Food Education in Irish secondary schools?	***RO 3***: Critique the subject Home Economics in Irish secondary schools as a food education intervention.	Studies: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
RQ 4: How did the macro policy process pertaining to the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics in the Republic of Ireland unfold?	***RO 4:*** Examine the macro policy process pertaining to the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics in the Republic of Ireland.	Studies: 4, 5
RQ 5: What are the experiences of Home Economics teachers in enacting curriculum policy at the micro level of the school and classroom?	***RO 5:*** Analyse the experiences of Home Economics teachers in enacting curriculum policy at the micro level of the classroom.	Study 5

Table 1: Diagrammatic representation of the link between the research questions, research objectives and study number.

Each of the five studies, illustrated in figure 8 and table 1, are now each explored in detail including the methodological approach, the analysis of the data and the limitations of the study.

Study 1: Comparative case study analysing the curriculum policy pertaining to food education internationally

In order to analyse the curriculum policy pertaining to food education internationally, a comparative case study across seven countries was undertaken. As Thomas (2017) notes a case study involves "in-depth research into a case or a small number of cases … the aim is to gain a rich, detailed understanding" (p.156). This research involved multiple case studies (seven), bounded by specific context and setting (food education curriculum policy and geographical) which allowed the research area to be analysed. This methodological approach was chosen because it was the intent of the researcher to gather evidence as opposed to generalised fact finding. Additionally, the researcher aimed to develop a full understanding of the "case in depth, and in its natural setting, recognising its complexity and context" whilst also having a "holistic focus, aiming to understand the wholeness and unity of the case" (Punch, 2014, p.143). This allowed for interpretative analysis to be undertaken. Furthermore, by choosing comparative or multiple case sampling, a certain level of confidence was added to the findings and accordingly, the research was strengthened in terms of the "precision, validity, stability and trustworthiness of the findings" (Miles et al., 2014, p.33).

Method

Initially, the boundaries of the case were identified in order to ensure the comparative case study was a bounded system (Creswell, 2018; Thomas, 2016). The boundaries set around the collective case study included: firstly, only school based formal curriculum policy pertaining to food education and Home Economics would be included; and secondly, only the policy concerning to junior cycle in second-level schools (ages 12-15 and normally the first three years of study in secondary school, depending on the country) would be included. The researcher recognises there is a plethora of cooking and food-based initiatives that are run by charities and non-government organisations outside of the formal school setting; however, because these are outside the bounds set by the case study they are not included.

Following the identification of the boundaries, non-probability sampling was employed and the decision as to which case study would be included was determined. Selection of the initial list of countries was informed by the working knowledge of the researcher and based on the

suitability of the food education curriculum policy to one of four criteria (Table 2). Initially, ten countries were selected – Japan; Finland; Republic of Ireland; Northern Ireland; Malta; Australia (State of Victoria); England; Canada (Manitoba Province); Scotland and the USA. However, seven countries (Japan; Finland; Republic of Ireland; Northern Ireland; Malta; Australia (State of Victoria); England) were included in the final study due to the scope and breadth of the policy data available; time available to conduct the study; and word restrictions of the publishing journal. The State of Victoria, in Australia, was included as it adapts an innovative way of training Home Economics teachers through their Home Economics Association.

The four criteria for selecting the countries were as followed:

Criteria	**Country Selected**
1. An established historical policy for providing mandatory food education on the curriculum	Japan, Finland
2. A relatively recent change in policy to have mandatory food education	Northern Ireland
3. An established policy but optional food education on the curriculum	Ireland; Malta; Australia (State of Victoria)
4. An ad hoc, piecemeal approach to food education	England

Table 2: Selection Criteria for the Case Study Sample

Second-level curriculum policy documents pertaining to food education and Home Economics at junior cycle were identified in each of the seven countries. Although policy documents may not reflect the reality on the ground; they still have value and, as noted by Shaw et al., (2004, p.261), are regarded as "deliberate and conscious statements of strategies". In each of the seven countries the most current curriculum education policy documents were selected and sourced which were produced by comparable sources such as national education departments, ministries with specific responsibility for curriculum and assessment and subject associations. The policy documents were sourced via the website of the respective Department or Ministry or where relevant, the national subject association. These were collected into a database for later analysis. In all instances, where English was not the official country language, an English translation of the policy document was available. In Japan, the reproduction of the Home

Economics curriculum in a book published by the Japan Association of Home Economics in 2012 (established in 1949 and has over 5,000 members) was used during the analysis together with English translations of wider education policy documents and the Journal of Home Economics of Japan publication. The policy documents analysed are detailed in table 3:

Country	**Curriculum Policy Document**
Republic of Ireland	Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification (2017)
Northern Ireland	Key Stage 3 Home Economics and Home Economics: Food and Nutrition (2017)
England	National Curriculum Cooking and Nutrition: Design and Technology (2014); GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition (2015) License to Cook initiative
Malta	Home Economics Curriculum (2012)
Japan	Course of Study for Home Economics (2008)
Finland	Home Economics Curriculum (2014) (revised)
Australia (State of Victoria)	Learning in Design and Technologies

Table 3: Curriculum policy documents selected in each country

Analysis

To generate a comparative case study, the curriculum policy documents from each country were analysed using a data extraction and collection sheet. This involved recording in a systematic, coherent and comparable way, data (i.e. curriculum description; structure; rationale; aim; learning outcomes and assessment) from the food education/Home Economics curriculum policy of each country. As Collins (2005) notes, it is important to differentiate when undertaking policy analysis between analysis of policy process and that of policy content. In Study 1, it was the analysis of the policy content that was undertaken and not the process of how they were developed.

The Framework Method analysis (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994), which is explained in detail under Study 5 was used as a framework structure for analysing the policy documents and the

comparison between the cases provided the analytical framework (Creswell, 2018; Creswell and Poth, 2018). In keeping with the overall epistemological approach of the thesis, interpretive inquiry was used to elicit the key themes. This involved finding "points of congruence and similarity – places of coherence in the seemingly amorphous mass of data" (Thomas, 2016, p.204) during the analysis of the multiple cases. The following cross-case themes (Creswell and Poth, 2018) were identified and extracted from the policy documents: nomenclature used in the policy to refer to Home Economics and food education; status of the subject on the curriculum (optional or mandatory); rationale and aim of the curriculum; pedagogical emphasis (theoretical and/or practical, experiential); curriculum content and assessment; and teacher education.

Limitations

For Study 1, the comparative case study, seven countries (including sub-regional as in the case of Australia) were included in the final study which provides useful information on the policy situation in the identified countries. It also represents a broad geographical and policy context despite the number of countries limiting the generalisability of the findings. It is accepted by the researcher that the findings cannot be used to generalise to other cases, rather this study compares these cases for what they show (Thomas, 2016). However, for this thesis it proved a valuable tool in analysing the curriculum policy pertaining to food education and Home Economics across the seven countries and therefore, the data gleaned in an international context was used to inform the development of an evidenced-based Home Economics curriculum policy in the Republic of Ireland. This was achieved as the author of this thesis was commissioned by the NCCA, as a subject expert in Home Economics, to write a *Background Paper for Junior Cycle Home Economics* (NCCA, 2016) which included an international scoping exercise. This then later informed the philosophical and pedagogical underpinning in the development of the *Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification (DES, 2017)*. Chapter 4 presents the review of literature, findings and discussion from the international review of food education curriculum policy in the form of a published peer-reviewed article in an international journal (McCloat and Caraher, 2019).

Study 2: Historical document analysis exploring the evolution of Home Economics curriculum policy in primary and secondary schools from the 1800s to the 21st Century

Documenting the evolution of Home Economics curriculum policy in primary and secondary schools from the 1800s to the 21st Century was a key objective of this thesis. The publication of Study 2 was the first time the history of Home Economics in Ireland from the 1800s to the 21st century was published in a peer-reviewed journal (McCloat and Caraher, 2018). In order to explore the evolution of the subject, a historical document analysis was undertaken. Historical document research is defined as "the systematic and objective location, evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events" (Cohen et al., 2007, p.191).

Method

Initially, the timeframe of the documents to be consulted was established and it ranged from 1800s to the 21st century. In the mid-1800s, Ireland was part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, it was ruled from London but education was not high on the priority list and was set against a backdrop of financial constraints, social and political unrest, and high level of poverty in Ireland (Walsh, 2007). Political events and uprising resulted in the establishment of two States on the Island of Ireland – Northern Ireland (six counties in the North of the island) and the Irish Free State (remaining twenty-six counties). After the 31st January 1922, in the Irish Free State, authority for education was transferred to the Minister for Education based in the Houses of the Parliament (The Dáil) in Dublin.

Home Economics was first established in the mid-1800s in primary schools under the guise of cookery, needlework, domestic economy and laundry and therefore, this date was the starting point for sourcing pertinent documentation. Study 2 depended entirely on historical document analysis. The types of documents consulted included: education policy documents; official curricula and teacher guidelines of the time; Department of Education Inspector reports; examination papers; school textbooks; Department generated statistical data on student enrolment, school location, profile of teachers and examination results; relevant legislation; Government announcements and briefing papers. The primary sources of documents from the

1800s to 1900s, in the main, were not digitised. However, the researcher sourced them in the repository of the archives of the National Library of Ireland in Dublin. Initially, their online catalogue was painstakingly sifted through using relevant search words. Many of the documents had to be ordered in advance, as they were stored off-site in the archives. Additionally, because of the daily limit on the number of documents that can be accessed at the National Library in Dublin; the prohibition of photography and, for many of the older documents, a prohibition on photocopying, sourcing and reading through the documents took a significant amount of time. Similarly, to the experience of this researcher, Cohen et al. (2007) notes "historical research is one of the most taxing kinds" (p.191) because of the challenge in obtaining the documents and ensuring that the document would add worth and value to the study. Primary sources from the 2000s onwards were mostly available online either through the Department of Education Digitised Archives; the National Library of Ireland website; the National Council Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA); and State Examinations Commission Statistical Reports and Data. Bunreacht na hÉireann (the Irish Constitution) was also examined for what it implies about women's work and the family, and education. It was the researchers' experience, like that of Punch (2014), whereby the historical and more contemporary documents obtained proved to be a "rich source of data" for this study. Furthermore, Shaw et al. (2004) notes document analysis is an "intellectually challenging and can provide researchers with a rich source of data … it is usually one of several techniques used in research into policy implementation" (p.265).

Analysis

Document analysis is the "finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesising data contained in documents" (Bowen, 2009, p.28). Silverman (2013) identifies the importance of having a clearly defined analytic approach to ensure effective analysis of historical documents can take place. Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2007) notes a two-step process, which firstly, involves confirming authenticity of the source (referred to as external criticism) and secondly, the accuracy of the data is determined (referred to as internal criticism). In this study, the researcher added a third criteria and ensured careful consideration was given as to how the document would add value to the research objective of the study (Bowen, 2009). For this

purpose, an excel recording sheet was used to note the applicability of the historical documents retrieved to each of these three criteria.

The next stage in the document analysis involved the assessing and synthesising of the data and this was conducted using *Content Analysis* method from an interpretative perspective. Cohen et al. (2007, p.475) defines content analysis as the "systematic set of procedures for the rigorous analysis, examination and verification of the contents of written data". This is reiterated by Mackieson et al. (2019) who notes content analysis "refers to the process of organising and quantifying the contents of the data into pre-determined categories relevant to the central research question(s) in a systematic, replicable and objective manner" (p.969). As the researcher was working with historical documents, many of which were not digitised, it was neither feasible nor practical to use computer software for the purposes of categorising and analysing. Therefore, a manual system was used for ascribing and analysing the categories. The categorisation matrix used is detailed in Table 4. Categories were generated by the researcher as the overarching groupings. Within each category, subcategories were assigned which are more exhaustive and defined groupings in relation to the research objective of the study.

Category	**Sub-category Level 1 (L1)**	**Sub-category Level 2 (L2)**
Pre-Irish Free State: 1800s – 1921	Domestic Subjects @ Primary Education	- Policy
		- Pedagogy
		- Practice
Post Irish Free State: 1922 – 1990s	Domestic Subjects @ Primary Education	- Policy
		- Pedagogy
		- Practice
	Home Economics @ Post-Primary Education	- Policy
		- Pedagogy
		- Practice
Current Curricula: 1999 – 2017	Home Economics @ Post-Primary Education – *Junior Cycle*	- Policy
		- Pedagogy
		- Practice
	Home Economics @ Post-Primary Education – *Senior Cycle*	- Policy
		- Pedagogy
		- Practice

Table 4: Categorisation Matrix

The categories were then ascribed to the documents which reduced the volume of data to "manageable proportions while maintaining the fidelity to essential content" (Cohen et al., 2007, p.480). The content ascribed to each category was subsequently retrieved for summarising, synthesising, and analysing. The data was analysed using an interpretative lens and the findings were written up in a manuscript format in order to be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal.

Limitations

Study 2, which involved the historical document analysis, was predicated on accessing the national archives held in repository in the National Library of Ireland for documents pertaining to the 1800s and the 1900s. Not all documents were accessible due to their state of repair, particularly some of those dating from the 1800s. However, the researcher engaged in a process of cross-referencing and liaised directly with State Departments to ensure access to relevant statistical data and education reports as required. Notwithstanding this, the researcher was conscious that historical texts may be limited and were designed for information purposes at the time and not research (Cohen et al., 2011). Additionally, the content and the way it was organised in the historical documents varied quite significantly which can make comparison between documents challenging (Shaw et al., 2004). Having a clear categorisation matrix to work within assisted in analysing the data in a systematic manner.

Chapter 5 of this thesis presents the findings from the historical review of Home Economics curriculum policy in primary and secondary schools from the 1800s to the 21st Century in the form of a published peer-reviewed article in an international journal (McCloat and Caraher, 2018).

Study 3: Literature Review on Home Economics in Irish secondary schools as a food education intervention

This study is one of the first published which explores the relationship between Home Economics and Food Education specifically in Irish secondary schools. Home Economics, particularly in Ireland, remains an under researched area. Although there is research conducted

by Home Economists, it is in areas that are aligned to Home Economics such as food; family and social issues; education; textiles; sustainability etc. Therefore, there is a dearth of Home Economics specific research in Ireland. The purpose of Study 3 was to conduct a literature review to explore the relationship between Home Economics and Food Education in Irish secondary schools. Although this was not conducted as a systematic review, a comprehensive search of electronic databases (Pubmed, SCOPUS, Web of Science, Jstor, and Proquest) was conducted using specific search terms. The researcher limited the search to English language and peer-reviewed papers or thesis.

Chapter 2 and Chapter 6 of this thesis presents a critique of literature. Chapter 6 is presented in the form of a published peer-reviewed article in an international journal (McCloat and Caraher, 2016). This arose from the need to publish the findings of the literature review and contribute to the advancement of the field by increasing public exposure to those outside the field of Home Economics.

Study 4: The macro policy process pertaining to the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics in the Republic of Ireland

Study 4 details the macro policy process in the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics. The researcher, as a subject expert in Home Economics, was commissioned in 2014 by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) to write a *Background Paper for Junior Cycle Home Economics* (NCCA, 2016). Following the publication of the draft paper, a public consultation was undertaken to elicit stakeholders' views on the focus of the Background Paper. The researcher was then further commissioned to work with a Subject Development team to develop the *Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification* which was published in 2017 (DES, 2017). This Specification is now the formal State curriculum policy document for Home Economics at Junior Cycle in the Republic of Ireland.

Chapter 7 of this thesis presents a critical overview of this macro policy process using Basil Bernstein's Pedagogic Device as a theoretical framework. In particular, the recontextualising field of the pedagogic device, which involves dislocating the knowledge from the production field and re-locating it to form pedagogical knowledge, is examined.

Limitations

In Study 4, the researcher is also the subject expert who was commissioned to write the *Background Paper for Junior Cycle Home Economics* (NCCA, 2016) and to work with a Subject Development Team to develop the *Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification* (DES, 2017) over a 12-month period. Consequently, there may be an element of researcher bias towards the curriculum policy. In such circumstances a "halo effect" can occur whereby a researcher brings a self-fulfilling prophecy (Cohen et al., 2011). This was a key rationale for collecting the data in Study 5 and ensured methodological rigour was applied throughout the research.

Study 5: Analyse the experiences of Home Economics teachers in enacting curriculum policy at the micro level of the school and classroom

The overarching aim of this thesis was to explore the interpretation of food policy in the education setting through Home Economics curriculum policy. This comprises the development and enactment of Home Economics curriculum policy from upstream at the macro policy development level to enactment downstream at the micro school and classroom level. In doing so, the thesis examines the role of Home Economics in providing the philosophical and pedagogical underpinning for food education as a food policy action in secondary schools. In order to have a socio-cultural approach, it is essential to view food education policy from both the formation and implementation perspective (Bartlett and Vavrus, 2017). As Study 4 outlined, the researcher was inextricably linked to the development process of the new Home Economics curriculum at the macro policy level. However, the relationship between "evidence, policy and practice", particularly in food policy, is often challenging (Lang et al., 2009). Therefore, in order to ascertain the views of Home Economics teachers on how the policy is enacted at the micro level of the classroom, in-depth, semi-structured, interviews were conducted. Interviews are a suitable qualitative method in order to allow a group of participants to express their point of view and perspective on the research area (Silverman, 2013). As Punch (2014) notes it is "one of the most powerful ways we have of understanding others" (p.167). A semi-structured approach is applicable in instances, similar to this research area, where the researcher is in a position to design an interview schedule with open-ended

questions in advance and thereby, in a position to frame the discussion with the participants (Richards and Morse, 2013). Additionally, Thomas (2017, p.206) refers to conducting semi-structured interviews as the "best of both worlds" because it facilitates the researcher to have pre-determined list of topics to investigate whilst also allowing the freedom to engage further on any points raised during the interview.

Method

Sampling

In order to recruit a sample of Home Economics teachers, purposive sampling was utilised. Initially, an email was sent to nineteen Home Economics teachers who were identified based on their school's geographical location and the type of school they taught in to ascertain their interest in participating in the study. It was important to have a diverse viewpoint that reflected the enactment of curriculum policy in different types of schools. Therefore, a variety of schools, reflective of the location and composition of schools in Ireland were identified (Department of Education and Skills, 2020). These included: all-girls; all-boys; co-educational; urban; rural; public school; private, fee-paying school; and a designated DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) status school which normally has a high proportion of students from a socio-disadvantaged community (Table 5 details a full breakdown of the composition of schools involved).

Participants

On receipt of an expression of interest for further information on the study from the teachers, a follow up email with a consent form and a detailed information sheet was distributed to each participant. All nineteen teachers indicated their consent to participate in the study. However, in order to be included it was necessary that the Home Economics teacher met two inclusion criteria: firstly, they were teaching five years or more and secondly, at the time of the interview they were teaching the new Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification. These two criteria were necessary so that experienced teachers' perspectives were obtained and, as the research was focused on the enactment of the new curriculum policy for Junior Cycle Home Economics, it was essential that the teacher had experience teaching this Specification. Following the

application of the inclusion criteria, fifteen teachers were eligible to participate in the interviews.

Interview Process

Initially, pilot interviews were conducted with two of the fifteen teachers in order to check for reliability, validity, clarity of questions, and to identify any omissions (Cohen et al., 2011). However, this pilot data was not included in the analysis as changes were made to the interview schedule following piloting. The remaining 13 teachers were provisionally scheduled for a semi-structured telephone interview late February – April 2019.

The interview schedule was finalised (Appendix A) and it was based on open ended questions with additional prompts that could be used during the interview in order to glean more information and clarification as required. In total, ten in-depth interviews were conducted with Home Economics teachers. No new themes emerged at interview number eight; however, two further interviews were conducted to confirm this and to gauge the level of data saturation. Additionally, at interview number ten the sample sufficiently reflected the required diversity of the target group. Therefore, based on these factors theoretical saturation was considered to have been achieved (McChesney and Aldridge, 2019). According to Baker and Edwards (2012), theoretical saturation can be identified when no new theoretical insights are obtained. In this study, no new themes were emerging; the data from those interviewed had essential characteristics in common and each of the variety of schools was represented (Morse 2015; Baker and Edwards 2012). Although thirteen had been provisionally identified on a timetable, the researcher was cognisant of the demands on teachers' time with practical exam preparation underway and therefore, no further interviews were conducted after the tenth interview and the remaining three teachers were notified. The demographics of the sample included in this study is evident in table 5.

Teacher	**Private/Public**	**DEIS status**	**Rural / Urban**	**School Composition**
A	Public	No	Rural	Co-Educational
B	Public	No	Rural	Co-Educational
C	Public	Yes	Urban	Co-Educational

D	Public	No	Rural	All-Girls
E	Public	No	Rural	Co-Educational
F	Public	No	Urban	All-Girls
G	Public	No	Urban	All-Girls
H	Public	Yes	Urban	Co-Educational
I	Private (fee paying)	No	Urban	All-Boys
J	Public	No	Urban	All-Girls
n=10	Public n=9 Private n=1	DEIS Status n=2	Urban n=6 Rural n=4	Co-Ed n=5 All-Girls n=4 All-Boys n=1

Table 5: Demographics of Participants in Study 5

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was granted from University of London, City, Sociology Research Ethics Committee in early February 2019 (Reference number: ETH1819-0576). An information sheet (Appendix A) and a consent form (Appendix A) was distributed one week in advance to each participant. The participants were asked to sign and return the consent forms to the researcher.

The interviews, on consent of the participants, were recorded. Each of the audio files were encrypted with a password and saved on the researcher's password protected laptop. All interviews were conducted by one researcher for consistency. Notes were taken during the interview which lasted between 35-45 minutes. Participation was voluntary and the participant could choose not to participate in part or all the study, and they had the option to withdraw at any stage of the project if they so wished to do so.

Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity to the teachers participating in the study was of the utmost importance from an ethical perspective. This is to ensure participants are protected and are willing to freely engage with the interview process (Richards and Morse, 2013). Therefore, each teacher was randomly assigned a code (Teacher A, B, C etc.) and this code was consistently used during the interview and when the transcripts were transcribed.

The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and, to ensure accuracy, all transcripts were crosschecked against the audio file. This involved the researcher listening to each recording twice and compare it to the transcript for accuracy. As outlined in the information sheet, a copy of the published paper was sent to all participants in the study. No teacher or school is identifiable from findings presented in either the published paper or this thesis.

Analysis of the Data

In analysing the data emerging from the interviews, the Framework Method (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994) was adopted along with the application of the conceptual framework of Bernstein's pedagogic device. The researcher listened to the recordings twice which not only served to check for accuracy of the transcripts but also allowed the researcher to develop familiarity with the data. According to Gale et al. (2013), the Framework Method is regarded as a flexible and systematic way of organising and classifying data into a structured output of themes where "obtaining a holistic, descriptive overview of the entire data set is desirable" (p.2). This facilitates, as Ritchie and Lewis (2003) notes, a transparent approach to data management of the views of participants. There are five distinct phases to the Framework Method that were applied to this study including familiarisation; identifying a thematic framework; indexing; charting; and mapping and interpretation (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994). A notebook was retained throughout Study 5 by the researcher; this included, as previously eluded to, notes taken during the interviews. The notebook also contains initial interpretations of the data and impressions of linking themes between the participants. This was then used to compare with the findings from the analysis.

From a conceptual perspective, Bernstein's pedagogic device was used to analyse the data, particularly the fields of recontextualisation and reproduction. This facilitated the researcher to analyse how Home Economics teachers enact curriculum policy, specifically food education elements, at the micro level of the classroom. A presentation and discussion of the findings from Study 5 is detailed in Chapter 8 of this thesis in the form of a peer-reviewed published paper (McCloat and Caraher, 2020).

Limitations

This thesis is situated within the interpretivist paradigm and is a qualitative piece of research. As Creswell and Poth (2018) notes qualitative research commences with assumptions and a worldview. Therefore, the data included is subjective in nature. Teachers participating in the interviews may have responded in socially desirable ways wanting to ensure to give the 'right answer'. Additionally, the research focused on the macro policy development and the enactment of the policy at the micro level of the classroom. It examined Home Economics teachers' experiences at the micro level; however, the view of the students in the classroom could provide further insights into how the policy is implemented in the classroom. This was beyond the scope of this study but would be an interesting area for further research.

Methodological Rigour in the Thesis Research

One of the key characteristics of quality in research is ensuring that methodological rigour is applied, and the conclusions outlined by the researcher are valid and reliable. This involves the researcher using a recognised approach to data collection; they collect multiple forms of data; and they accurately undertake data analysis (Creswell, 2018; Cohen et al., 2011). In this thesis, methodological rigour was applied through reflexivity; triangulation; and a rigorous approach to data collection and analysis.

As Creswell (2018) notes, researchers engaged in interpretive, qualitative research often write an interpretation based on a reflection of their own stance, perceptions or positions. These are referred to as 'reflexivities' and it is important to identify these so that the research process is transparent. The researcher in this thesis is "inescapably part of the social world" they are researching and therefore, it was an important step early in the research process to disclose this and acknowledge my role in the research and the influence I may have (Cohen et al., 2011, p.225). Creswell and Poth (2018) refer to this as the researcher having a "presence … in the accounts they present" (p.70). In order to acknowledge this "presence" in the research in the thesis, the researcher maintained a notebook throughout the research process, which documented how their personal perceptions affected the data collection and analysis. As advised by Fox et al. (2007), the researcher habitually stood back and examined reflexivity at the design of each study. During the research process, the researcher would engage in

professional dialogue with their supervisor on their reflexivities; potential biases and importantly how this could be mitigated in an open and transparent way so as not to undermine the trustworthiness of the research. This was particularly pertinent as the researcher is very involve in Home Economics policy at a national and international level.

Triangulation is an important way to demonstrate validity of research (Punch, 2014; Creswell, 2018) and reduce an element of researcher bias. It involves researching an area of interest from more than one standpoint and utilises two or more methods of data collection in order to draw informed conclusions (Thomas, 2017; Cohen et al., 2011). In this thesis, methodological triangulation was achieved by utilising a number of data collection methods and approaches including literature review, historical document analysis, comparative case study, policy development, and in-depth interviews in order to achieve the research aim and objectives. This increased the validity of conclusions drawn of the research in this thesis.

A rigorous approach to data analysis was employed throughout the studies in this thesis by using the 'Framework Method' for data analysis (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994) throughout the thesis. This approach utilises a five-step approach to data analysis which included careful coding of the data thereby ensuring replicability and transparency of the research (Gale et al., 2013). Additionally, when writing up the studies, verbatim quotes were used in the manuscripts to lend credibility to the data analysis.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter provided an overview and critique of the research methodology and the applied methods which were used for this thesis. An explanation and justification for the research paradigm was included along with the research questions and associated objectives which influenced the methodological approach. The methods employed in each of the five studies were explained. Finally, the limitations of the research were identified, and an overview of the considerations employed to ensure methodological rigour were detailed. The following five chapters presents the findings from each of the studies. The chapters, except for Chapter 7 (Study 4) which is still under review at the of submission of the thesis, are presented in the form of a published journal manuscript. The format, spelling and referencing style of the manuscript is associated with the international peer-reviewed journal where the respective study is published.

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CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4 An international review of second-level food education curriculum policy

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An international review of second-level food education curriculum policy

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ABSTRACT

Recently, there has been an intensification of calls for comprehensive food education curriculum in schools. Despite this, there is limited international comparative data on the provision of food education. This study uses a comparative case study approach to analyse second-level food education curriculum policy across seven countries. It explores curriculum policy regarding the status of food education, nomenclature and the pedagogical and philosophical approaches. In six of the seven countries, Home Economics is identified as the school subject which teaches practical food education. Coherence in the discourse and pedagogical approaches is evident; however, disparity between countries exists as to whether the subject is optional or mandatory. The authors conclude that food education should form part of the curriculum, but rather than a piecemeal approach, they recommend it be taught, by specialist teachers, in an integrated, sequential and developmentally appropriate manner through an established subject such as Home Economics.

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Food education; curriculum; home economics; food literacy, cooking skills

Introduction

Internationally, there is concern about the individual and population health consequences of unhealthy dietary behaviours (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2016a). In response, schools have been identified as an efficient and effective setting to promote healthy behaviour to children and young people, as habits and behaviours developed at an early age can influence lifestyle choices in adulthood (Hawkes et al., 2015; WHO, 2017). The EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity (2014–2020) recognises the benefit of an integrated approach to teaching children about food. The Action Plan recommends that children should be educated about nutrition, healthy lifestyle and sustainability issues, along with practical food skills, in an integrated manner which utilises the existing curriculum, as opposed to piecemeal additional components (Development Initiatives, 2017; European Union, 2014). Nutrition literacy, incorporating clear context-specific nutrition advice, coupled with education on food preparation, is further reinforced by the

An International Review of Second-level Food Education Curriculum Policy

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Abstract

Recently, there has been an intensification of calls for comprehensive food education curriculum in schools. Despite this, there is limited international comparative data on the provision of food education. This study uses a comparative case study approach to analyse second-level food education curriculum policy across seven countries. It explores curriculum policy regarding the status of food education, nomenclature, and the pedagogical and philosophical approaches. In six of the seven countries, Home Economics is identified as the school subject which teaches practical food education. Coherence in the discourse and pedagogical approaches is evident; however, disparity between countries exists as to whether the subject is optional or mandatory. The authors conclude that food education should form part of the curriculum, but rather than a piecemeal approach, they recommend it be taught, by specialist teachers, in an integrated, sequential and developmentally appropriate manner through an established subject such as Home Economics.

Keywords

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Introduction

Internationally, there is concern about the individual and population health consequences of unhealthy dietary behaviours (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2016a). In response, schools have been identified as an efficient and effective setting to promote healthy behaviour to children and young people, as habits and behaviours developed at an early age can influence lifestyle choices in adulthood (Hawkes et al., 2015; WHO, 2017). The EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity (2014–2020) recognises the benefit of an integrated approach to teaching children about food. The Action Plan recommends that children should be educated about nutrition, healthy lifestyle and sustainability issues, along with practical food skills, in an integrated manner which utilises the existing curriculum, as opposed to piecemeal additional components (Development Initiatives, 2017; European Union, 2014). Nutrition literacy, incorporating clear context-specific nutrition advice, coupled with education on food preparation, is further reinforced by the WHO (2016b) Report of the Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity as a component in a multidisciplinary approach to enabling families to make healthier choices. Providing cooking skills initiatives, in isolation, will not alone solve poor eating habits or obesity (Caraher, Wu, & Seeley, 2010). Rather, a comprehensive approach to address knowledge, attitudes, confidence and practical food and cooking skills is required in order to have a meaningful influence on dietary quality (McGowan et al., 2015).

In recent years there has been a renewed interest in food education and, in particular, the concept of food literacy (Vidgen & Gallegos, 2014). In the home setting, learning from the mother was most commonly cited as the source of learning food and cooking skills; however, a decline in home cooks and pressure on family time may pose a challenge for the future transfer of food knowledge and skills (Lavelle et al., 2019, 2016; McCloat, Mooney, & Hollywood, 2017). Traditionally, formal food education was the remit of Home Economics teachers in schools. Home Economics was regarded as the subject responsible for educating students on food knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies required for life (Pendergast, 2012).

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) states that Home Economics, 'as a curriculum area, facilitates students to discover and further develop their own resources and capabilities to be used in their personal life, by directing their professional decisions and actions or preparing them for life' (International Federation for Home Economics [IFHE], 2008, p. 1). The benefits of a comprehensive curriculum such as Home Economics in educating young people in the basic lifeskills of preparing food for themselves and their families is internationally recognised (Lichenstein & Ludwig, 2010; McCloat & Caraher, 2016; McCloat et al., 2017; Ronto, Ball, Pendergast, & Harris, 2016; Worsley, Wang, Yeatman, Byrne, & Wijayaratne, 2015). However, there remains a variance in the provision of food education in second-level education curriculum policy in schools internationally. In order to mitigate against this perceived variance, in 2016 the IFHE called on governments to strengthen Home Economics, as a curriculum area, in school-based education (IFHE, 2016). At the time of writing this paper, there appears to be no current comparative studies analysing food education curriculum policy on an international basis. To address these issues, this study uses a comparative case study approach in analysing second-level food education curriculum policy across seven countries: Republic of Ireland; Northern Ireland; England; Malta; Japan; Finland; and Australia (State of Victoria). It explores the education policy regarding food education on the curriculum; the pedagogical basis and philosophical underpinning of the curriculum; and the profession of teachers who teach food education and Home Economics.

2. Methodology

This study is a cross national, comparative case study of food education curriculum policy in secondary schools across seven countries: Republic of Ireland; Northern Ireland; England; Malta; Japan; Finland; and Australia (State of Victoria). Comparative case study research can provide a useful example of what occurs in other countries; however, it is accepted that the findings from these seven case studies cannot be utilised to generalise to other cases. Rather, this study compares these cases for what they show (Thomas, 2010, 2016).

Non-probability sampling was employed, and the countries were selected based on their suitability to one of four criteria which were identified in order to explore varying perspectives on food education curriculum policy. Selection was also informed by the working knowledge of the two authors. The four criteria included: (1) an established historical policy for providing

mandatory food education on the curriculum (Japan, Finland); (2) a relatively recent change in policy to have mandatory food education (Northern Ireland); (3) an established policy but optional food education on the curriculum (the Republic of Ireland; Malta; Australia [State of Victoria]); or (4) an ad hoc, piecemeal approach to food education (England). The State of Victoria, in Australia, was included as it adapts an innovative way of training Home Economics teachers through their Home Economics Association.

Despite policy documents often representing an incomplete or apparent account of the reality on the ground, they still have value and are regarded as 'deliberate and conscious statements of strategies' (Shaw, Elston, & Abbott, 2004, p. 261). Initially, curriculum policy documents were collected into a database and analysed in each of the seven country case studies. According to Collins (2005), a distinction needs to be applied when conducting policy analysis between analysis of policy process and that of policy content. For the purposes of this paper, food education curriculum policy analysis of the content was undertaken. This comparative policy analysis focused on analysing second-level curriculum policy at junior cycle (ages 11–15 and normally the first three years of study in secondary school, depending on the country) pertaining to food education and Home Economics. In each of the countries, selected curriculum education policy documents, which were produced by comparable sources such as national education departments, ministries with specific responsibility for curriculum, and assessment and subject associations, were analysed. This facilitated a quicker and easier sourcing of documents and a comparable process focusing only on food education curriculum policy. The education policies were sourced through the websites of each of the departments of education and, where appropriate, national subject associations. For all countries where English is not the official language, an English translation of the policy document was available. In one country (Japan) the Japan Society of Home Economics (established in 1949 and having over 5000 members) published the Home Economics curriculum in a book (Japan Association of Home Economics, 2012) and, consequently, this was used during the analysis together with English translations of wider education policy documents and the Journal of Home Economics of Japan publication. The education policy chosen for analysis in each country was the most current national policy at junior secondary school and included: Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification (2017) in the Republic of Ireland; Key Stage 3 Home Economics and Home Economics: Food and Nutrition (2017) in Northern Ireland; National Curriculum Cooking and Nutrition: Design and Technology (2014); GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition (2015) and Licence to Cook initiative in England; Home Economics Curriculum

(2012) in Malta; the Course of Study for Home Economics (2008) in Japan; the revised Home Economics curriculum (2014) in Finland; and Learning in Design and Technologies (Victoria, Australia).

In analysing the policy documents in the respective countries, the initial stage involved using a data collection sheet. This recorded in a systematic, coherent and comparable way, data (i.e. curriculum description; structure; rationale; aim; learning outcomes and assessment) from the food education/Home Economics curriculum policy of each country. Subsequently, the data was analysed, and the following comparable themes were extracted from the policy documents: nomenclature used in the policy to refer to Home Economics and food education; status of the subject on the curriculum (optional or mandatory); rationale and aim of the curriculum; pedagogical emphasis (theoretical and/or practical, experiential); curriculum content and assessment; and teacher education. Only formal education and curriculum policy at junior cycle in second-level schools (ages 12–15) has been included in this review. The authors recognise the myriad of cooking and food education initiatives that are run by charities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) outside of the formal school setting; however, due to word constraints these have not been explored within the scope of this paper. Such initiatives are not included in education curriculum policy documents, which only relate to teaching, learning and assessment in schools as required by the curriculum.

3. Findings: an international review

3.1 Republic of Ireland (ROI)

In the Republic of Ireland, the Department of Education and Skills has responsibility for the curriculum in all schools while the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) develops the curriculum. The name 'Home Economics' is used throughout curriculum policy documents in secondary schools and in teacher education in the Republic of Ireland (ROI). Home Economics is a popular subject with students; in 2019, it was taken by 36% (n = 23,043) of the total cohort of students (n = 64,330) sitting the Junior Certificate examination (taken at age 15 after three years of study) (State Examinations Commission, 2019). Junior Cycle education (ages 12–15) in the ROI is undergoing a process of curriculum policy change as set out in the new Junior Cycle Framework (2015). Consequently, a new Specification for Junior

Cycle Home Economics (2017) was introduced in all schools in September 2018, made up of a three-year course of study, designed for a minimum of 200 hours of timetabled student engagement. According to the Department of Education and Skills (DES, 2017) the central focus of Home Economics, as a field of study, is to achieve optimal, healthy and sustainable living for individuals, families and society. The new Specification for Junior Cycle Home Economics aims to 'develop students' practical food and health literacy skills so that they can adopt a healthy lifestyle and make informed decisions that positively impact their health and wellbeing as individuals as well as within their families and society' (DES, 2017, p. 5).

The Specification is made up of three strands: 'Food, Health and Culinary Skills'; 'Responsible Family Living'; and 'Textiles and Craft'. The 'Food, Health and Culinary Skills' strand focuses on developing a 'healthy, sustainable attitude and positive relationship with food through practical experiential learning' (DES, 2017, p. 15). Students are required to apply their knowledge and understanding of nutrition, diet and health principles to make informed decisions which will positively impact their health and wellbeing as well as that of their families. Practical food and cookery skills are integral to the strand and cover a broad range of skills including: food choice; budgeting; shopping; menu and meal planning for individuals and families at all stages of the lifecycle; diet related diseases and specific diet disorders; nutritional analysis; portion control; importance of nutrition and diet in contributing to health and wellbeing; comparing commercial and homemade food products; scientific principles and biological systems including digestion; reading food labels; health and safety food skills; preparing and cooking a range of food using various cooking techniques; ethical and ecological food principles; and food waste. At the end of the three years of study, students will be expected to have developed a broad range of knowledge, understanding and practical skills which relate to food health and culinary skills including, for example, applying a range of cooking principles and techniques in the preparation of healthy individual and family meals incorporating budgetary considerations; using a problem-based learning approach; and applying nutritional knowledge in the planning and preparation of food for the family (DES, 2017, p. 15). The strand is underpinned by four elements which have as their focus: Health and Wellbeing; Individual and Family Empowerment; Sustainable and Responsible Living; and Consumer Competence. All 19 learning outcomes in this strand are arranged according to their relevance to each of these four elements.

In recognition of the importance of the practical food skills underpinning the specification 50% of the externally assessed marks are weighted towards a practical food skills examination which

is externally assessed by the State Examinations Commission. The practical food skills examination will require students to demonstrate the application of nutritional knowledge and their food literacy skills in the preparation of a healthy nutritious dish or product to meet the requirements of a specific brief which may refer, for example, to healthy family meals; special dietary considerations; healthy school lunches; stages of the lifecycle; resourceful cookery; or diet related diseases (DES, 2017).

3.2 Northern Ireland

Despite being on the island of Ireland, Northern Ireland is governed separately from the Republic of Ireland. The policy on curriculum for schools is set out by the Department for Education, Northern Ireland (DENI) but developed by the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). The Northern Ireland curriculum aims to 'seek to empower pupils to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. It is about helping pupils prepare for life and work as individuals' (Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment [CCEA], 2007, p. 2). In 2007, following curriculum policy change in Northern Ireland, Home Economics became a mandatory requirement for all students (male and female) up to Key Stage 3 level (age 11–14 years) within the learning area 'Learning for Life and Work'. According to the CCEA (2017), including Home Economics within this learning area 'endorses the contribution it makes to preparing young people for independent living' (p. 1). This signalled a change in the status of Home Economics in Northern Ireland with related negative implications for the teaching and resourcing of the subject, including the availability of specialist teachers and facilities in schools (Caraher & Seeley, 2010). The minimum statutory requirement in Home Economics, which all students must study, includes three key concepts – Healthy Eating, Home and Family Life and Independent Living – and involves a focus on practical food skills as well as more theoretical aspects of these key concepts. Through studying Home Economics, students acquire 'knowledge, understanding and practical skills in areas such as diet and food choice, family relationships and parenting and financial and consumer awareness' (CCEA, 2017, p. 1).

Some 10 years on from Home Economics achieving mandatory status, in September 2017 a revised GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) specification in Home Economics: Food and Nutrition commenced with a guided contact hour allocation of 120 hours. The subject aims to develop students' knowledge and understanding of Home Economics: Food and

Nutrition; their application of food and nutrition to everyday living situations; high level practical food skills; their knowledge and understanding of human needs within the context of a multicultural society; and their critical and analytical problem solving, decision making and consumer discernment skills (CCEA, 2016). The integrated and practical nature of Home Economics on the Northern Ireland curriculum, according to Baird (2010), enables students to develop a broad range of skills in an explicit and structured manner.

The GCSE specification has two components: Food and Nutrition, and Practical Food and Nutrition. The Food and Nutrition component of the specification includes food provenance; processing and production; factors affecting food choice; food and nutrition for good health; nutritional and dietary needs of different groups of people; macro and micro nutrients; fibre; health issues; consumer discernment; food safety; resource management; recipe modification and food preparation; and cooking and presentation skills. This component is weighted at 50% of the assessment and total mark allocation for the subject (CCEA, 2016). The Practical Food and Nutrition component of the specification equates to the other 50% of the total marks and relates to a practical task that 'develops unique transferable skills' (p. 15). The practical task involves the students researching and investigating a given task title; choosing and justifying their practical activity; completing the practical activity, which involves preparing three dishes plus accompaniments in a practical session; and then evaluating all parts of the task (CCEA, 2016).

3.3 England

The Department for Education in England has responsibility for curriculum policy in schools, while Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) inspects and regulates services in education. Food education has a piecemeal footing on the curriculum in the UK. Food Technology within the Design and Technology curriculum area was an optional subject in secondary schools (revised in 2011). Concerns were raised by Ofsted in 2006 in an inspection report on Food Technology which noted tension, confusion and weaknesses in the curriculum and a 'fundamental clash, on the one hand, between teaching about healthy eating and how to cook accordingly and, on the other hand, developing food products to be marketed to meet consumer needs' (p. 6). According to Rutland (2017) 'learning how to cook can

contribute to a healthy lifestyle, while food technology involves studying food as an academic subject' (p. 7).

Subsequent policy developments in England resulted in the Government announcing that cooking would be a 'compulsory' component on the curriculum by 2011 for all 11- to 14-year-olds as a direct response to the increasing prevalence of obesity in the UK (HM Government, 2008). This led initially to the development of the 'Licence to Cook' programme which did not become 'compulsory', but rather an entitlement for all students attending maintained (state-funded) second-level schools in England. Rutland (2017) notes that the intention of this initiative was to integrate it into the food technology curriculum. The programme was based on a minimum entitlement of 16 hours of practical cooking sessions; three hours of theory; and five hours of online tutorials. It focused on four competencies – including Diet and Nutrition, Food Safety and Hygiene, Consumer Awareness and Basic Cooking Skills – and aimed to teach students how to prepare simple, healthy and nutritious meals, consumer discernment and food safety, and hygiene skills (Rutland, 2008). However, in the absence of the availability of a trained cohort of Home Economics teachers, this programme was delivered by non-specialists who had undertaken short upskilling courses. One-day training was provided to teachers to learn how to deliver the cookery sessions and they could avail themselves of online tutorials. The programme drew some criticism as concerns were expressed about its possible impact on the delivery of Food Technology in schools (Rutland, 2008). The Licence to Cook programme in schools lasted for three years, but the resources produced continued to be used by schools and are available on the British Nutrition Foundation (BNF) website for teachers (Owen-Jackson & Rutland, 2016). The level of official support for the programme remains unclear and its placement on an industry non-governmental association website raises questions about its official role in school curricula.

The government did adhere to their early indications that cooking would be a compulsory component of the curriculum. The revision of the National Curriculum in 2014 had a requirement for students (5–14 years old), in all local authority-maintained schools, to study 'Cooking and Nutrition' as part of the subject Design and Technology at Key Stage 3 (11–14 years) (Ballam, 2014). The Department for Education has placed an emphasis on learning to cook, citing it as a 'crucial life skill that enables pupils to feed themselves and others affordably and well, now and in later life' (2014, p. 90). This particular aspect of Design and Technology aims to focus on instilling a love of cooking, mainly savoury dishes utilising a variety of basic

techniques, and to teach students how to apply the principles of healthy eating and nutrition in the cooking of the dishes.

Concurrent to this, policy change also occurred in the curriculum (2013) and resulted in a revised GCSE 'Food Preparation and Nutrition' (2015) subject, which follows two years of study (Key Stage 4: Year 10 and Year 11; aged 14–16 years). The subject was initially called 'GCSE Cooking and Nutrition' (2014) but this name was changed after the consultation process to 'Food Preparation and Nutrition'. This aims to teach students how to cook and apply the principles of nutrition, healthy eating and food science. Through studying 'Food Preparation and Nutrition', students are encouraged to apply their under- standing of the theory of food and nutrition in practical cookery. At Key Stage 4 students are taught how to prepare dishes to feed themselves and others in an affordable and nutritious way; the principles of nutrition and health; recipe modification; planning and preparing meals; advanced cookery techniques including the use of a variety of commodities, including electrical appliances; food science, including the functional properties and chemical processes; appreciation of sensory attributes of food; sustainability and ethical considerations of food; food microbiology, health and safety; culinary traditions; and food provenance and seasonality (Department for Education, 2015). However, food teachers and food teacher educators expressed concern during consultations on the initial curriculum and noted that as the new subject was essentially combining three pre-existing subjects, it had breadth but lacked depth. Consequently, it was argued there was too much of an emphasis on teaching lifeskills, practical food skills and cooking at the expense of scientific and technological understanding (Rutland, 2017).

The revision of the curriculum also witnessed the removal of any food specific subject at Key Stage 5 (years 12 to 13; ages 17–18 years old). This caused much consternation and objection, as it now provides no academic based food progression route for students who take the 'Food Preparation and Nutrition' GCSE (Owen-Jackson & Rutland, 2016; Rutland, 2017). The Department for Education (2016) justified this removal by noting firstly that Food Technology was not properly situated within the 'Design and Technology' curriculum area and had a low uptake among students; secondly, there are vocational routes available to study food should a student wish to progress to a career in this area; and, thirdly, most food science and nutrition courses require a science subject as opposed to Food Technology as entry requirements (p. 29).

3.4 Malta

The Ministry for Education and Employment has responsibility for curriculum policy in schools in Malta. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Home Economics has been offered on the Maltese curriculum and has been an examinable subject for second-level students since 1910. Similar to Ireland, the discipline has gone through various name changes including 'Domestic Economy', 'Housecraft', 'Domestic Science' and now 'Home Economics'. In the mid and late twentieth century, Home Economics was a compulsory subject for girls in the first two years of secondary schooling. However, a new National Curriculum Framework (NCF) was endorsed in 2012, and within this Framework Home Economics is an optional subject in second-level schools (Piscopo & Mugliett, 2014). A high proportion of both male and female students of the Form 1 (age 11/12) cohort choose to study Home Economics (Piscopo, 2006).

Similar to other countries, Home Economics education in Malta, from a food education perspective, aims to enable students to 'foster an understanding of relevant scientific principles in nutrition and health; and promote a balanced, critical approach to food choice and eating habits and develop skills relating to the choice, preparation and presentation of food' (Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, 2012, p. 9). The socio-ecological model which acknowledges the relationship between the individual and society is integral to the Home Economics curriculum in Malta. There are four key guiding principles for Home Economics which include: connectedness, whereby students explore their interaction and connection with their environment in order to promote, support and sustain the health and well-being of individuals, families and society; problem-solving skills to become critical reflective thinkers; sustainability to develop as advocates for sustainable future; and advocacy to enhance the health and well-being of individuals, families and society (Ministry of Education and Employment, 2014).

Home Economics education in Malta is underpinned by three strands of continuous learning:

- Strand 1: 'Food, Nutrition and Health', which is further subdivided into four learning areas or sub-strands: 'Food, Health and Energy Balance'; 'Sustainable Resource Management'; 'Safety and Risk Management and Practical Interventions'
- Strand 2: Home and Family Well-Being
- Strand 3: Choice and Management of Resources.

The Home Economics curriculum is a unitised curriculum which aims to achieve a balance between the breadth of content and the available time for students' learning. The revised curriculum in 2012 resulted in a reduction of content in curriculum subjects.

Each of the units in the curriculum has a specific set of teaching objectives and learning outcomes which can be reasonably achieved within the identified time for that unit (Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, 2012). According to the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (2012), the pedagogical approach for teaching and learning in Home Economics is 'a nurturing of skills that develop an inquiring mind' (p. 10). The practical nature of the subject is reinforced throughout the Teaching Objectives Framework and the Subject Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for Home Economics with an emphasis placed on experiential learning through a design brief process.

3.5 Japan

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) is responsible for curriculum policy and teacher education in Japan. Home Economics (Kateika) education in Japan enjoys an established and reputable place on the curriculum in both elementary (primary) and high school (secondary) education. It has been a required subject in elementary school for grades 5 and 6 for Japanese boys and girls since 1947. According to Kawamura (2016), Kateika is based on an established pedagogical approach and places a strong emphasis on developing life skills and problem solving. The subject aims to develop independent students in their daily lives with a focus on developing competencies including cooking by themselves for themselves. This has been the approach for some time by teachers of Home Economics.

In 2005 the Basic Law of Shokuiku was enacted, which targets all citizens of Japan. The law defines 'Shokuiku' as food education to acquire 'knowledge about food and the ability to make appropriate food choices' (Reiher, 2012, p. 509). It positions food education at the core of society and offers a holistic approach to the integration of food education throughout the family, school and community. Home Economics as a mandatory school subject is one mechanism through which the principles of the law can be realised.

The course of study includes family and family life; daily meals and basics in cooking; comfortable clothing and housing; daily consumer issues; and the environment (Arai, 2012). The aims of the course of study include reference to enabling students to 'acquire basic and fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for everyday life through practical and hands-on

activities relating to food . . . and to develop a positive attitude towards a better family life as a member of the family' (MEXT [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan], 2008, p. 2). With specific reference to the component 'daily meals and basics in cooking', students receive instruction on nutrition; balanced meals and healthy eating; meal enjoyment; menu planning; specific cooking techniques including boiling, stir-frying, rice cooking and making miso soup; serving meals; and safety in the kitchen (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan [MEXT], 2008).

In junior high school (grades 7 [age 13] and 8 [age 14]), Home Economics has been a required, co-educational subject since 1989. Prior to this the subject was called Home Economics and Technology and whilst the subject was centred around three practical skills (designing, building and operating), the content was differentiated based on gender: boys studied carpentry and machinery; girls studied cooking and childrearing. Consequently, there was no formal opportunity for males to learn food literacy skills. In 1989 the course of study was revised to minimise gender segregation; however, given the influences on gender stereotyping in society, the content continued to be differentiated based on gender. It was not until 1998, in light of growing societal criticism of gender discrimination in school curricula, that the course of study was amended to ensure learning outcomes were combined and would subsequently be studied by boys and girls in grades 7 and 8 (Arai, 2012; Kawamura, 2016; Kudo, 2015). This resulted in boys as well as girls studying cooking, food, diet and nutrition, meal planning, and independent living. According to Kudo (2015), a consequence of this change was assisting men to acquire lifelong practical lifeskills. The course of study in junior high school focuses on family, home and child growth; food, cooking and independent life; daily consumption and the environment; and clothing, housing and independent life. In order to develop their food literacy competencies, students receive instruction pertaining to diet and nutrition; preparation and cooking of daily meals; local food culture; menu planning; food quality; safe and hygienic preparation of food; consumer discernment; and sustainable consumption (Arai, 2012).

3.6 Finland

Home Economics teaching was established in the 1890s (Elorinne, Arai, & Autio, 2017). Anna Olsoni founded the Pedagogic Cooking School in Helsinki with the first students beginning their studies in 1891. The modern manifestation is one of compulsory home economics for both

boys and girls (Kudo, 2015; Turkki, 2005). The Finnish National Board of Education has responsibility for setting the core curriculum in schools in Finland. The core curriculum in Finland was revised in 2014 and replaced the 2004 curriculum. Implementation of the 2014 curriculum commenced in August 2017 with grade 7 (age 13).

Similar to other countries in this study, food education and cooking skills are taught in Finland through the subject of Home Economics, which is a mandatory core subject at grade 7 (age 13) and an optional, albeit popular, area of study at grades 8 (age 14) and 9 (age 15). At grade 7 there is a strong emphasis on developing practical skills and each student is taught three hours per week of Home Economics, made up of practical instruction and theoretical input depending on the topic. The teaching and learning in Home Economics equip students with the essential lifeskills for 'sustainable living, food knowledge and skills as well as consumer skills' (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016, p. 470).

At grades 7–9 there are three content areas which relate to the objectives of Home Economics with an emphasis on students applying what they learn in class to their everyday living situations. The three content areas include: (C1) food knowledge and skills and food culture; (C2) housing and living together; and (C3) consumer and financial skills at home. Of particular interest to this paper is the (C1) content area of food knowledge and skills and food culture. Home Economics objectives include a focus on developing practical skills that encourage students to use materials, utensils and appliances to promote well-being and sustainable consumption. The C1 content area includes a focus on food preparation and baking skills; meal planning; considering food choices and habits; nutrition and healthy eating; food safety; the food chain; food knowledge and skills; ethical considerations of food; economical use of food; and food culture and customs (Finish National Board of Education, 2016). For the first time, in September 2016, as a result of policy change in the 2014 curriculum, Home Economics can now also be taught as an optional subject at primary school level (grades 1–6). The content areas are as set out in the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2014), but are taught in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children of this age group and involve developing children's knowledge, skills and understanding of Home Economics related areas, including food and nutrition. Work has also been conducted to align and integrate Home Economics knowledge in cross curricular themes to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of students e.g. school lunches (Turkki, 2015).

3.7 Australia – State of Victoria

The Victorian Minister for Education is responsible for education in all schools with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) responsible for developing curriculum and assessment in the state. In the junior second-level curriculum there are two learning areas which are concerned with food education. These include 'Home Economics' and 'Food and Nutrition', whereby content for each of these areas is drawn from two curricula: 'Design and Technologies' and 'Health and Physical Education'. 'Home Economics' is concerned with the practical concerns of individuals, families and communities. One element of this is food education, which relates to food; nutrition; healthy food choices; influences on human growth and development; and wellbeing. In the 'Food and Nutrition' area students are provided with the opportunity to learn knowledge and skills associated with food including nutrition principles; food origins; food production; healthy eating and food choices; as well as technology related food issues such as food processing and packaging. They are provided with the opportunity to apply this knowledge in the selection and preparation of food in hands-on practical cookery sessions (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2017).

Victoria's new senior curriculum commenced in schools in 2017. The Victorian Certificate of Education '(VCE) Food Studies' (2017–2021) replaces the previous curriculum 'Food and Technology'. 'VCE Food Studies' aims to develop students who can make informed food choices as capable food citizens; apply the principles of nutrition and food science; take ownership of their food decisions; and be conscious of the environmental, ethical and economic dimensions of food. Practical food skills are integral to the curriculum and include the planning, preparing, evaluation and enjoyment of food (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2016). There are four units of study: food origins; food makers; food in daily life; and food issues, challenges and futures. Each of the units is based on 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction. The new 'VCE Food Studies' was developed following extensive consultation and has been broadly welcomed. According to Compton (2016) this curriculum takes an interdisciplinary approach to food studies and has an emphasis on developing a path- way for students to health and wellbeing through the theoretical and practical application of food skills.

4. Discussion

The curriculum policy for six of the seven countries in this study identified Home Economics as the subject on the curriculum to teach food education to second-level school students (Table 1). The exception to this is England, where Home Economics as a subject is not on the curriculum, although food education is taught in Design and Technology in the form of 'Cooking and Nutrition' and the 'Food Preparation and Nutrition' GCSE in local authority maintained schools. Here, in the absence of a trained professional group, there is heavy reliance on outside support to deliver curricular content (Caraher, Seeley, Wu, & Lloyd, 2013). However, between countries it is also apparent that variations occur in the policy regarding whether food education is mandatory for all students or an optional area of study; the pedagogical basis and philosophical underpinning of the curriculum; and the status of the profession of teachers who teach food education and Home Economics in each of these countries. Exactly how this influences the nature, provision, and quality of food education in second-level schools is set out later in this article.

4.1 Nomenclature

Findings from this comparative analysis demonstrate that the nomenclature around food education and Home Economics utilised formally in the seven countries often varied between junior and senior second-level curricula. The IFHE identify the name 'Home Economics' as the preferred name for the field and the profession. They note internationally that the name has been retained and is recognised within and beyond the profession (IFHE, 2008). In reviewing the seven countries in this study, the name 'Home Economics' was used when referring to food education in curriculum policy in the Republic of Ireland; Finland; Japan; Northern Ireland; Malta; and Australia with nomenclature such as 'Food and Nutrition' (Australia) and 'Food Studies' (Australia) also evident in curriculum policy. In practice, the use of various nomenclatures can lead to dilution of the discipline from a philosophical perspective; it can also lead to confusion and fragmentation of the mission of Home Economics, particularly when taught by non- specialist teachers. In countries such as Finland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Malta and Japan there is a consistency of nomenclature with the use of the name 'Home Economics' in second-level curriculum and university teacher education programmes. This can lead to

Home Economics teachers having a strong sense of identity and belonging to the Home Economics discipline. What is important is how the teachers can transmit a coherent philosophical perspective on food education from a Home Economics lens in their everyday teaching.

England was the only country reviewed where there was no reference to 'Home Economics' in any curriculum policy documents as a medium for teaching food education. According to Caraher and Seeley (2010) cooking, as a lifeskill, was no longer in favour with industry in England in the 1980/90s, which instead preferred skills such as food product development; marketing; packaging; and costing of food products. This had significant and influential consequences on the curriculum policy of the time. Leith (1997) noted that a technological and industrial approach to teaching food in schools; a lack of qualified teachers; costs associated with the class; replacement of kitchens in schools with computer rooms or general facilities; and the perceived lack of academic rigour associated with cooking resulted in the decline in schools offering 'Home Economics' in England. Food Technology was introduced within the Design and Technology curriculum area and the focus was mainly on food product development for industry as opposed to health. However, the thinking has come almost full circle as Food Technology has now been replaced with 'Cooking and Nutrition' as part of the subject Design and Technology to Key Stage 3 and the optional GCSE subject 'Food Preparation and Nutrition'.

Country	Nomenclature around Food Education used in curriculum policy documents	Optional / Mandatory Subject for students	Aim / Rationale – Discourse used in relation to Food Education
1. Republic of Ireland	Home Economics	Optional for all students.	Healthy, sustainable living for individuals, families and society; practical food and health literacy skills; adopt a healthy lifestyle; make informed decisions that positively impact students' health and wellbeing.
2. Northern Ireland	Home Economics Home Economics: Food and Nutrition	Mandatory up to Key Stage 3 (age 14); optional thereafter. (Optional) GCSE exam in Home Economics: Food and Nutrition after three years' study.	Three key concepts: Healthy Eating; Home and Family Life; and Independent Living which involves a focus on practical food skills and theoretical knowledge. Application of food and nutrition to everyday living situations; practical food skills; problem solving, decision making and consumer discernment skills; knowledge and understanding of human needs.
3. England	Design and Technology: Cooking and Nutrition Food Preparation and Nutrition	Cooking component to be offered to all students in maintained schools. Optional GCSE exam	Cook and apply the principles of nutrition and health; lifeskills; develop skills to feed themselves and others affordably and well. Apply their understanding of the theory of food and nutrition in practical cookery.
4. Malta	Home Economics	Optional for all students.	Understand relevant scientific principles in nutrition and health; balanced, critical approach to food choice, eating habits; practical skills for choice, preparation and presentation of food.
5. Japan	Home Economics	Mandatory for all students in Junior (age 13-14) secondary school; optional thereafter.	Practical, hands-on activities relating to food; knowledge and skills for everyday life; better family life.
6. Finland	Home Economics	Mandatory at Grade 7 (age 13) and optional thereafter.	Essential lifeskills for sustainable living, food knowledge and consumer skills; promote wellbeing.
7. Australia (State of Victoria	Two Learning Areas: Home Economics; Food and Nutrition	Optional for all students.	Make informed food choices as capable consumers; apply principles of nutrition, food science; practical food skills; environmental and economic aspects of food.

Table 1: Summary Table

4.2 Home Economics as the vehicle for food education in curriculum policy

This study demonstrates the focus and value countries such as Japan, Finland and Northern Ireland place on ensuring second-level students are taught food education lifeskills as part of their formal curriculum. In these three countries Home Economics is the vehicle for teaching food education. In Japan, from elementary school to high school, Home Economics education is the mechanism for developing comprehensive, sustained, practical food and lifeskills in children and young people. From a policy perspective, Japan has invested in ensuring that mandatory Home Economics education, for both males and females, has an established place on the curriculum due to the importance it places on being able to have these essential food education lifeskills. Consequently, every student, regardless of gender, has an opportunity to study food education as a component of Home Economics with a focus on the practical lifeskills of cooking and meal preparation. In Japan the status of the profession of a Home Economics teacher is well regarded and the subject in schools is taught by specialised, and university educated, Home Economics teachers who have a strong pedagogical basis and philosophical underpinning.

Similarly, in Finland, a consistently high performing education system ranking in the top five of OECD countries in PISA results (OECD, 2016) has ensured Home Economics is a mandatory subject for all young people and is a highly regarded practical lifeskills subject on the curriculum. From a Finnish perspective the main goal of Home Economics is to teach students practical and theoretical everyday lifeskills and competencies (Hokkanen & Kosonen, 2013; Kuusisaari, 2013) and a value is placed on these skills in society. Evidently, a key strength of the subject, from a food education perspective in Finland, is the developmental process students engage with in order to assist them to take responsibility for their health; develop a positive attitude towards health and well-being; increase knowledge and understanding of food, nutrition and health issues; and introduce health promoting food habits. Likewise, in Northern Ireland, Home Economics has a mandatory place on the curriculum and plays a pivotal role in educating young people on food, nutrition and practical cookery skills. Baird (2010) concludes that this area of learning, which provides knowledge and understanding necessary to make healthy food choices, as well as the practical cookery skills to apply this knowledge, is one of the most important learning areas for our young people in the current era.

However, in contrast to countries such as Japan, Finland and Northern Ireland, Home Economics still remains an optional subject in curriculum policy in the Republic of Ireland, despite a recognition of the contribution it makes to teaching food lifeskills. In a national consultation with

young people, the subject was identified as an essential lifeskills subject where they stated that learning to prepare and cook food in Home Economics classes was regarded as one of the most useful things ever learned (Department of Children and Youth Affairs [DoCYA], 2014). There is no question as to regard its popularity, with 36% of the total cohort of Junior Cycle students studying the subject in the Republic of Ireland in comparison to subjects such as Art, Craft and Design (33%); Materials Technology (28%); and Music (18%) (State Examinations Commission [SEC], 2019). Despite the popularity and numerous public calls in the media to make the subject mandatory (Boland, 2017; Gray, 2015; Hickey, 2018; Maguire, 2017; McCloat, 2012, 2013; Safefood, 2018; St. Angela's College, Sligo, 2018; Sweeney, 2015), it remains an optional area of study on the new Junior Cycle Framework. In November 2018 the Irish Houses of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Children and Youth Affairs' Report on Tackling Childhood Obesity recommended that the 'Government should consider the introduction of Home Economics as a compulsory subject on the Junior Cycle Curriculum for post-primary schools' (House of the Oireachtas, 2018, p. 6). This report is a positive step forward for Home Economics in the Republic of Ireland and affirms the important role the subject can play in teaching young people essential practical food lifeskills underpinned by scientific theory.

A similar, but less advantageous, situation exists in Australia where, although Home Economics is identified as the most 'logical and favourable' place to teach comprehensive food literacy skills, incorporating a theoretical and practical component, there is a reported lack of status and value applied to Home Economics and food education programmes in Australian high schools (Ronto et al., 2016). Compounding this issue is the varying curriculum policies implemented across the States of Australia which do not value Home Economics. This lack of status is regrettable as a recent nationwide study, conducted by Worsley et al. (2015), showed that Home Economics (and similar) education was associated with higher levels of food knowledge among adults in Australia. The researchers stated there is substantial evidence which suggests that Home Economics education can have a long-lasting impact on the learning of food knowledge in adults, but identified the negative impact of having different curricula across the states in Australia on the food knowledge of the adults. Leahy and Wright (2015) note that instead of having initiatives in school with a narrow focus, an interdisciplinary approach to teaching food education using a socio-critical lens is required in the Australian context.

Arguably, teaching young people essential lifeskills pertaining to food and cooking has been in a state of disarray for some years in England (Jamie Oliver Food Foundation, 2017; Owen-Jackson & Rutland, 2016; Rutland, 2017). Whilst the re-introduction of a statutory requirement for food

and cooking skills to the curriculum in England is welcome, the auspices under which it is done need to be carefully considered. The use of the 'Licence to Cook' initiative as a mechanism for teaching food education lacked a coherent pedagogical basis and was piecemeal in design. It focused not on the holistic development of food skills over a sustained period of time, but rather aimed to equip students with 'essential lifeskills' in approximately 24 hours of input. This approach cannot be compared, in terms of effectiveness, to a subject with a sound pedagogical basis taught in a sequential, comprehensive manner over a period of three years by qualified teachers. Furthermore, it appears the change in the National Curriculum for maintained schools, which required all students to study Cooking and Nutrition as a component of Design and Technology, did not have the desired impact in schools. According to the Jamie Oliver Food Foundation (2017), the new curriculum requirements were being broadly implemented but a wide variation existed between schools in terms of the duration, frequency, content and quality of delivery of food education to students at Key Stage 3. Teachers reported that the statutory changes had little to no impact on the delivery of food education in their schools, with 65% noting no change to the amount of time spent on food education; 74% stated there was no change to lesson duration; 68% and 69% reported no change to teaching resource provision and ingredient provision respectively (British Nutrition Foundation, 2017). The scale of the teaching of food education was also reported as being low at Key Stage 3, with 44% of teachers noting that pupils receive only 11–20 hours of food education per year; 13% identified their students receive 10 hours or less; 23% reported 21–30 hours and 20% reported 30 hours or more (p. 3). A more holistic approach, moving away from focusing only on the practical skills to a curriculum which facilitates students to consider the wider food science, political, social, ethical, nutritional issues which pertain to food, has been advocated for (Owen-Jackson & Rutland, 2016). Food education and cooking skills should form part of a comprehensive curriculum, similar to other countries in this study which have situated it within the subject Home Economics. In these countries Home Economics is sequentially planned in a developmentally appropriate manner and taught by expert teachers qualified in the pedagogy underpinning the discipline (McCloat & Caraher, 2016). Skills should be regarded as a priority for inclusion as essential lifeskills and taught regardless of their impact (Fordyce-Voorham, 2011). Furthermore, England is the only country where there is no opportunity for students to study an academic focused food subject in the senior cycle (ages 16+) of secondary school. The decision taken by the Department of Education to remove Food Technology and not develop a food subject specification, emphasising instead the vocational programmes available, demonstrates a lack of appreciation of the potential for a holistic food education subject as is taught in other countries. Food education, as is evident when it is taught

through Home Economics, is more than teaching people how to cook. It encompasses the wider health, social, environmental, and political aspects of food.

It is evident from the analysis of the curriculum policy in six of the seven countries that Home Economics, as a vehicle for teaching food education, has an underpinning pedagogical approach. This was explicitly stated in the curriculum policy documents analysed whereby a socio-ecological pedagogical approach, which acknowledges the relationship between the individual and society, is applied in the teaching and learning of food education in Home Economics. Practical experiential learning underpins this approach where the instruction is based on practical activity. Interestingly, across the curriculum policy analysed, a systemic approach is utilised in Home Economics which encourages students to address practical, perennial problems of individuals and families in a critical, thoughtful and socially responsible manner. Home Economics teaches more than the technical skill of cooking; it also teaches scientific and nutritional theory and the application of these to food. It aims to develop students who are sustainable, responsible consumers of food. Critical social theory is applied to the teaching and learning in Home Economics in order to develop in society reflective critical citizens who have an emancipatory approach to problem solving (Piscopo & Mugliett, 2014). Home Economics equips students with the requisite skills to manage day-to-day life and the application of these skills in a variety of contexts where students are encouraged to take responsibility for their personal and family health, wellbeing and sustainable living (Turkki, 2015). It is interesting to note that Home Economics has a pedagogical practice history, including practical problem solving and constructivist pedagogy, that 'transcend[s] the transmissive, technical method and focuses on interpretive action and critical thinking' (Smith, 2016, p. 10).

4.3 Teacher education

The evidence from each of these countries suggests a strong link between countries educating specialised Home Economics teachers and having a coherent and strong subject presence on the school curriculum. Finland, Ireland, Malta and Japan educate Home Economics teachers at both undergraduate and postgraduate University level. Two of these countries – Ireland and Finland – have a concurrent/integrated Home Economics teacher education programme to Masters level. Additionally, Finland offers a structured Ph.D. programme in Home Economics education. In practice this means that students, on completion of their secondary education, apply to enter a

full-time undergraduate teacher education degree in Home Economics and Education resulting in a Masters qualification. This is usually of five years' duration and demand for these programmes far exceeds places. There is a strong degree of interlinking between Home Economics and pedagogical studies (Turkki, 2005). Consequently, students are dedicated and interested in becoming a Home Economics teacher from an early age and throughout the five years are provided with a strong pedagogical and philosophical basis in the discipline. According to Turkki (2005), students have an 'excellent attitude towards their studies and to the field [Home Economics] as a whole' (p. 280). In Malta and Japan, students study an undergraduate degree in Home Economics and then undertake a postgraduate teacher education programme in Home Economics education. This is referred to as a consecutive model of teacher education. Similarly, to Ireland and Finland, students elect to study Home Economics as a discipline from an early age and have a strong philosophical and pedagogical understanding of the discipline. It is interesting to note that Home Economists from countries such as Republic of Ireland, Japan, Malta, Finland and Australia are active participants in the IFHE as an international professional association for the discipline (International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE, 2018).

Victoria, Australia and Northern Ireland have no undergraduate degree in Home Economics. Cognate areas linked to Home Economics, for example, consumer studies, nutrition, food, health, and culinary arts related courses are all accepted as entry to graduate teacher education programmes. In Victoria, Australia, qualified teachers wishing to upskill to teach Home Economics can undertake a Graduate Diploma in Home Economics Education which is a two-year part time course offered by Home Economics Victoria (Home Economics Victoria, 2017). In Northern Ireland, students apply for a place on a Post Graduate Certificate Education (PGCE) Home Economics course offered by the University of Ulster. As students enter these postgraduate courses from a myriad of undergraduate degrees, the conclusion can be drawn that their philosophical understanding of the discipline can be limited.

In England, reflecting the situation on the school curriculum, there are no under- graduate or postgraduate courses in Home Economics available for students wishing to study the discipline despite 92% of food teachers surveyed in England expressing a desire that food education should be taught by specialist teachers in schools (British Nutrition Foundation, 2017). Having a formal, clear university education route into Home Economics teacher education in countries such as the Republic of Ireland, Malta, Finland and Japan has led to having specialised teachers who have a strong pedagogical and philosophical basis in the teaching of food education through Home Economics. Teachers of Home Economics in these four countries have normally studied an

undergraduate degree in Home Economics and have a teacher education qualification. It is evident that these countries are also those who have a comprehensive second-level food education curriculum policy; whether this is chicken or egg is not a question that can be answered by this research, but there appears to be a clear link. It is possible that the demands of a curriculum drive teacher education, but it is also equally conceivable that an existing strong professional group keeps alive the need for the subject, as can be seen in the case of the Republic of Ireland, Malta, Finland and Japan.

5. Conclusion

Internationally, there have been numerous calls for a comprehensive curriculum of food education to be taught in schools. Robertson and Schneidler-Benns (2015) invite policy makers and actors to consider a 'wider lens' on food and health in education curriculum policy. Lichtenstein and Ludwig (2010) publicly state that an investment in food education and 'bringing back' Home Economics may be among the best investments that a society can make. This study set out to establish the current situation with regard to food education in second-level curriculum policy. Consequently, a comparative case study approach was utilised to analyse second-level food education curriculum policy across seven countries: Republic of Ireland; Northern Ireland; England; Malta; Japan; Finland; and Australia (State of Victoria). Analysis of the curriculum policy for almost all of the countries in this study illustrates that Home Economics is tasked as the subject on the curriculum to teach food education to second-level students. This analysis concludes that as a curriculum area, Home Economics is a wide-ranging education programme which incorporates nutritional knowledge, scientific theory, practical culinary and food skills in a sequential and integrated manner. It maximises practical experiential learning for the student and teaches a sustainable healthy approach to, and relationship with, food. Home Economics, in teaching food education, is ideally placed to utilise its pedagogical approaches and philosophical underpinning to deliver a holistic and comprehensive programme to young people.

6. Disclosure statement

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CHAPTER 5

Chapter 5 The evolution of Home Economics as a subject in Irish primary and post-primary education from the 1800s to the twenty-first century

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Abstract This paper is a historical review, documenting the evolution of Home Economics as a subject in Irish primary and post-primary education from the 1800s to the twenty-first century. In the 1800s and early twentieth-century domestic subjects, including cookery, was widely taught to females in both primary and post-primary schools. The philosophical underpinning of the subject was to enhance the quality of life for families. The subject remained a popular choice for young women up until the establishment of the Irish Free State which, thereafter, witnessed many changes in the teaching of cookery and domestic science in primary and post-primary schools. The core ideology of the subject has remained relevant and it aims to provide students with knowledge, practical skills, understanding and attitudes for everyday life as individuals and as family members. This reflects the richness of the subject from the past and the relevance of the subject in addressing issues of a twenty-first century society.

Keywords: Home Economics; curriculum history; secondary education; female education; primary education

1. Introduction

In Ireland, in the 1800s primary education was provided in schools operated by charitable institutions or the church (Catholic or Protestant) or in schools funded by the British Treasury where students experienced a gendered curriculum (Raftery, Harford, and Parkes 2010). Hedge schools were still a source of education for young children until 1870, particularly for those living in rural areas, and were often run by itinerant teachers. The early nineteenth century saw universal schooling gaining momentum with the establishment of national schools which were free for all students. At the time, secondary education was preserved for the elite and the concern of a small minority of adolescents. Consequently, many students finished their education at the end of primary school.

The nomenclature used in relation to what is now called Home Economics has evolved and changed since the 1800s. The subject first evolved in primary education

The evolution of Home Economics as a subject in Irish primary and post-primary education from the 1800s to the twenty-first century

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The nomenclature used in relation to what is now called Home Economics has evolved and changed since the 1800s. The subject first evolved in primary education in the mid-1800s where cookery, laundry, domestic economy and needlework was known as the 'Domestic Subjects' in national schools (Dale 1904). This remained the case until they were removed officially from the primary curriculum in 1971. In post-primary education, Domestic Economy was studied at intermediate certificate level and this later evolved to be known as Domestic Science at both intermediate and leaving certificate level. It was not until 1968, that the term Home Economics was used in Ireland and this was brought about with the advent of a new syllabus for the leaving certificate. To this day, despite investigations about a possibility of a name change (NCCA 2016), Home Economics is the nomenclature used across all curricula in schools and higher education in Ireland.

This article documents the evolution of Home Economics in Irish primary and post-primary education from the 1800s to the twenty-first century. It uses a chronological approach, which highlights significant milestones in the evolution of the subject, with a specific focus on Cookery, Domestic Science, Domestic Economy and Home Economics in primary and post-primary education. There is an emphasis on food/cookery although other aspects of Home Economics, such as needlework, are mentioned where relevant but are not the focus of this article. The article aims to give an insight to the rationale for offering these subjects on the curriculum, the aim of the subject, student uptake, and the quality of teaching and learning as the subject evolved from the 1800s to the twenty-first century. A summary timeline of this evolution is provided, as an overview, in Figure 1.

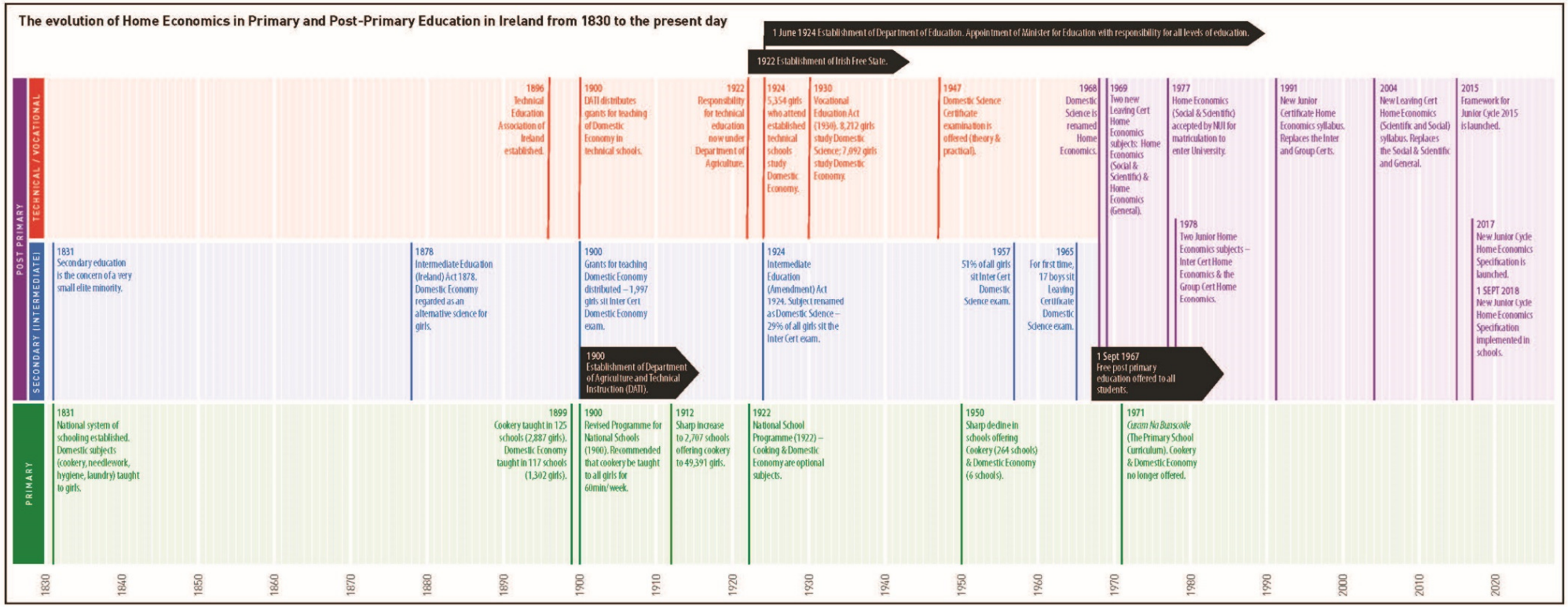

Figure 1. The evolution of Home Economics in Irish primary and post-primary education from 1830 to the present day.

2. The domestic subjects in primary education in the 1800s – 20th century

2.1. Domestic subjects in primary education 1800s – 1921

In the 1800s society regarded the role of the woman as in the domestic sphere either as a housewife or working as a domestic servant (Wynn 1983). Domestic subjects were regarded as having a place in the education of females as it was the view that the majority of girls would marry, raise a family or work in domestic service whereas boys would work as manual labourers, in trade or agriculture (Raftery, Harford and Parkes 2010). Needlework, obligatory for females, was regarded as 'very useful to females generally, and particularly so to the "humbler classes", whether applied to domestic purposes, or as a mode of remunerative employment' (Durcan 1972, 34).

The Powis Commission of 1870 recommended the introduction of 'payment by results' and included needlework and other domestic subjects, such as cookery which could be examined. Cookery was taught in a small number of schools which were mostly convent schools and it was predominately taught outside school hours (Coolahan 2017). In 1896, cookery was taught in 83 schools and 1724 students were examined and by 1899, this had increased to 125 schools where 2887 students were examined. Domestic Economy was taught in 117 schools and 1302 students were examined (Commission on Manual and Practical Instruction 1898).

The significance of the subject and the rationale for its inclusion on the curriculum at this time was to 'facilitate the acquirement of such knowledge as will most readily tend to secure a condition of life as free as possible from the many ills with which life is visited' (Gallagher 1894, xii). Consequently, the subject content was divided into three areas: The Individual; Food; and The Home. The individual section of the subject covered topics such as the human body; digestion; removal of waste; personal cleanliness; health and sickness; home cures; infectious diseases; sick nursing; social and moral life. The food section focused on nutrition; practical cookery of vegetables, fruits, meat, fish, fowl, farinaceous foods; economical foods; beverages; and special dietaries. While the home section included topics such as landlord and tenant; housing; ventilation; water; cleaning areas of the home and gardening (Gallagher 1894). Although the subject was very popular with the female students the provision of equipment, materials and fuel for the fire meant the cost was prohibitive for many schools who were underfunded. In large towns, a centre for cookery, often in a Model School, was established whereby girls from schools in the area attended to receive instruction (Commissioners of National Education 1900).

Towards the end of the 1800s education in Ireland was changing with many educationalists advocating a more child-centred approach and a move away from a traditional focus solely on academic subjects (Hyland and Milne 1987). The Report of the Belmore Commission on Manual and Practical Instruction (1898) recommended cookery and domestic science, where practical, be offered in all-girls' schools and aid, in the form of liberal grants, should be provided for the necessary buildings and equipment (Commissioners on Manual and Practical Instruction 1898). The Commissioners of National Education accepted the Belmore Commission Report (1898) and commenced incorporating some of the recommendations when drafting the Revised Programme for National Schools (1900). Under the Revised Programme (1900) payment by results was abolished. A specimen timetable for girls' schools recommended 60 minutes, once a week, be timetabled for cookery stipulating that cookery should be offered in all-girls' schools where there were a competent teacher and suitable appliances. In contrast, needlework had a recommended time allocation of forty minutes per day for three days and thirty minutes per day for two days (Commissioners of National Education 1900). This allocation reflected the challenge of requiring specialist physical resources for cookery whereas needlework could be undertaken at a desk. The training of teachers was conducted by Ms Mary Fitzgerald, Head Organiser for Cookery and Laundry Department of the Education Office, and twelve assistants who organised classes, on a nationwide basis, for teachers in cookery commencing in 1900 (Commissioners of National Education 1903).

Evidentially, emphasis in society on the role of the woman in the home and a desire for better public health outcome starting in the homes shaped the philosophical orientation of the subject. Students were taught cooking skills which aimed to 'preserve the health of all who dwell in it [home]' and provide 'food that is wholesome, varied, nourishing, plentiful and agreeable' (Fitzgerald 1903a, 9). The rationale, as clearly stated in the Revised Programme (1900), was not to train cooks but to impart the requisite skills for the 'average primary school girl, when she assumes the position of housewife, to perform the ordinary culinary operations' (Commissioners of National Education 1900, 78). This rationale was one which was heavily criticised in later years by the feminist movement (Attar 1990) and indeed one could argue has been a burden on the stereotypical image of the subject ever since.

The objective of cookery was to 'show the children, how, by intelligent methods, the limited resources and simple food of even poor homes in Ireland can be turned to the best account' and to give 'scope for the useful application of science for girls' (Dale 1904, 77). The significant contribution of cookery to the lives of those who studied it was reflected in a survey of parents in

1903 who commented 'it is the most useful thing that has ever been taught, and will bring comfort to our homes' (Fitzgerald 1904, 206). Reflecting these sentiments, and the popularity of the subject, the number of schools offering cookery increased steadily from 48 schools (0.57% of all national schools) in 1891 to 2707 schools (33% of all national schools) in 1912 (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of national schools offering cookery from 1891 to 1912 (Commissioners National Education 1891, 1893, 1896, 1899, 1902, 1903, 1905, 1906, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912).

	1891	1893	1896	1899	1902	1903	1905	1906	1909	1910	1911	1912
Total number of schools	8346	8459	8606	8670	8712	8720	8659	8602	8401	8337	8289	8255
Number schools offering Cookery	48	53	83	125	631	727	360	561	2342	2437	2522	2707
As % of total cohort	0.57%	0.62%	0.96%	1.44%	7.24%	8.34%	4.15%	6.52%	27.90%	29.20%	30.42%	32.80%

The subject, from a pedagogical perspective, was taught in an integrated manner incorporating practical skills and theoretical content with a strong focus on the former. Areas of study from 1st to 6th class included setting and lighting fires; and learning techniques such as cooking vegetables; boiling, frying and poaching eggs; making tea, coffee and cocoa; uses of milk and meal including 'stirabout' or gruel, tapioca, semolina; yeast cookery; bread making; meat cookery including lamb, mutton and rabbit; utilising cheaper cuts meat such as tripe, sheep's head, corned beef, cowheel and offal pie; fish cookery; making preserves; and baking (Revised Programme for Instruction in National Schools, 1900).

From analysing inspector reports of the time, the quality of teaching cookery and the student experience varied depending on which type of school the student attended. In a report from 1903, it was noted that students attending a convent school were found to understand what was being taught and knew how to make basic dishes. The teachers in convent schools were teaching in a practical manner with clear explanations, suitable dishes were taught to the students and 'good method and interest' were observed (Fitzgerald 1903b, 205). This positive report of convent schools was repeated in 1904, where again the teaching of cookery was described as 'all that can be desired', with the kitchen and students in class the 'picture of neatness' (Fitzgerald 1904, 124).

However, the report was critical of 'other schools' where the teaching of cookery was unsatisfactory due to a 'want of cleanliness, order, attention to detail and the neglect of scullery work' (Fitzgerald 1903b, 205). This situation did not improve, and in 1904 teachers' approach to teaching cookery was criticised with too much emphasis on 'cake making and fancy dishes' and not the required focus on teaching the students 'cheap, useful dishes which prove that good, nutritious food may be obtained at small cost' (Fitzgerald 1904, 124). The implementation of the subject largely relied on the availability of equipment and the training of teachers. In an education

system which had a large proportion of unqualified teachers, financial constraints, rural schools and social unrest, the effective implementation of the Revised Programme was hindered (Walsh 2007). Subsequent political events took place which resulted in the setting up of two States on the Island of Ireland – Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State (1922). This resulted in a curriculum reform movement in the newly established Free State which had a particular focus on culture and Irish language and consequently, there was less emphasis placed on the domestic subjects.

2.2. Domestic subjects in primary education 1922–1999

After the 31st January 1922, in the Irish Free State, national and secondary education came under the authority of the Minister for Education. Technical education was excluded from this where until 1924 it was under the remit of the Minister for Agriculture. The new National School Programme (1922) comprised compulsory subjects which included Irish, English, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, geography, history, singing, rural science and needlework (for girls only) (National Programme Conference 1922). The 1922 Programme heralded significant changes for the study of domestic subjects in primary education with an emphasis on needlework and a reduced emphasis on cookery and domestic economy. The curricular reform was situated within a societal context for a revived emphasis on the Irish language and a renewed sympathy towards the Gaelic League (Coolahan 1981). Consequently, many subjects, including cookery and domestic economy, were included in a list of optional subjects and were only to be offered where special accommodation, equipment and facilities were available in schools (National Programme Conference 1926). Notably, at a general meeting of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) in 1925, a recommendation was made to reduce the number of obligatory subjects to Irish, English, mathematics and needlework for girls. It was suggested that subjects such as domestic economy, due to their orientation of preparing students for work and domestic life, were more suitable to secondary schools, which, at the time were fee paying (O'Connell 1968).

These changes were proposed within a very specific cultural, social, economic and political context. The education received focused on religion and the transmission of skills that may be required to earn a living with the economy being mainly agrarian based. Females were regarded as academically inferior and were required to be taught domestic skills in order to make 'thrifty wives and astute mothers', skills required for future life in the home (O'Sullivan 2014, 69). The number of married women working outside the home remained consistently low at this time and their role was considered to be the primary carer in the home. This was reinforced by Article 41.2

in Bunreacht na hÉireann which recognises the support a woman gives by 'her life within the home' and therefore, the State would endeavour to ensure that 'mothers shall not be obliged by economics necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home' (1937, 164).

The cookery programme was underpinned by a strong focus on the development of practical food skills. Students were taught dishes which could be easily made in the home (National Programme Conference 1922). The quality of teaching in cookery and domestic economy was commended by Inspectors in their Reports in 1931 where it was noted that 'creditable work is generally done in schools' in these areas (Department of Education 1931, 23). Despite this, cookery and domestic economy continued to be taught in a small number of national schools (Table 2). The decline in the uptake of these two optional subjects was regarded as 'regrettable' by Inspectors in 1931 but was blamed on the high cost of offering cookery and the diminished status of the subject being an optional area of study (Department of Education 1931). In 1927 there were 565 primary schools teaching cookery and 11 teaching domestic economy (Department of Education 1928) and by 1952 this had further reduced to 246 and 3 schools respectively (Department of Education 1952). At the same time, needlework was a compulsory subject in all girls' schools, and it was examined for the award of Primary School Certificate for females.

Table 2. Number of national schools offering cookery from 1923 to 1952 (Department of Education 1923, 1927, 1931, 1935, 1938, 1943, 1947, 1952).

	1923	1927	1931	1935	1938	1943	1947	1952
Total number of national schools	5684	5641	5378	5280	5166	5064	4946	4876
Number of schools offering Cookery	411	565	449	391	347	391	345	246
As a % of total number of schools	7.23%	10%	8.34%	7.40%	6.71%	7.72%	6.97%	5.04%
Number offering Domestic Economy	11	11	6	2	4	9	5	3
As a % of total number of schools	0.19%	0.19%	0.11%	0.04%	0.08%	0.17%	0.10%	0.06%

According to Walsh (2016) the curriculum changes made in 1922 were to continue to be the bedrock of curriculum provision for the next 50 years and subjects such as cookery were rarely taught in national schools. In 1971 'Curaclam na Bunscoile' (Primary School Curriculum) was published and it was underpinned by a child centred approach to teaching and learning. In this revision cookery and needlework were removed from the list of subjects available to students. This heralded the end of the teaching of domestic subjects on the primary curriculum. The 1971 curriculum was later revised by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in 1999 and this remains the curriculum which is taught in all primary schools in the Republic of Ireland. Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is a subject on the curriculum which broadly covers topics such as personal hygiene, healthy eating, food and nutrition but no practical food skills. Ironically, Mooney et al. (2011) called for a review of the food and nutrition content

of the SPHE curriculum and to consider the benefits of (re)introducing practical culinary skills. Their study notes that the removal of the domestic subjects such as cookery from the list of subjects in the primary curriculum in 1971 is now being lamented almost 50 years later (Mooney et al. 2011).

3. Post-primary education 1870–1960s

At the start of the twentieth-century post-primary education existed in two formats in Ireland – the secondary school and the state-sponsored technical school. It was considered that the secondary school offered courses of an academic nature whilst the technical school offered courses of a practical orientation. There were restrictions and variations in the examinations that students from both schools could undertake. The domestic subjects were offered, to varying degrees, in the secondary and technical schools. However, secondary schooling was not considered important for the majority of children, particularly females and by 1930, 93% of the population had been educated only to primary school level (Clarke 2016).

3.1. Home Economics in secondary schools 1870–1960s

3.1.1. Home Economics in secondary schools 1870–1921

By 1870 secondary education was mainly offered in denominational private schools with access being limited to a small minority of the population (Coolahan 1981). Finding a mechanism for financing secondary education, which was predominately denominational based, was a challenge. Consequently, the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act (1878) was passed to provide monies for improving secondary education provision in Ireland and arguably, it was one of the most important steps in the growth of girls' secondary education (Clarke 2016; Raftery, Harford, and Parkes 2010). It began by appointing Commissioners and sought to bring in a system of written examinations. Examinations were the same for both genders; however, the awards and prizes for achievement were separate. Subjects such as the classics and English were weighted more favourably than subjects such as music or drawing (Coolahan 1981).

Although domestic subjects were included on the curriculum in girls' schools exclusively, they had a very tenuous hold given their perceived lack of relevance in a literary based curriculum.

Many of these schools were preparing girls from the emerging middle classes and did not see domestic science as relevant for career opportunities. In 1898 it was a completely female-orientated subject and only offered to girls as an alternative science aimed at those students who would spend their lives in the 'domestic sphere' (Raftery, Harford, and Parkes 2010, 570). The pedagogical orientation of the subject remained as practical and skills based which aimed to develop the requisite life skills for managing a home. Students studied topics such as physiology; nutrition; practical cookery; digestion; hygiene and personal cleanliness; home management; and systems of the home (Commissioners on Manual and Practical Instruction 1898). By 1900, there were 1997 females taking the intermediate examination out of a total candidate number of 7608 (Raftery, Harford, and Parkes 2010, 570).

Following the publication of the Report of the Commission on Intermediate Education in 1899 (Palles Commission), the Government passed the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Amendment Act, 1900. The most far-reaching changes were in relation to the teaching of practical subjects (McElligott 1981). In 1900 the Irish Educational Studies 9 Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction (DATI) was set up and in 1901, they issued a programme for the administration and distribution of grants for the teaching of domestic science. This was an incentive for girls' secondary schools to promote and encourage students to undertake the domestic science course (Department of Education 1962).

3.1.2. Home Economics in secondary schools 1922–1960s

Under the Irish Free State, the Intermediate Education (Amendment) Act 1924 was enacted and in August of 1924 a new programme for secondary schools was put in place. Changes in the examination system were implemented. The Intermediate Certificate exam was taken after the first three years of study and the Leaving Certificate after the subsequent two years. However, the system was not free and consequently, this was a barrier for many children to access secondary education.

True to the pedagogical orientation of the subject, the domestic science syllabus at intermediate and leaving certificate had a strong practical focus. This was underpinned by the principle to 'provide a scientific and cultural as well as technical training' to students and echoed the sentiments of previous syllabi by having a focus on the development of lifeskills for the home (Department of Education 1927, 67). The syllabus for the three-year intermediate certificate

course in domestic science was for girls only and included topics such as cooking principles; roasting; baking; use of gluten; stewing; frying; steaming; food commodities; nutrition; hygiene; digestion; physiology; along with areas such as household knowledge; needlework; and clothing (Department of Education 1924). Similarly, the two-year course for the leaving certificate encapsulated a focus on food skills and included a practical examination. Topics included nutrition; digestion; exercise; food choice, storage, preservation and marketing; feeding of infants and young children; disease; cooking of complete menus with a focus on combining foods for nutrition and digestion; invalid cookery; preserving and processing of food; food science; household knowledge and needlework (Department of Education 1924).

Inspection reports of the time commented on the teaching and stated, 'manual operations of cookery are well taught, but the theoretical instruction which should explain the nature of the materials and processes employed is often unreal and bookish' (Department of Education 1927, 67). In response to an article 'Can Irish girls cook?', published in the Irish Independent on 6 April 1938, there was a recommendation to make domestic science compulsory for girls in place of compulsory Irish in order to encourage healthier diets in Irish homes (Clear 2000). Although this was not to be the case the subject witnessed an increased uptake year on year (Table 3). In 1925 out of a total of 1062 females at intermediate level, 29% (n = 305) sat the domestic science exam; by 1935 this had increased to 51% (n = 1287) and by 1957 this had increased further to 74% (n = 5368) (Department of Education 1962, 192).

Table 3. Number of students examined in Intermediate Certificate Domestic Science and Leaving Certificate Domestic Economy from 1925 to 1952 (Department of Education 1925, 1926, 1931, 1935, 1939, 1944, 1947, 1952).

	1925	1926	1931	1935	1939	1944	1947	1952
Intermediate certificate domestic science								
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Female	305	282	778	1287	1359	1921	2456	3611
Leaving certificate domestic economy								
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Female	80	53	123	308	391	506	716	1200

A capital grant was paid to secondary schools offering domestic science which contributed to the increase in uptake. The grant was for the purpose of ensuring schools had satisfactory and adequately equipped kitchens; the domestic science teacher be suitably qualified; and the number of students in the class did not exceed the recommended number for a practical class (Coolahan 1981). The Report of the Council of Education (1962) noted the desirability of providing

instruction in domestic science to females as being 'so obvious that it does not require to be stressed' (192). They recommended, in view of the 'importance of domestic training for girls, all girl pupils should, at least during their junior course, obtain instruction either on the full prescribed syllabus in domestic science, or on a suitable and approved alternative syllabus' (Department of Education 1962, 192). The Council Report did not even consider the notion that boys should study the subject and, whilst strongly recommending the prescribed syllabus, fell short on making it compulsory for all females.

3.2. Home Economics in technical (vocational) schools 1900s–1960s

Operating alongside the secondary school system was the technical (vocational) education system. The need to enhance Ireland's economic wellbeing meant that technical education was popular. The Recess Committee Report in 1896 called for the cause of practical education [to] be promoted' and it urged evening classes and higher technical colleges to be established (Coolahan 1981, 87). The Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act 1899 established a Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction (DATI) in 1900 and they were tasked with establishing a system of technical education in Ireland. Domestic economy, which involved practical cookery instruction, featured as an important aspect of technical education. The DATI was supportive of domestic economy and from 1901 distributed grants to schools in order to develop specialist facilities and purchase specialist equipment. The training of female itinerant teachers of domestic economy, who were assigned to a particular region, took place over an eight-month period (Hyland and Milne 1987). Itinerant teachers conducted classes, usually of a six-week period, in rural areas in single subjects such as domestic economy.

With the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, control for technical education was transferred to the Department of Education in 1924. At this time there were 147 rural centres catering for 4631 females studying domestic economy (Department of Education 1924). The course aimed to teach students budget cookery, nutrition, composition of foods, household management, and textiles. For those who attended technical schools, domestic economy was studied by 24% of all students in 1924, which accounted for a total of 5354 females (Department of Education 1924). In international terms, these are the equivalent of the extension colleges established in the US under the New Deal in 1938.

One of the most significant pieces of legislation on technical education was the Vocational Education Act of 1930. The 1930 Act promoted the continuation of Irish Educational Studies 11 education in domestic economy and the necessity for organising a 'Day Junior Technical Course for Girls' (Hyland and Milne 1992, 232). It was a popular subject and in 1931 in established technical schools, 8212 females took courses in the domestic economy and in classes other than established technical schools, 7092 females studied courses in the domestic economy (Department of Education 1931, 49). In 1947 a Group Certificate in Domestic Science examination was introduced for the first time which consisted of both a practical and theoretical component and, in this year, 275 females sat the examination (Department of Education 1947, 31). The rationale for the subject was to teach lifeskills required by girls to manage their own homes and if necessary, to provide training for domestic servants (Clear 2000). An analysis of the textbooks at the time showed a focus on course content including simple, family-friendly and easy to use recipes which were based on the assumption that cooking would take place on the fire; and information on nutrition, healthy diets and menu planning (DATI 1925).

Inspector reports from 1964 commended the good work and high standard of teaching in domestic science. However, they recommended the adoption of modern teaching aids and up-to-date textbooks with an increased emphasis on dietetics, food costing, hygiene and labour-saving devices. Teachers were also encouraged to integrate theory and practice when teaching (Department of Education 1964, 60).

The popularity of technical education was evident in the growth of the number of technical schools between 1900 and 1960. However, as the 1950s came to a close there were criticisms of the sector; particularly, in relation to the transfer value and opportunities for further education for students on completion (Coolahan 2017). Consequently, a new model of secondary education emerged in Ireland in the late 1960/70s.

The group certificate Home Economics programme was most commonly offered in technical schools. Students took the exam after two/three years with the average age being 14 (Coolahan 1981). Group certificate Home Economics maintained the same pedagogical approach as the intermediate certificate programme but had a much stronger emphasis on practical skills and less of a focus on the theoretical and scientific underpinning. The programme recommended 150 hours be allocated to practical food and cookery which was assessed by a practical examination (Department of Education 1984).

4. Home Economics in post-primary education 1965–2018

In September 1966 the then Minister for Education, Donogh O'Malley, announced that post-primary education would be free for all students from September 1967 to ensure equality of opportunity for all children (Department of Education 1969). Curriculum provision was widened whereby students in all types of schools were now allowed to take the Intermediate and Leaving Certificate examinations (Crooks and McKernan 1984). In 1968 the name Home Economics was adopted throughout the post-primary curriculum.

4.1. Intermediate Certificate Home Economics 1968–1991

Intermediate certificate Home Economics was of three years' duration and focused on theoretical content underpinned by practical application. The subject aimed to teach students three key areas of learning: (1) Food and Cookery (focusing broadly on nutrition; cooking skills; meal planning; food constituents; and shopping for food); (2) Home Management and Hygiene (focusing on personal hygiene; food hygiene; principles of home management; and kitchen appliances); and (3) Needlework (focusing on practical needlework, sewing machine skills; fabrics and clothing) (Department of Education 1984).

The subject was very popular among females and in 1969 two males sat the examination for the first time (Table 4). Uptake by males continued to rise each year, however, it was not easily achieved. According to Wynn (1983) parents regarded the choice of Home Economics as a 'cissy' option for boys. Furthermore, teachers struggled with ensuring the language registry and examples used in class were gender inclusive, particularly when teaching social issues and textile skills (Wynn 1983).

Table 4. Number of students examined in Intermediate Certificate Home Economics from 1968 to 1991 (Department of Education 1968, 1969, 1972, 1976, 1980, 1983, 1990, 1991).

	1968	1969	1972	1976	1980	1983	1990	1991
Intermediate certificate home economics								
Male	0	2	14	35	107	230	895	1184
Female	9247	12,212	14,567	17,411	17,940	18,975	18,655	18,587

4.2. Junior Certificate Home Economics 1991–2017

In 1986 an Interim Curriculum and Examinations Board recommended a broad and balanced core curriculum and assessment (Crooks 1990). Consequently, in 1991 a new Junior Certificate programme was introduced which allowed for a common and unified curriculum to be available for all students. The Home Economics syllabus commenced in 1991 as an optional area of study within the Junior Certificate programme.

The rationale for including Home Economics on the curriculum was inherently linked to the subjects' philosophical and pedagogical underpinning which identifies it as having 'a direct relevance to the present and future life of every young person. Its purpose is to equip young people in certain important skills for living' (Department of Education 1990, 1). The Home Economics syllabus was designed to facilitate the empowerment of students with lifeskills by providing them with the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes necessary for daily living within the home, family and society (Department of Education 1990). The syllabus comprised five core areas and three optional areas of study with an assigned weighting (Table 5). The assessment of Home Economics was at higher and ordinary level and comprised a written exam; a practical food skills examination; and an optional study project which can be either a childcare, craft or textile project.

Table 5. Structure Junior Certificate Home Economics (1991) Syllabus.

Areas of study	% Weighting
Food Studies and Culinary Skills	40%
Consumer Studies	15%
Social and Health Studies	10%
Resource Management	10%
Textiles	10%
Option Study (choose one) (Childcare or Craftwork or Textile Skills)	15%

Home Economics during this era was a popular subject, particularly among females. Since 1992 the subject has maintained this popularity (Table 6) and in 2017, there were 22,260 students which accounted for 36% of the total Junior Certificate cohort of 61,654 (SEC 2017). Year on year there has also been an increase in the number of males being examined in Home Economics. This is a positive move to continue to dispel the traditional gender stereotyping which plagues the subject. In 2008, Inspectors noted that gender imbalance in the uptake of Home Economics was often as a result of the subject being timetabled against what was traditionally perceived as male subjects (DES 2008). The high level and excellent practice in teaching Home Economics were commended

by the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science. The Chief Inspector identified excellent practice in teaching practical food sessions where Home Economics teachers emphasise the development of students' practical skills, in a staged approach, whilst also integrating key theoretical knowledge (DES 2008). Students were encouraged to develop critical thinking and decision-making skills. The Home Economics Departments in schools were identified as being 'well established and well organised' with the teachers being majorly 'very experienced, dedicated and committed' (DES 2008, 8). This positive experience and high quality have had a positive influence on the steady uptake of the subject of circa 36% of the total Junior Certificate cohort. The Junior Certificate Home Economics syllabus witnessed no changes since its inception in 1991; however, under the new Framework for Junior Cycle (2015), a new specification (previously called a syllabus) for the subject was developed.

Table 6. Number of students examined in Junior Certificate Home Economics from 1992 to 2017 (Department of Education 1992, 1997; State Examinations Commission, 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017).

	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017
Junior Certificate Home Economics						
Male	1348	2668	2424	2629	3210	3675
Female	18,338	19,933	18,167	17,451	18,333	18,585

4.3. Junior Cycle Home Economics 2017

The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) sets out a new vision for teaching, learning and assessment in the first three years of post-primary education in order to provide a quality, inclusive and relevant education for students in the twenty-first century. In designing the programme of study each school is guided by 24 statements of learning, eight principles and eight key skills (DES 2015). The development of the Home Economics specification was informed by a Background Paper in Home Economics which sets out Home Economics education in the twenty-first century, as well as identifying four influencing trends on Home Economics education. These four interconnected societal trends were identified as being: food and health literacy; changes to family and social systems; education for sustainable development and responsible living; and home and resource management (NCCA 2016). In October 2017, the new Home Economics Specification was approved by the Minister for Education and Skills. The aim of junior cycle Home Economics is to 'develop students' knowledge, attitudes, understanding, skills and values to achieve optimal, healthy and sustainable living for every person as an

individual, and as a member of families and society' (DES 2017, 5). The specification is designed for 200 hours timetabled student engagement across three years.

It has three inter-connected contextual strands: Food, Health and Culinary Skills; Responsible Family Living and Textiles and Craft. The major strand, in terms of learning outcomes to achieve, is Food, Health and Culinary Skills. This strand aims to facilitate students to apply their understanding of nutrition, diet and health and to develop a 'healthy, sustainable attitude and positive relationship with food through practical experiential learning' (DES 2017, 15). Strand two, Responsible Family Living, uses a systems approach to develop essential lifeskills including managing resources responsibly and sustainably in the home, family and community; consumer competence and discernment; and developing a caring attitude towards others. The third strand is Textiles and Craft, which is the shortest of the strands in terms of learning outcomes, focuses on developing students' textile knowledge, creativity and skills. It is envisioned that although the learning outcomes in each strand are presented separately, the students should experience an integrated approach to teaching and learning in Home Economics. Students should be encouraged to address real-world, practical, perennial problems in socially responsible ways. This is facilitated by four cross-cutting elements which transcend each of the three strands (DES 2017). These include Individual and Family Empowerment; Health and Wellbeing; Sustainable and Responsible Living and Consumer Competence.

The assessment of Home Economics comprises two Classroom Based Assessments (CBA) (Creative Textiles, CBA 1 and Food Literacy Skills Brief, CBA 2); a practical food skills examination; and a written examination. The practical food skills exam and the written exam will each be allocated 50% of the marks available for the final examination. For the practical food skills exam students will be required to apply their nutritional knowledge and practical culinary skills in preparing, healthy nutritious dishes or products to meet the requirements of a brief issued by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) (DES 2017). The roll out of the new specification in September 2018 represents a new chapter in the evolution of Home Economics. The rationale, aim and the integrated, experiential approach to teaching, learning and assessment in the new specification will hopefully ensure that the subject has currency and relevance for students in the twenty-first century and beyond.

4.4. Leaving Certificate Home Economics 1965–2004

A significant milestone took place in 1965, when, for the first time, 17 males undertook the domestic science leaving certificate examination (Department of Education 1965). This was the first time in the evolution of Home Economics that males undertook and sat state examinations in the subject and commenced a step, albeit a small one, on a path towards the subject having a place on a progressive curriculum for both genders.

As already noted, Domestic Science was renamed Home Economics in 1968 and in 1969 a new programme was offered at leaving certificate level. For the purpose of the leaving certificate programme, there were two subjects in Home Economics: Home Economics (Social and Scientific) and Home Economics (General). In 1977, the National University of Ireland (NUI) accepted Home Economics (Social and Scientific) as a subject for matriculation to enter University. Home Economics (General) had a more vocational and practical orientation; however, criticisms existed of it not being recognised by NUI (Mulcahy 1981). Uptake of Home Economics increased year on year until 2000 when, thereafter, it started to decrease (Table 7). When looked at as a percentage of the total cohort of leaving certificate students, uptake of the subject fell from 42% in 2000 to 32% in 2003. Anecdotally, this decline has been attributed to the withdrawal of the recognition of Home Economics, by third level institutions, as a science subject for the purposes of matriculation.

Table 7. Number of students examined in Leaving Certificate Home Economics from 1968 to 2004 (Department of Education 1968, 1969, 1972, 1976, 1980, 1983, 1990, 1991, 1997, 2001, 2003).

	1968	1969	1972	1976	1980	1983	1990	1991	1997	2001	2003
	Leaving certificate domestic economy		Leaving certificate Home Economics (Social & Scientific) & Home Economics (General) combined*								
Male	18	0	50*	93*	709*	1543*	2175*	2361*	3529*	2916*	2481*
Female	5212	5683	7104*	8856*	12,205*	14,380*	16,702*	16,522*	18,941*	16,564*	15,632*

Home Economics (Social and Scientific) was a two-year course of study involving both theoretical and practical components with a minimum allocation of three hours per week and at least 40% of the time to be devoted to practical work. The subject aimed to equip students with the knowledge, skills and understanding in areas such as nutrition; human physiology; food constituents; microbiology; food preservation; the family in contemporary society and the principles and practices of home management. The syllabus noted the importance of active teaching methodologies to engage the students (Department of Education 1996, 191).

The Home Economics (General) course was similar to the previous course in domestic science but with an emphasis on group work and a broader practical programme. This course was also two-year duration with a minimum allocation of three hours per week. No defined practical work time allocation was indicated; however, it was intended that a strong practical element would be included. The course comprised three sections: Nutrition and Cookery (focusing broadly on nutrition, food constituents, consumer education, menu planning and food preservation); Dress (focusing on theoretical and practical elements of textiles); and Management of the Home (focusing on the principles and practices of home management) (Department of Education 1984). Mulcahy (1981) notes the subject aims to equip students to 'deal satisfactorily with a range of issues commonly encountered in everyday living' and whilst 'the orientation is practical; a scientific or theoretical element is included' (103).

4.5. Leaving Certificate Home Economics 2004–present

The introduction in 1969 of Home Economics (Social and Scientific) saw a marked decline in popularity for the Home Economics (General) programme. By 1991 Home Economics (Social and Scientific) programme was studied by 32% (15,718) of the total cohort of students undertaking the Leaving Certificate and in contrast only 3% (1303) studied the General programme (Department of Education 1992). Because of this decline an NCCA Home Economics Course Committee (Senior Cycle) was established to review the subject. And in 1997, a revised syllabus for Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social was presented to the Department of Education. The implementation of the revised syllabus was delayed until September 2002 and the first examination was in June 2004. This revised syllabus for Home Economics Scientific and Social replaced both Home Economics (Social and Scientific) and Home Economics (General). It is the existing programme of study for senior cycle students and is recognised by NUI for matriculation purposes.

The rationale for the subject sets out the multidisciplinary context and applied nature of the discipline with a focus on the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to enable students to 'take control of their own lives at present and in the future' (DES 2001, 2). The systemic approach underpinning the discipline is evident in the syllabus as it refers to the interrelationships between the individual, families, society and the environment. The syllabus aims to 'allow students to acquire the knowledge, understanding, skills, competence and attitudes necessary to contribute to human development, health, leisure, security and happiness' (DES 2001). Skills of discernment,

critical thinking, responsibility, resourcefulness, organisation, independence, creativity and adaptability are all identified in the aims of the syllabus.

The syllabus is structured around three core areas of study, each carrying a different weighting, and three elective areas where students chose one (Table 8). From a pedagogical perspective, Home Economics is taught in an integrated manner, utilising experiential learning, in order for students to contextualise and consolidate learning.

Table 8. Structure of Leaving Certificate Home Economics – scientific and social (2004) syllabus.

Core areas of study	% Weighting
Food Studies	45%
Resource Management and Consumer Studies	25%
Social Studies	10%
Electives (choose one area)	
Home Design and Management	20%
Textiles, Fashion and Design	20%
Social Studies	20%

The assessment of leaving certificate Home Economics is at higher and ordinary level and comprises two/three components depending on which elective areas students choose. For those studying the Home Design and Management and Social Studies electives, there is a written examination (80%) and Food Studies coursework (20%). However, for those studying the Textiles, Fashion and Design elective, the written examination is worth 70%; the Food Studies coursework 20% and the Textile Studies elective coursework 10%. For the Food Studies coursework students complete four assignments as set by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) each year. Topics vary in areas such as nutrition; diet through the lifecycle; diet-related diseases; processing and preservation; use of time-saving appliances; sensory analysis. According to the Chief Examiner (2017) students at a higher level, in particular, were very able to engage in skills of higher order thinking by applying and analysing information and scenarios effectively. Students at both higher and ordinary level demonstrated good knowledge in the subject area. However, teachers and students were encouraged to utilise various methodologies which facilitate the development of higher order skills (SEC 2017). The introduction of the new syllabus resulted in a decline in the number of students taking Home Economics from 32% (2003) to 28% (2004). Anecdotally, teachers attributed this decline to the introduction of the written food studies coursework. The coursework was initially set at six assignments for 20% of the marks. However, students and teachers perceived this to be cumbersome for the allocated marks. It was subsequently reduced to five assignments and following further representation by the Association

of Teachers of Home Economics (ATHE) the requirement was reduced to four assignments in 2015 for a 20% allocation of total marks (ATHE 2015). Although the numbers taking leaving certificate Home Economics continued to decline over a 10-year-period, it has remained relatively stable since 2014 (Table 9).

Table 9. Number of students examined in Leaving Certificate Home Economics from (State Examinations Commission 2004, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017).

	2004	2005	2007	2010	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Leaving Certificate Home Economics – scientific and social									
Male	1706	1576	1250	1371	1409	1356	1326	1316	1419
Female	13,802	12,916	11,000	11,164	10,637	10,671	10,571	10,326	10,395
Total	15,508	14,492	12,250	12,535	12,046	12,027	11,897	11,642	11,814
% of total cohort	28%	27%	24%	23%	23%	22%	22%	21%	21%

Whilst the number of students taking leaving certificate Home Economics has been declining the opposite has occurred at junior certificate level. The popularity of the junior cycle programme is often attributed to the practical nature of the subject and in particular, the high proportion of time attributed to food and cookery skills (NCCA 2016). An aspect which is often not the focus at leaving certificate Home Economics.

5. Conclusion

This article has documented the evolution of Home Economics in primary and post-primary education in the Republic of Ireland from the 1800s to the twenty-first century and the changes which occurred over this time reflected the social milieu. Home Economics started in the 1800s within a gendered curriculum and was under the auspices of cookery and domestic economy. These subjects were for young girls to learn about the practical concerns of home management and family cookery. Policy makers were quick to promote the subject as essential life-skills and one which should be taught in all schools to girls. Subject inspections of the time commended the quality of teaching in cookery and domestic economy. However, the desire for more gender equity in terms of curriculum provision in secondary schools grew momentum after the Intermediate Education Act (1878). Consequently, despite the subject being offered in all-girls' secondary schools, Home Economics had a low status due to its lack of relevancy in a literary based and liberal curriculum.

Home Economics in the 1920s–1950s existed as a dichotomy. On one hand, it was regarded as having an important social purpose which facilitated the empowerment of young females with the

knowledge and practical skills required for everyday living. However, on the other, it was criticised by feminists as a subject which endorsed the primary role of the woman as being in the home and one which promoted a middle-class society domestic ideology. The reference as an alternative science for girls and subject content which focused on the home contributed to the gendered perception of the subject and consequently, boys did not choose to study Home Economics. Despite this, the number of females studying the subject at intermediate and leaving certificate continued to rise year on year. The teaching of the subject was repeatedly commended by inspectors as being of high quality particularly in convent schools which were well resourced. Given the traditional perceptions and the lack of availability of the subject to male students, the seventeen males who sat the leaving certificate exam in 1965 heralded a welcome change for the subject. This was followed in 1969 when two boys sat the intermediate examination. Through the promotion of the subject by the Home Economics profession the number of male students taking state exams now exceeds 5000.

In the twenty-first century, the new Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification 2017 aims to facilitate the empowerment of students (as individuals and as members of societies) to achieve optimal, healthy, and sustainable living and uses a systemic approach to address practical, real world, perennial problems. The new specification is current, up to date and relevant for the lives of individuals and families whilst also promoting itself as being gender inclusive. It will be interesting to observe if the upward trajectory of male students studying the subject at Junior Cycle continues. It is evident, with each curriculum change that the areas of learning of Home Economics have continued to evolve to maintain currency and relevancy to the lives of individuals, families and society. Overcoming outdated and traditional perceptions of the subject, which can have a negative impact on student uptake, will remain a challenge for the Home Economics profession. The philosophical orientation of the subject through the eras has focused on practical life-skills education which is concerned with improving the everyday life of individuals, families, and society. Through interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary inquiry Home Economics education integrates knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in order to assist students to contextualise and consolidate learning. It is evident from the curricula documents through the eras that Home Economics utilises an experiential approach to teaching and learning. Students' critical, reflective and evaluative thinking skills are developed as they are facilitated to adapt and transfer their knowledge and skills in order to pragmatically address real life, practical, perennial problems.

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CHAPTER 6

Chapter 6 Home Economics as a food education intervention: lessons from the Irish secondary education context

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Amanda McCloat and Martin Caraher

Home Economics as a food education intervention: lessons from the Irish secondary education context

In this article, we start with a history of Home Economics followed by a discussion of Home Economics in the Irish curriculum, the development of the profession and its pedagogical base; finally, we make a case drawing on the existing literature for home economists as key catalysts in any 'whole of school' programme around food and health.

The Irish Context

In Ireland, similar to many other countries, levels of overweight, obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases (DRNCDs) are on the increase among low-income groups (Safefood, 2016). However, for Ireland the picture is starker: the country is on course to top European league tables for the prevalence of overweight and obesity by 2020 (WHO, 2015). Currently, six in ten adults and one in four children are either overweight or obese in Ireland with only 40% of the population having a healthy weight (Department of Health, 2016; 2013; Layte and McCroy, 2011). It is widely recognised that obesity is a risk factor for chronic non-communicable diseases, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancer, and may have a negative impact on mental health. However, the distribution of the of adult obesity to be in the region of €1.13 billion annually, accounting for 2.3% of the total health expenditure.

Consequently, childhood obesity and diabetes, are widely regarded as a serious public health challenge requiring cross-sectoral attention. On the 22nd September 2016 the Department of Health (2016) in Ireland launched *A Healthy Weight for Ireland: Obesity Policy and Action Plan* (2016-2025). *A Healthy Weight for Ireland* sets out, over a ten-year period, targets and actions to achieve which in turn aims to produce measurable outcomes in reducing the levels of overweight and obesity in Ireland and in assisting people to achieve better health. The policy outlines 'Ten Steps Forward' and twenty priority actions that will be taken to achieve the ambitious aims by 2025. Of the ten steps, and in the context of exploring the role of Home Economics education, the key priority action which this article will focus on relates to developing and implementing a 'whole of school' [sic] approach to healthy lifestyle programmes referencing curriculum, nutrition, physical activity, smoking, alcohol and mental wellbeing (Department of Health, 2016).

Why Home Economics is a sustainable

and addresses practical, real world, perennial problems or concerns of individuals and families in a socially responsible manner. Problems are deemed to be practical because they are problems experienced in everyday life and can impact on family health and wellbeing. Recurrent problems exist from generation to generation and include health, diet-related diseases; food security, food poverty etc. (Caraher and Reynolds, 2005).

As a curriculum area, Home Economics facilitates students to discover and further develop their own resources and capabilities to be used in their personal life (IFHE, 2008, p.2). Home Economics education aims to facilitate the empowerment of students to have a positive relationship with food. It is underpinned by a constructivist approach to teaching and learning where students are engaged in experiential learning. Consequently, students develop transferable skills and knowledge and an ability to be adaptive in order to address everyday food and health issues. The value of Home Economics, according to Pendergast (2001), is that is does not teach a skill for the sake of that skill, it teaches for application, it teaches informed decision-making in various scenarios, it teaches evaluative and critical thinking skills, and it empowers individuals – no matter what their circumstances (2001, p.8). McGowan *et al.* (2015) found that the integration of practical culinary skills, knowledge, attitudes and confidence are all essential elements of a programme which aims to enhance dietary quality.

This is further iterated by Condrasky and Hegler (2010) who state that programmes focusing on producing sustainable healthy eating behaviour through culinary confidence and nutrition alertness are a successful approach to begin the restoration of our nation's health (p.1). Home Economics education can add an element deliver clear and comprehensive food education.

The Home Economics Teaching Profession in Ireland

One of the strengths of Home Economics from an education perspective is the high degree of professional capacity and subject expertise of the Home Economics teachers. There is a coherence in terms of how they are educated, with the majority obtaining a Bachelor of Education (Home Economics). All Home Economists working in an education setting must have undertaken a comprehensive programme of initial teacher education (equivalent to 120 European Credit Transfers (ECTs)). In order to register as a Home Economics teacher in the Republic of Ireland an applicant must meet certain criteria as set out by the Teaching Council Ireland. This includes holding a degree-level equivalent (minimum 180ECTs), having studied Home Economics up to and including third-year level and the discipline Home Economics comprising at least 90 ECTs of the degree. Applicants are also required to demonstrate they have undertaken a post-primary initial teacher education programme of study (minimum 120 ECTs) which includes the theory, methodology and practice of teaching Home Economics.

Furthermore, the study of the discipline Home Economics during the degree must include theoretical and practical content in the areas of Food Studies; Family Resource Management; Textiles, Fashion and Design; Home Design and Management and Social Studies and importantly, the application of these areas to the individual, family and society (Teaching Council, 2013). There is one national Association of Teachers of Home Economics (ATHE), which has a strong membership base and plays an important role on a number of fronts including professional

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Why Home Economics is a sustainable and effective food education intervention

The discipline of Home Economics was initiated in 1908 as a world-wide response to social challenges of health, poverty, gender inequality and other social issues (International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE), 2008). According to the IFHE the discipline "is a field of study and a profession, situated in the human sciences, that draws from a range of disciplines to achieve optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities" (IFHE, 2008, p.1). Home Economics is a problem-solving-oriented discipline. Home Economics as a food education intervention: lessons from the Irish secondary education context and addresses practical, real world, perennial problems or concerns of individuals and families in a socially responsible manner. Problems are deemed to be practical because they are problems experienced in everyday life and can impact on family health and wellbeing. Recurrent problems exist from generation to generation and include health, diet-related diseases, food security, food poverty etc. (Caraher and Reynolds, 2005).

As a curriculum area, Home Economics facilitates students to discover and further develop their own resources and capabilities to be used in their personal life (IFHE, 2008, p.2). Home Economics education aims to facilitate the empowerment of students to have a positive relationship with food. It is underpinned by a constructivist approach to teaching and learning where students are engaged in experiential learning. Consequently, students develop transferable skills and knowledge and an ability to be adaptive in order to address everyday food and health issues. The value of Home Economics, according to Pendergast (2001), is that it "does not teach a skill for the sake of that skill, it teaches for application, it teaches informed decision-making in various scenarios, it teaches evaluative and critical thinking skills, and it empowers individuals – no matter what their circumstances" (2001, p.8). McGowan et al. (2015) found that the integration of practical culinary skills, knowledge, attitudes and confidence are all essential elements of a programme which aims to enhance dietary quality.

This is reiterated by Condrasky and Hegler (2010) who state that programmes focusing on producing sustainable healthy eating behaviour through culinary confidence and nutrition alertness are a successful approach to begin the restoration of our nation's health (p.1). Home Economics education can add an element often missing in other subjects: by adding an active dimension of doing, which requires students to think critically and reflectively about the content and the process. It can increase their level and complexity of thinking about food and health issues. Consequently, Home Economics can play a key role in developing food literacy skills and competencies in young people. It is the application of theoretical knowledge and principles to practical situations, in a critical and reflective manner that is inherent in Home Economics, which ensures it has the capacity to deliver clear and comprehensive food education.

The Home Economics Teaching Profession in Ireland

One of the strengths of Home Economics from an education perspective is the high degree of professional capacity and subject expertise of the Home Economics teachers. There is a coherence in terms of how they are educated, with the majority obtaining a Bachelor of Education (Home Economics). All Home Economists working in an education setting must have undertaken a comprehensive programme of initial teacher education (equivalent to 120 European Credit Transfers (ECTs)). In order to register as a Home Economics teacher in the Republic of Ireland an applicant must meet certain criteria as set out by the Teaching Council Ireland. This includes holding a degree-level equivalent (minimum 180ECTs), having studied Home Economics up to and including third-year level and the discipline Home Economics comprising at least 90 ECTs of the degree. Applicants are also required to demonstrate they have undertaken a post primary initial teacher education programme of study (minimum 120 ECTs) which includes the theory, methodology and practice of teaching Home Economics.

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Home Economics Education in the Republic of Ireland – an established subject

Home Economics, under various names, has had a place in Irish primary and post-primary schools long before the establishment of the Irish Free State (1921). At the turn of the 19th century domestic subjects including needlework, cookery, laundry and household management were seen as important areas of study for girls not only for teaching life-skills but also as vocational subjects. As post-primary education was the reserve of the elite classes the provision of study in domestic subjects was made at primary level. Under the Revised Programme for National Schools (1900) cookery was mandatory for all girls in primary schools. Sixty minutes once a week was recommended in the timetabling of cookery in schools. Interestingly, the limited diet of the time was evident in the outline areas of study on the course which included cooking potatoes and cabbage; slicing and frying potatoes; setting and lighting fires; boiling, frying and poaching eggs; making tea, coffee and cocoa; uses of milk; uses of meal including 'stirabout' or gruel and bread (Hyland and Milne, 1987).

In post-primary schools, cookery was mostly being taught in convent schools to girls and mainly to fourth standard or higher. In 1899, cookery was taught in 125 schools and 2887 pupils were examined. Domestic Economy and Hygiene was taught in 117 schools and 1302 pupils were examined (Durcan, 1972, p.96). Despite cookery being very popular among the students, the provision was restricted due to the underfunding of schools in equipment, materials and fuel for the fire. Teaching cookery was regarded as an important life-skill for girls from a health, social and vocational perspective. However old-fashioned a notion this may seem now, it was regarded at the time as essential that young girls would have the skills necessary to manage a home and look after their family. By 1925, programmes in domestic science included practical cookery and were a popular choice for females. In 1925, out of a total of 1,062 girls at Intermediate level (Junior, aged 12-15), 29% (n=305) studied Domestic Science; by 1935, this had increased to 51% (n=1287), and by 1957, this had increased further so that 74% of all girls (n=5368) examined for the Intermediate certificate at the age of 15 years sat the Domestic Science exam (Department of Education, 1962, p.192). Initially, Domestic Science was offered in post-primary schools only to girls; however, in 1965, for the first time, seventeen boys undertook the Domestic Science Leaving Certificate examination which is the examination taken on completion of the final two years of senior cycle education. In 1967, the name changed to Home Economics and in 1969 a new syllabus was offered at senior level focusing on a broader academic programme and including more scientific content. A further revised Senior Cycle syllabus was introduced in 2004,

which aimed to enable students with the necessary lifeskills required for healthy, resourceful living.

In Ireland, students have a statutory requirement to complete the first three years of post-primary education. This is referred to as the Junior Cycle (lower secondary education) and normally students are 12-15 years old. They can then progress to Senior Cycle (upper secondary education) and this is normally for students aged 15-18 years. At junior level the Junior Certificate Home Economics syllabus was introduced in 1991. The rationale for the Junior Certificate Home Economics (ages 11-15) curriculum (1991) is to develop important skills for living. It aims to provide students with the knowledge and practical skills for application to everyday life contexts (Department of Education, 1990). The curriculum comprises five core areas of study (Food Studies and Culinary Skills; Consumer Studies; Social and Health Studies; Resource Management and Home Studies; Textiles Studies) and an optional area of study from a choice of three (Childcare; Design and Craftwork; Textile Skills). In 2016, at Junior Certificate level, 60,247 students sat the examination in 2016, of which 36% (21,464) studied Home Economics (State Examinations Commission, 2016).

In recognition of the importance of teaching practical food life-skills, a minimum of 40% of the programme is dedicated to Food Studies and Culinary Skills. The assessment comprises written examination, an optional area of study project and a practical food and culinary skills examination which accounts for 35% of total marks at higher level and 45% at ordinary level. For the purpose of this paper, the focus will primarily be on the Food Studies, Culinary Skills and the Health Studies component of the Junior Certificate Home Economics curriculum.

The Department of Education's Chief Inspector for Home Economics has identified examples of excellent practice in the teaching of practical food sessions with a focus on the development of students' practical skills and the integration of relevant theoretical knowledge. They noted that the development of students' practical skills was facilitated by a staged approach, where clear teacher instruction and the explanation and demonstration of key processes and new skills occurred at appropriate stages in the lesson (Inspectorate, 2008, p.29). Additionally, the Chief Inspector for the DES identified teachers who delivered Home Economics were for the most part very experienced, dedicated and committed (Inspectorate, 2008, p.8). It was also acknowledged that the Home Economics departments in the schools were well established and well organised (p.14). It is essential to maintain and build on this excellent level of practice in order to ensure that food education and culinary skills do not become marginalized.

In 2011, a consultation took place with young people in Ireland relating to overall curricula reform at Junior Cycle (DoYCA, 2011). Students involved in the consultation noted that learning lifeskills in Home Economics, and in particular learning to prepare and cook food in Home Economics classes, was one of the most useful things ever learned and it was identified as one of the two most essential skills young people in junior secondary education should learn. One student commented, "Home Economics because it is something, I'll have my whole life" (Junior Cycle Student, DoCYA, 2011, p.8). Furthermore, senior cycle students, on reflecting on their Junior Cycle experience acknowledged Home Economics as being most useful and enjoyable because it is a practical lifeskill (ibid., p.18). Furthermore, cooking was one of the elements identified by this group of senior students as an essential requirement of a Junior Cycle programme. The practical, skill-based orientation of the subject was identified as a key strength of the subject (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), 2004; Smyth et al., 2006a and 2006b).

The NCCA (2016), in the *Background Paper for Home Economics*, identified four key interconnected societal factors that suggest an ongoing relevance and requirement for Home Economics education in the 21st century. These include changes to the family and social systems; education for sustainable development and responsible living; food and health literacy and home and resource management. Home Economics education can address these trends in order to achieve healthy and sustainable living for individuals, families and society. In particular, societal changes pertaining to food and health literacy continues to be of concern as the obesity rates continue to rise.

Discussion

Early intervention in young children is often regarded as more effective in facilitating improved lifelong health trajectories rather than corrective efforts in later life (Gillman and Ludwig, 2013; Lichenstein and Ludwig, 2010). There have been numerous calls in the US for the re-introduction of compulsory Home Economics for all students as a means of addressing chronic diseases through encouraging the choice of healthy options, more fruit and vegetable consumption and the use of healthy cooking options (Lichtenstein and Ludwig, 2010; Vileisis, 2008). In a study conducted by Worsley et al. (2015), results demonstrated that Home Economics education was associated with higher levels of food knowledge across several age groups. According to Lavelle et al. (2016b), learning cooking skills as a young person is positively related to cooking and food practices, cooking confidence, health and diet quality in later life. Stitt (1996) maintained that in

countries like Iceland and Finland, where Home Economics is compulsory and is a high-status subject, the health of these nations is "far superior" to other countries in the developed world (p.28). Lichenstein and Ludwig (2010) also note that an informed generation of young people may have a positive influence on their families and serve as role models for having a positive attitude towards food ultimately reversing the upward trend for obesity and diet related diseases. The edited volume by Pendergast, McGregor, and Turkki (2012) shows the profession developing and adapting to future trends including global changes in diet and the need for a globally conscious consumer. The profession of Home Economics is key in many countries to the development of healthy populations. In countries such as Ireland the changing food system and the changing habits of the population often make it seem like the teaching of Home Economics and cooking are old-fashioned and unnecessary. In contrast, we argue that such knowledge and skills are essential elements of an engaged citizen. The skills are necessary to understand modern food and food processes, necessary to take control of food and health and to participate in a food secure society (Caraher, Wu and Seeley, 2010). Furthermore, in line with the increasing evidence of success of school-based interventions around food and healthy eating (Makeeva, 2015; Owen, 2013; Ryland, 2014) we argue that the profession of Home Economics is trained and well placed to co-ordinate and link the education activities to practical food provision and skills training in the school context (Fordyce-Voorham, 2010; Pendergast and Dewhurst, 2012). Our only reservation is that teaching at a secondary school level may be too late and the focus should be on incorporating Home Economics in primary schools as well (Upton, Taylor and Upton, 2012)

The NCCA (2016), in the *Background Paper for Home Economics*, has identified four interconnected societal factors that suggest an ongoing relevance and requirement for Home Economics education and appropriately trained professionals in the 21st century. Home Economics education can address these trends in order to achieve healthy and sustainable living for individuals, families and society. In particular, societal changes pertaining to food and health literacy continues to be of concern as the obesity rates continue to rise (Department of Health, 2016). Allied to the concern over the health of the nation is a suggestion of a decline in culinary skills in the general population (Stitt, 2006; Condrasky and Hegler, 2010; Caraher and Seeley, 2010). Cooking from scratch in homes is no longer considered the norm and interventions should focus on developing practical skills to increase cooking self-efficacy (Lavelle et al., 2016a, Safefood, 2014). A lack of cooking skills, often coupled with deficit in nutritional knowledge, can influence families to eat outside the home (Hersch et al., 2014). Home Economics is the only school subject which primarily aims at preparing students for everyday life and teaches students

nutritional knowledge and practical food skills with a focus on increasing cooking self-efficacy. Home Economics is unique in its systematic, integrative approach where problems of everyday life are addressed in a holistic manner (CHEA, 1996, p.169).

In a study conducted by McGowan et al. (2016), findings demonstrate the need for interventions which are multifactorial and integrate a range of knowledge and psychological related factors in their design. According to Lichenstein and Ludwig (2010), a comprehensive curriculum such as Home Economics is required in schools for all students to teach young people the scientific and practical aspects of food and the basic skills of how to prepare food for themselves and their families. Consequently, it is hoped that students will develop a confidence in choosing, preparing and cooking food.

Conclusion

Home Economics in schools can be the linchpin for a comprehensive education programme which incorporates nutritional knowledge, scientific theory, and practical culinary and food skills in a sequential and integrated manner within a 'whole of school' approach. It maximises practical experiential learning for the student and teaches a sustainable healthy approach to, and relationship with, food. Lichenstein and Ludwig (2010) state that an investment in food education and 'bringing back' Home Economics may be among the best investments that a society can make. From an Irish perspective, Home Economics is already an established subject but ensuring all students have access at junior cycle is a worthwhile investment from a food education intervention perspective. This is important in the light of the societal and (ill) health changes occurring at a population level, as early intervention is cheaper than treating a problem once it has occurred.

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CHAPTER 7

Chapter 7 Examining the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics curriculum policy in Ireland

Reader's Note:

This chapter was submitted in August 2020 as an original manuscript and, at the time of submission of this thesis, is under review by editors for the peer-reviewed journal *International Journal Home Economics*.

No changes to the submitted manuscript have been made to the chapter in this thesis. The manuscript has been formatted, including referencing, in the style required by this journal.

Examining the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics curriculum policy in Ireland

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Abstract

In 2017, a new curriculum policy for Junior Cycle Home Economics, the first reform in twenty-eight years, was launched in Ireland. Home Economics is a popular subject choice among junior students and the reform of the curriculum was much anticipated by teachers and students. The new curriculum policy focuses on developing essential skills and knowledge to empower students to live healthy and sustainable lives. This study analyses the macro policy development process utilising Basil Bernstein's 'Pedagogic Device' as a theoretical lens and draws on the findings of in-depth interviews (n=10) to examine the Home Economics teachers' perspectives on the reformed policy. The pedagogic device provides a valuable theoretical model for studying the macro policy process and facilitated an exploration of the recontextualisation of expert knowledge to form Home Economics curriculum policy. Teachers broadly welcomed the reformed policy and identified a new opportunity for Home Economics education to contribute more effectively to food and health policy agendas. However, they identified a need to engage in action to raise awareness of the philosophical basis and pedagogical approaches that are promoted in the reformed Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification.

Key words
Curriculum Policy, Home Economics Education, Food Education, Secondary Education, Policy Development

Introduction

For over 150 years, Home Economics education has been taught in schools across the world (IFHE, 2008). It was first introduced as a public health policy and a mechanism for improving the health and living standards of families (Pendergast et al., 2011; Pendergast, 2001; Stage, 1997; Sillitoe, 1966; Yoxall, 1965). In Ireland, domestic subjects, including cooking, were taught in primary schools as far back as the mid-1800's (McCloat and Caraher, 2018). In many countries (Japan, Finland, Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Malta), Home Economics education is identified in curriculum policy as contributing to the development of practical food and cooking life skills in young people. However, Home Economics is often offered on the curriculum as an optional subject (apart from Japan, Korea, Finland and Northern Ireland) and so, not all students have an opportunity to study food education (McCloat and Caraher, 2019). In comparison to other countries, for example, England, Canada, USA, Australia, the subject Home Economics maintains a popular choice in the curriculum in the Republic of Ireland (ROI). Home Economics is offered to both junior (12-15 years) and senior (16-18 years) students as an optional subject on the curriculum in secondary schools. In 2019, Home Economics was studied by 36% (n=23,043) of students (n=64,330) sitting the Junior Certificate examination (taken after the first three years of study). However, there remains a very disproportionate gender balance with 82% (n=18,852) females and 18% (n=4,191) males sitting Junior Certificate Home Economics. At senior cycle, 21% (n=12,002) of all students (n=56,071) studied Home Economics. This is comprised 87% (n=10,489) females and 13% (n=1,513) males (State Examinations Commission, 2019).

At junior cycle, the mandated curriculum policy, between the years 1990-2017, was based on the Junior Certificate Home Economics Syllabus (1990). The rationale for Home Economics, a three-year course of study, states the subject "has a direct relevance to the present and future life of every young person. Its purpose is to equip young people in certain important skills for living" (1990, p.3). The Department of Education 1990 syllabus comprised five core areas of study, each with a different weighting of time allocation (Food Studies and Culinary Skills (40%); Consumer Studies (15%); Social and Health Studies (10%); Resource Management and Home Studies (10%); Textile Studies (10%)), and one additional area of study (15%) from a choice of three

(Childcare; Design and Craftwork; and Textile Skills). The assessment of Home Economics at the end of the three-years involved a written examination (worth 40% of total marks at higher level); a food and culinary skills practical exam (45% of total marks); and a project (15% of total marks) (Department of Education, 1990). However, in 2012 a consultation on the reform of junior cycle education policy in Ireland was announced which culminated in the publication of a *Framework for Junior Cycle 2015* policy document (Department of Education and Skills, 2015). This was an overarching framework document which detailed the reform of all subjects on the curriculum and set out a roadmap in four phases. This paper examines the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics curriculum policy in Ireland as part of this Framework. Initially, it analyses the macro policy development process employing some theoretical elements from Basil Bernstein's Pedagogic Device and the paper then presents on findings which examines the policy issues, from a teachers' perspective, associated with the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics curriculum policy in Ireland.

Reforming Home Economics Curriculum – the Policy Process

The process of large-scale reform of curriculum policy is lengthy and complex (Tikkanen et al., 2017; Priestly et al., 2014; Leithwood et al., 2002). In Ireland, curriculum is developed at a national level with a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches which involves all stakeholders. The policy process is managed by the National Council Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) who advise the Minister for Education on all matters relating to curriculum policy. The reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics curriculum policy was initiated in 2016 by the NCCA. In order to examine the macro policy process of this reform, Basil Bernstein's pedagogic device is used as a theoretical framework in this paper. Bernstein's pedagogic device denotes the rules and processes surrounding the generation of pedagogic discourse (1990, 2000). Therefore, it facilitates us to examine how knowledge is selected and "translated into what is taught to whom, when, where, why and how it is evaluated" (Singh et al., 2013, p.467). From a curriculum policy perspective, the pedagogic device sets out the "rules of the policy process" and is "a device that shares relative similarity in the structuring of educational systems across historical time and geographic space" (Singh et al., 2013, p.467). Apple (2002) notes the pedagogic device "regulates the production of the school curriculum and its transmission" (p.613). The importance is further reiterated by Mathou (2018) who identifies it as essential to understanding pedagogic discourse comprising curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Although within the pedagogic device there

are three fields (figure 1) – production, recontextualisation and reproduction (Bernstein, 1990, 2000), in the context of this paper, the field of production and recontextualisation will be focused on.

In order to inform the development of Home Economics curriculum policy, non-pedagogical knowledge is taken from the field of production which may include sites such as higher education institutions and research centres. These are considered within the field of production because it is here that new knowledge is constructed and where the intellectual field of Home Economics and its associated disciplines originates and evolves (McCuaig and Hay, 2014). The knowledge is then recontextualised to create Home Economics pedagogical knowledge. The recontextualisation field, in Ireland, is situated and controlled at a national level through the work of the NCCA. Bernstein (1990, 2000) explains the recontextualisating rules regulates when policy is dislocated from the primary site (to develop Home Economics curriculum policy) and relocated to a pedagogic context (i.e. the Home Economics classroom) where it is converted into pedagogic discourse (McCuaig and Hay, 2014). This relates to what Home Economics subject knowledge is taught and how it is taught in schools. The recontextualisation field comprises the official recontextualising field (ORF) which is the development of the official Home Economics curriculum policy by the NCCA; and the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF) which involves Home Economics teacher educators and subject associations.

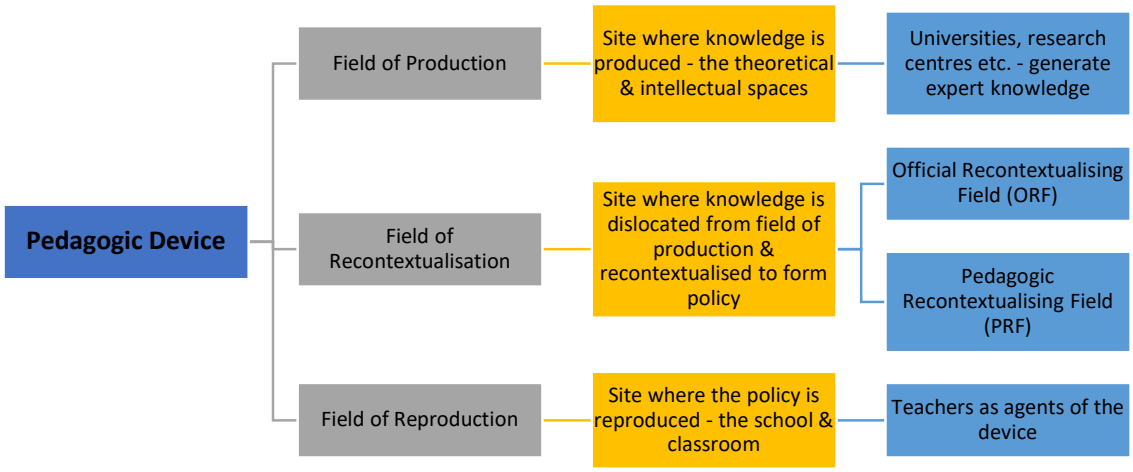

Figure 1. Fields of Basil Bernstein's pedagogic device. The figure was developed by the authors using Bernstein's concepts of the pedagogic device (Bernstein, 2000)

Jephcote and Davies (2004, p.548) identified the development of curriculum policy as 'complex and characterised by negotiation and compromise'. Therefore, in order to ensure a research informed curriculum policy, a *Background Paper* was produced by a Home Economics expert for the NCCA in 2016. The *Background Paper for Home Economics* sets out the pertinent discourses from the theoretical and intellectual space (i.e. the field of production) and identified the knowledge which was to be considered in the development of the Specification at a later point. In particular, it drew on seminal writings on the philosophical and pedagogical underpinning of Home Economics and Home Economics education from the production field of the pedagogic device. Most influentially, the paper also identified four interconnected societal factors (changes to family and social systems; education for sustainable development and responsible living; food and health literacy; home and resource management) which were directly related to future curriculum development and were recognised as being important to ensure the 'currency and relevancy for the subject in the lives of individuals, families, communities and society' (NCCA, 2016, p.31). From a Bernstein perspective, these four interconnected societal factors identified in the Background Paper, were the selected discourses from primary contexts which were then recontextualised and transformed to inform the development of the Home Economics Specification. The aim of which would be to achieve optimal, healthy and sustainable living for individuals, families and society.

There followed a consultation process (online survey and written responses) on the Background Paper which had a very high level of engagement (244 individual responses to the online questionnaire and 2 written responses) across stakeholders including teachers, students, parents, management, industry and community organisations (NCCA, 2017a). The framing of the discourse in the Background Paper leaned very much towards the role Home Economics can play in health, wellbeing and responsible and sustainable living. In the public consultation report, many respondents noted, given the 200 hours allocation and the breadth of the 1990 syllabus, the area of textiles was a component which needed to be reviewed and reduced to facilitate more inclusion of up to date knowledge in the area of food, health and sustainability. Ninety nine percent of those who responded to the consultation identified the important role Home Economics education should play in addressing a key priority area of health and food literacy skills (NCCA, 2017a). The final edit of the *Background Paper for Home Economics* was published in 2017. This officially set out, for the first time in Ireland, a body of knowledge for Home Economics curriculum policy and it paved the way for the development of the *Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification*.

Subsequently, the NCCA, through a subject development group, engaged in an iterative process of selecting the discourse which would form the official curriculum policy for Home Economics at junior cycle. The terms of reference for the group were to provide a "strong, representative and responsive basis for its curriculum and development work" (NCCA, 2016). According to Bernstein (1990) the power and control relations are very strong at this point as the process of selecting, decoding and recontextualising the knowledge discourse takes place to form the curriculum policy. The impact of this on the development of the Home Economics Specification can be significant, as Ball et al. (2011) notes, the high level of interpretation conducted by these 'policy actors' can be influenced by values, attitudes, interests and the personal and institutional contexts. According to the NCCA there were 12 members of the Subject Development Group, all Home Economists, who represented the following interests: Home Economics subject association; teacher unions; Department of Education and Skills; school management bodies; State Examinations Commission; a co-opted Home Economics expert; and an independent Chair (NCCA, 2020).

The *Background Paper for Home Economics* detailed a brief for the review of junior cycle Home Economics which would ultimately lead to the production of a specification for the subject. The initial development of the specification took place over a 5-month period and a draft specification was put forward for public consultation in February 2017. The purpose of the consultation was to gather feedback from stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, management, academics) or members of the public on how the specification successfully captured the aims of junior cycle Home Economics and, to allow for any comments on the draft specification (NCCA, 2017b). Similar to the response for consultation on the Background Paper, there was a good level of engagement with the process by teachers, students, parents, school management, interested government and non-government organisations and industry. In a report on the consultation feedback, the NCCA notes there were 295 responses to the online questionnaire (84% of whom identified as a Home Economics teacher); eight written submissions and one focus group (NCCA, 2017b). The consultation process was undertaken in a very transparent and open manner and provided an opportunity to feed into the policy development within the official recontextualising field (ORF). An analysis of the written submissions and the online responses demonstrated a very positive impression of the draft specification and respondents noted that the draft reflected the philosophical underpinnings of Home Economics. Ninety three percent (93%) of those who responded commented the draft specification would be effective in developing "students' practical food and health literacy skills" and 92% noted it would assist in developing "students'

knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies to achieve optimal, healthy and sustainable living" (NCCA, 2017b, p.7). Following the consultation process, feedback was considered by the subject development group, amendments were made, and a final specification was published in August 2017. Teaching of the new curriculum policy commenced in schools in September 2018. Between August 2017 and September 2018, professional development training was conducted with Home Economics teachers on a nationwide basis. This was conducted by the Home Economics Team of the JCT (Junior Cycle for Teachers) which is a dedicated support service of the Department of Education and Skills.

Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification – the Reformed Curriculum Policy

The Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification (2017) is designed for 200 hours of timetabled student engagement over three-years and comprises three strands: Food, Health and Culinary Skills; Responsible Family Living; and Textiles and Craft. Each of the three Strands are underpinned by four cross-cutting elements which have a focus on Health and Wellbeing; Individual and Family Empowerment; Sustainable and Responsible Living; Consumer Competence. The overall aim of Junior Cycle Home Economics is to "develop students' knowledge, attitudes, understanding, skills and values to achieve optimal, healthy and sustainable living for every person as an individual, and as a member of families and society" (DES, 2017, p.5).

The Specification reflects the various submissions by stakeholders to the policy development process and includes a strong discourse around food, health, sustainable and responsible living which is informed by expert knowledge dis-located from the production field. In relation to food education, Junior Cycle Home Economics aims to "develop students' practical food and health literacy skills so that they can adopt a healthy lifestyle and make informed decisions that positively impact their health and wellbeing as individuals as well as within their families and society" (DES, 2017, p. 5). The strand Food, Health and Culinary Skills strives to develop a positive, sustainable and healthy relationship with food so that students can make informed decisions that will positively impact their health and wellbeing now and in the future. Practical experiential learning is core to the pedagogical approaches and covers a broad range of skills ranging from budgeting, shopping, ethical and ecological food principles to diet related diseases, nutrition, preparing and cooking various foods.

Bernstein (1990, 2000) refers to the evaluative rules as those concerned with transforming recontextualised discourse into pedagogic discourse and can be influenced by time allocation, resources and the assessment mode for the curriculum. Similar to other education contexts the evaluative site is controlled by the State (Singh, 2015) and in Ireland this is under the auspices of the State Examinations Commission and the Chief Examiner for Home Economics. In the curriculum reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics more emphasis was placed on practical food skills with the increased allocation of 50% (up from 35% at higher level in the previous 1991 syllabus) of the externally assessed marks weighted towards a practical food skills examination. The practical food skills examination, which is externally assessed by the State Examinations Commission, requires students to apply their nutritional knowledge and food literacy skills in the preparation of a healthy nutritious dish or product to meet the requirements of a pre-determined specified brief. Topics for the brief may include, for example, healthy school lunches; stages of the lifecycle; diet related diseases; healthy family meals; special dietary considerations; resourceful cookery (DES, 2017).

In an educational policy context, Bernstein's 'distributive rule' regulates the distribution of power and knowledge and is concerned with who can transmit what knowledge to whom. In this study it refers to the Department of Education and Skills official curriculum policy and because of the power attached to the curriculum in an education setting, it holds legitimacy for the teacher and students. This Home Economics Specification is now the official curriculum policy, mandated by the Government of Ireland Department of Education and Skills, which all Home Economics teachers must enact in the classroom if they are teaching Junior Cycle Home Economics.

Methods

This qualitative piece of research utilised non-probability sampling to recruit nineteen Home Economics teachers working in secondary schools in Ireland. Ethical approval was granted from University London, City, Sociology Research Ethics Committee (Reference number: ETH1819-0576). An initial email was sent to the teachers, who were selected based on the type of school they taught in and their geographical representation, to ascertain an interest in the research. The typology of the school reflected the composition of secondary schools in Ireland and this included: an all-girls; all-boys; State funded; fee paying; co-educational; and a designated DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) status school which normally has a higher representation of

students from disadvantaged communities. Once they confirmed their interest, a follow up email with an information sheet and consent form was sent.

On receipt of the consent form a screening process took place of the participants to ensure they met two inclusion criteria: firstly, they were teaching more than five years; and secondly, they were, at the time of the planned interviews, teaching the new Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification. Of the nineteen who indicated their consent; fifteen (n=15) met the inclusion criteria. Two of the teachers participated in a pilot which was not included in the final analysis as changes were made to the interview protocol after piloting. Thirteen teachers (n=13) were provisionally scheduled to take part in a semi-structured interview, over a three-month period, which aimed to examine the policy issues, from a teachers' perspective, associated with the reform of the Junior Cycle Home Economics curriculum policy. All interviews were recorded and professionally transcribed. Each transcription was cross checked for accuracy against the original audio recording. When interview number eight was conducted, it was evident that no new themes were emerging. However, two further interviews were conducted to ascertain the level of data saturation which was subsequently achieved at interview number ten (Morse, 2015). The transcripts were randomly coded as Teacher A, B, etc. to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Data was analysed using the framework analysis method (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994), as according to Gale et al. (2013), this provides a methodological and systematic approach to organise and analyse data from semi-structured interviews.

Findings

The research findings presented in this paper are part of a wider research study on the development and enactment of Home Economics curriculum policy. This paper aimed to examine the policy issues, from the teachers' perspective, associated with the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics curriculum policy. Of the ten teachers interviewed, nine were female (Teachers A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I) and one was male (Teacher J). Table 1 details the demographics of the schools where they worked.

Location	School Composition	Designation
Rural School: n=4	Co-Ed: n=5	State school: n=9 (of which 2 were DEIS designated)
Urban School: n=6	All-Girls: n=4	Private, fee-paying: n=1
	All-Boys: n=1	

Table 1: Demographics of the Schools

Status of Junior Cycle Home Economics Curriculum Policy in the School Community

From a policy perspective, it is interesting to gauge the perception of the wider school community towards the curriculum albeit reported through the perception of the teachers interviewed. In the context of this research, the wider school community is referred to as school leadership, board of management and parents. Although students are part of the broader research project, their views are not represented in this paper. All the Home Economics teachers reported a positive perception and status of the subject within the school community that they teach. Nine of the ten Home Economics teachers reported a 'very positive' perception of Home Economics by school leadership and the Board of Management; whilst one teacher noted the perception was generally positive but somewhat uninformed about the potential of the subject. School leadership in the all-boys school in the study were reported to look very favourably on Home Economics, which is a recent development (in the last five years initially introduced at Junior Cycle) in the school, because they see first-hand the popular uptake of the subject. Teacher I in this school reported "it's really a favourite subject with a lot of the boys … there is a real novelty factor … it is tangible and visible, and you can see what has been completed". Management in this all-boys school invested in a new kitchen to facilitate the teaching of the subject, which is now offered to both junior and senior cycle students and has significant uptake across all years. Another teacher (Teacher E) outlined that the perception of school leadership has changed in recent years and they now have a very positive view of the potential of the subject as a result of the media attention attributed to healthy eating and obesity. Interestingly, two teachers reported a "massively positive" view, particularly of the Board of Management, as the Home Economics Department in the school consistently achieve one of the highest sets of results in a subject at both the Junior and Leaving Certificate State examinations. This was perceived to be an important determining

factor of the status of the subject, by the management, in these two schools. Teacher B indicated management support teaching the students' life skills and there is a strong focus in the school on wellbeing consequently, she has autonomy to develop initiatives and noted the importance of this "top-down support by management, and if management weren't [in support] we wouldn't have the status in the school that we do". Home Economics teachers indicated this positive perception translated into acquiring resources when required and in addition to the all-boys school, the Board of Management in another school in the study allocated significant financial resources for a new kitchen because of the subject "being a very strong subject" (Teacher J) at junior cycle. Teachers spoke of welcoming the Principal or other teachers to the kitchens to see what was being prepared by the students and by operating an "open door" policy. Teacher A commented "it's trying to move the perception away from we only cook buns" and when asked what was driving this, Teacher A noted "I want to be seen for what we actually do".

In general, parents were reported as having a very positive view of the subject. A shift in perception and status of the subject among parents was reported by the Home Economics teachers. Interestingly, one teacher outlined, in her 15 years teaching in the same school, she has noted an increased positive attitude of the subject reported at parent-teacher meetings in the last two years, particularly whereby students are cooking and baking more at home on their own initiative. She commented that parents are now more willing to allow the students to cook at home because "they see the value of it [cooking] themselves and the fact that the students have the skills now" from studying Home Economics (Teacher G). Another teacher reiterated this point and noted a parent was praising Home Economics in 'teaching life skills' as their daughter was now making batches of bread each week for the family and she noted the parent "just loves it [Home Economics] and thinks it is such important skills she is learning" (Teacher G). Interestingly, a waiting list exists in one school to join the Home Economics classes in first year (of which there are three classes) and the teacher (Teacher H) perceives this is an indication of the popularity of the subject with incoming students and parents.

The involvement of the Home Economics teacher in the school community was viewed by all teachers as critical to the continued support and promotion of the subject. The proactive role that all these teachers took in extracurricular activities emerged during the interview and was not a question asked directly of the interviewees. These activities ranged from being a member of the Board of Management of the school (two teachers); School Wellbeing Coordinator (three teachers); involved in pastoral care meetings (one teacher); assisting with catering for the Parents Council events (one teacher); Health Promoting Schools (three teachers); assisting with Open

Days for the school (seven teachers); running initiatives with other subjects; having subject displays of work undertaken; and entering students to cooking and textile competitions. Teacher B commented, "as a Home Economics teacher, I have been given great opportunity to take my own initiative and to support the subject to do things like the development of wellbeing in the school". These types of proactive roles within the school community facilitated the Home Economics teachers to weave in aspects of the subject into broader policy initiatives within the school and thus, in doing so, promote the subject to those who do not have an opportunity to study Home Economics. Teacher D gave the example of working with the Parents Council on a campaign to reduce food waste in the home and another campaign to promote healthy eating practices among parents and students. This collaboration has led the "Parents Council to come on board and support the Home Economics Department" and vice versa which led to an increase in resources in terms of equipment (Teacher D). The autonomy to develop initiatives by the Home Economics teachers was revealed as a positive way to promote the subject by several teachers. Teacher E reported, "they [management] give us good scope to do whatever initiatives we like, and we are very heavily involved in health promotion within the school". There was a direct correlation between teachers who showed ingenuity and developed initiatives and those who reported a positive view of the subject within the broader school community.

Resourcing Home Economics and Food Education in Schools – Policy Implications

A key aspect to any policy implementation is adequate resourcing to ensure the policy can achieve its intended aims and outcomes. Due to the practical and specialist nature of the subject, Home Economics requires specialist resources including access to a fully equipped kitchen and a facility for teaching textiles. In this research, teachers were asked to comment on the Home Economics specialist physical environment available in their school. Interestingly, only one of the ten teachers reported a lack of modern and up to date physical facilities as an issue with the teacher reporting that the facilities date back to the 1970s. However, funding for a new build has been approved whereby there will be two new Home Economics kitchens. Of the remaining nine teachers, four are working in new purpose-built Home Economics facilities, two are waiting on refurbishment and the remaining three all reported to have no issues with their physical facilities. It may be surmised that this is because of significant capital investment in schools by the Government in Ireland over recent years. The scope of facilities available to the teachers is also consistent and Home Economics teachers have access to several dedicated specialist spaces.

Teachers in seven of the ten schools have access to two fully equipped Home Economics kitchens with required appliances and workstations; the remaining three teachers work in smaller schools (average student size 400) and they have one Home Economics kitchen which is also fully equipped. In addition to the kitchen, four of the ten teachers have access to one dedicated textiles room and one teacher has access to two textile rooms in addition to two kitchens. These rooms are used for the theoretical classes as well as teaching textiles and craft components of the subject. One teacher who shares a kitchen with her colleague noted that they operate a "week in, week out" system for sharing the kitchen but she indicated that the lack of a second kitchen means when it comes to exam times, she has to schedule the classes after school for two hours. This does not occur in any other subject she noted (Teacher D) but must be undertaken as the practical exam marks carry a high weighting.

In terms of specialist equipment, no teacher reported a challenge with purchasing small items of equipment. However, is must be noted that most of these teachers are working in newly refurbished schools. The Home Economics Departments in this study reported being allocated a budget at the start of the year to purchase small items of equipment and consumables that students use in class. The purchase of more expensive items such as freestanding mixers are purchased on a phased basis, as they need replacing. Teacher F commented, "we have quite a large budget … because it is viewed very positively by management, but I know from speaking with others [Home Economics teachers], students don't enjoy going into a kitchen because it is not nice or they don't have the resources". Although none of the teachers in this study reported an issue with resource allocation, similar to Teacher F, some did identify where they had experienced other schools who had very inadequate resources and dated facilities. Teacher D noted, "there are a lot of dated Home Economics rooms with dated appliances and dated equipment" which will affect the uptake of the subject. Teacher A reiterated this, "I have examined in kitchens where they don't have huge amounts of stuff but produce amazing meals … they are very resourceful … but it would be great if everyone had a level playing field". Ironically, Teacher H emphasised that sometimes having too much specialist cooking equipment was not necessarily a good thing, "they are not able to transfer what they have learned in school to their own resources because they don't have the same equipment at home".

Home Economics teachers noted the negative financial impact on students who study the subject as a major resource challenge in schools. In most schools, the students had to bring in the main ingredients such as meat, vegetables and fruit for class and the teacher would supply consumables such as oil, seasoning, etc. The cost of this for families on a weekly basis, particularly for families

from lower socio-economic group, is taken into consideration when teachers choose the dishes being taught in class. However, schools with an official designated disadvantaged status receive a budget for the teacher to purchase the ingredients. Teacher C noted the frustration expressed by parents at the parent-teacher meeting in relation to the high cost of the ingredients each week. Teacher B emphasized that schools need to support students more as it "is an expensive subject and if you have a practical class, you have students on low income and their family's finances are stretched already".

Policy Opportunities and Challenges for Junior Cycle Home Economics Education

Teachers were asked to comment on the policy opportunities and challenges for Home Economics from a food education perspective. The contribution of Home Economics education to a wider food and health policy agenda was referred to as a key policy opportunity by all the teachers interviewed. In the education sector, embedding the key skills learned in Home Economics was regarded as an opportunity to support and achieve broader policy goals. Most of the teachers referred to the application and transferability of food skills learned in the Home Economics classroom to everyday life as an important approach when teaching Home Economics. Teacher G noted that Home Economics education can contribute to the future health of young people "if we are engaging them at such a young age teaching these skills that … they [the skills] become part of their day-to-day life, they will grow up with healthier habits, more knowledge, more skills and as a result will hopefully create a more healthier future generation". This was reiterated by Teacher C, "it can have an impact on health going forward … if you can have the students who have the nutritional knowledge and the skills to cook for themselves healthily then it will have a greater impact in the future". The ability to cook healthy meals for themselves and their families was viewed by Teacher E as being a key opportunity to deliver on broader health and food policy goals, "they can prepare themselves for life, they can cook their own meals, they can shop so they can look after themselves and their families or the wider communities which is of huge benefit to them".

Developing critical thinking and skills of discernment in relation to food and consumer issues was cited by teachers as having a particular focus in the teaching and learning of junior cycle Home Economics. Teachers outlined examples of where these skills are required including food choices; food provenance; sustainable choices; resource management; consumer confidence; healthy food choices; using technology; and choosing a healthy lifestyle. Teacher J noted a desire

to develop students as "savvy, efficient and practical" while Teacher E referred to the development of students' "health and food literacy skills". Many of the teachers referenced "empowerment" and being in a privileged position to empower students with the knowledge and skills required for everyday life for the individual themselves and the family. As Teacher D emphasised "there isn't one part of your life that isn't touched by Home Economics". Several Home Economics teachers noted respect as an important value developed through studying the subject. They indicated that respect for the environment and students' health and wellbeing was a core philosophical pillar. By bringing respect to the fore and giving real life examples, they emphasised the relevance of the subject to modern day life of students.

The role of Home Economics education in contributing to the broader 'healthy school' agenda was identified by several teachers (n=6) as a key opportunity. Teacher H noted the role of the Home Economics teacher on the Healthy School Committee and the positive role they can play, "the canteen is better with the kids making healthier decisions, we have new water fountains, and healthy eating policy which we fed into". The potential for Home Economics to teach more about the growing of food was identified as an opportunity by Teacher D to reinforce key sustainability messages and develop a coherent cross curricular approach. Being able to translate and action key health messages is developed through Home Economics education, as outlined by Teacher C, "if they don't have the knowledge and they don't have the skill to use it from a food and health literacy perspective, then they are just not going to be able to".

The challenge of conflicting practices in the home and outside the school gate that go against what is being taught in the classroom was identified by several teachers as a key challenge. Teacher H noted "if we are teaching children values and healthy decision making … healthy meals and how to cook those. If they go home and the parents are cooking something else [not healthy] for them" it can be a major barrier to having a positive influence. They also suggested, from a policy perspective, parents need to be supported more in developing the skills to have a healthy approach to food and cooking. This is also identified by Teacher G, who outlines "if the same message isn't being delivered at home, that's where our greatest limitation is … it is often a lack of parental education and what they [students] are seeing in the home is in complete contrast to what we are telling them". Furthermore, Teacher A explained the necessity to work with school food canteen from a food policy perspective as "if you don't you are fighting a losing battle because you're talking about one thing, yet they are going down to eat differently in the school provision".

Interestingly, four of the experienced teachers identified a "lost generation" in terms of the practical food skills of the students and five indicated a very evident gap between what the students are being taught in school and the food related practices outside the school and in the home. One teacher (Teacher H) emphasised a desire to bridge this theory-practice nexus through the knowledge and skills taught in Home Economics. Teacher G also spoke of "bridging the gap" and facilitating students to develop the discernment and ability to deal with the challenges and often conflicting messages posed by the food environment "facing you on a day-to-day basis in life". Another teacher (Teacher C) revealed their current students are a "missed generation who have a skills gap" in cooking and they identified Home Economics as playing a valuable role in giving "back what has been missed for at least one generation if not two". Whilst Teacher F indicated more than often their students do not have the opportunity to learn food skills at home. Teacher A expressed their aim was to have the knowledge and skills learned in Home Economics "trickle subtly into home life as well" in order to make an impact on the health and wellbeing of the broader family.

Within the broad curriculum policy framework in schools in Ireland, Home Economics is an optional subject. In this research, all ten Home Economics teachers commented on this policy context. Eight of the teachers believed it should be made mandatory for all students and two teachers felt it would need further consideration. Teacher C explained their rationale for making it mandatory, "if you want to have an actual impact, you need to be working with every single student". A change in policy would also enhance the subject according to Teacher J who noted, "it will strengthen the subject as if it is the case that everybody has to do it then it becomes general and they are doing it from the point of view of life skills, nutrition, health and wellbeing". Furthermore, Teacher I stated that it is essential for the students "wellbeing and where people can cook and fend for themselves on a basic level". Two of the teachers who expressed a word of caution in relation to the calls for making the subject mandatory did so from the perspective of the interests of the students and out of the availability of resources. Teacher H explained the negative side of making the subject mandatory, "teaching students who did not choose a subject is very different from teaching those who did ... you are going to have some students will have a negative kind of connotation with Home Economics because they are being forced to do the subject". This teacher, along with Teacher F, expressed concern about the physical infrastructure nationwide were the subject to be made mandatory. They also noted that further investigation at school level would need to take place in order to ascertain the availability of teachers, the timetabling accessibility, facilities and budget in schools. However, both Teacher F and H

contended it would be a very positive development for the subject and for young peoples' lives if it were to be made mandatory.

Discussion

The development of the Home Economics curriculum policy was an iterative process and involved consultation at various stages designed to capture stakeholders' views including teachers, students, parents, school management and other interested parties. Bernstein's pedagogic device is a useful theoretical model for analysing the policy process and facilitates an exploration of how expert knowledge, generated in the field of production, is converted to Home Economics curriculum policy and to explore how the teachers, located in the field of reproduction, perceive the policy. Home Economics is a multidisciplinary field and, as outlined by IFHE (2008), draws content from "multiple disciplines, synthesising these through interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary inquiry" (p.1). In a food education context, the expert knowledge is drawn from disciplines including nutrition, food and culinary, health, education, consumer behaviour, and psychology. In the field of recontextualisation the expert knowledge is selected and synthesised to form the curriculum policy and underlying pedagogical approaches. One of the strengths of the field of Home Economics is the capacity to synthesise expert knowledge from a diverse range of disciplines (IFHE, 2008; Turkki, 2012; Pendergast, 2015; Pace et al., 2015; Renwick, 2016). In this curriculum process, the development of the final Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification reflected the views expressed during the consultation process and has a strong focus on food, health and culinary skills. As part of the Strand Food, Health and Culinary Skills, students are required to apply their knowledge and understanding of nutrition, diet and health principles in order to make decisions that will empower them to develop a "healthy, sustainable attitude and positive relationship with food through practical experiential learning" (DES, 2017, p.15). Research suggests a lack of food and cooking skills is associated with an increased consumption of processed foods, which lack nutritional quality, and a consequential poor overall diet (Poti et al., 2015; Mills et al., 2017; Monsivais et al., 2014; Kimura, 2011). From a policy perspective, comprehensive interventions, which create an empowering setting for young people to learn healthy behaviours, sustained over the long-term, is more preferable than short piecemeal interventions (Ronto, 2016; Hawkes et al., 2015; McGowan et al., 2015; McCloat and Caraher, 2016; Worsley et al., 2015; Lichenstein and Ludwig, 2010). The Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification facilitates students to study a broad range of food related skills. All the Home

Economics teachers in this study identified the ability to develop a healthy relationship with food where a person is empowered with the knowledge, skills and competencies to prepare and cook healthy meals as an important life skill. This is reiterated in research internationally which identifies the role Home Economics can play in contributing to the health and wellbeing of young people and their families (Boddy et al., 2019; Nanayakkara et al., 2018; Ronto et al., 2016; Vidgen, 2016; Worsley et al., 2015).

Arising from the curriculum policy reform, the Home Economics teachers in this study, as agents of the pedagogic device, identified the important role they can play in schools to contribute to the wider food and health policy agenda with a high level of professional capacity, enthusiasm and subject expertise. All Home Economists who work in post-primary schools in ROI must be registered with the Teaching Council. They stipulate that in order to achieve registration, the applicant must hold a degree-level qualification, having studied Home Economics up to and including third year level and the discipline Home Economics comprising at least 90ECTs of the degree. The applicant must also demonstrate they have undertaken a post-primary initial teacher education programme of study (minimum 120ECTs) either as part of their Degree or as a stand-alone (Teaching Council, 2013). This lends itself to the provision of a highly skilled and educated workforce who are not only Home Economics subject experts but also have the proficiency in Home Economics pedagogy. Consequently, they are ideally placed to educate young people, in a structured Home Economics learning environment, food and cooking skills over a sustained period. Conversely to this, the removal of Home Economics teacher education in Universities in England resulted in a lack of availability of suitably trained teachers and had a detrimental impact on the provision of food and cooking skills on the curriculum (Rutland 2017; Owen-Jackson and Rutland, 2016; Caraher and Seely010). Similarly, research conducted in Australia called for a common rigorous education of teachers (undergraduate and postgraduate) which, they suggest, would provide "sound foundations" for food education in schools because there would be a "consistent professional view" (Boddy et al., 2019, p.285). Therefore, the importance, from a policy perspective, of maintaining an already existing coherent and regulated Home Economics teacher education in ROI is evident.

The future sustainability of any subject to hold a place in curriculum policy in schools relies on a reliable throughput of students. Parents are the key influencers on a student's subject choice in secondary school (Accenture, 2014; Byrne & Smyth, 2010; Darmody and Smyth, 2005), therefore, their perception and understanding of the subject is critical. Home Economics teachers in this study referenced parents supporting their child to study the subject at junior cycle because

of their personal belief in the importance of learning essential food and life skills. However, from a societal perspective, research suggests there are some who hold a dated perception of Home Economics and do not perceive the subject to be of relevance in a contemporary society (Harden et al., 2018; Cunningham-Sabo and Simons, 2012; Nanayakkara et al., 2017). In order to overcome this there is a constant pressure on Home Economists to work towards strengthening and promoting the subject (McGregor, 2019; Christensen, 2019). Teachers in this study reflected these sentiments and all regarded it as critical to the continued support, status and promotion of the subject that they undertake additional activities in the wider school community. Home Economics teachers are quite unique in this space and it can add an undue pressure to the already challenging workloads of a secondary school teacher. The changing parental' perception of what the subject entails, witnessed in recent times by the more experienced teachers in the study, is reassuring. It is hoped that the reformed Junior Cycle Home Economics curriculum policy will contribute in a meaningful way to changing a preconceived stereotypical image of the subject as it beds down as policy over the coming years.

At senior cycle, the pressure on matriculation for admission to University and the importance of subject choice for various future careers means that Home Economics is often not perceived to be as important as a science or business subject for example. In a world where capitalism dominates it is perhaps not surprising that an education which empowers students to think critically, creatively and to problem solve in a healthy sustainable way is not as valued as a reductionist approach to education within a neoliberal senior cycle curriculum. The limited value society places on food education and life skills have been discussed in previous studies (Renwick, 2016; Rutland, 2017; McCloat and Caraher, 2016; Caraher, 2010). Ideally, in a context where there is joined up food and health policy in schools, Home Economics would be regarded as important at senior cycle as it is at junior cycle on the basis of the contribution it can play to the broader policy context.

For many school subjects, the status and how it is perceived, particularly by students, relates to not only how established the subject matter is but the curriculum policy around whether a subject is mandatory or optional (Paechter, 1993; Bleazby, 2015). Much media attention in Ireland has been focussed on calls to make Home Economics mandatory for all students to junior cycle (Safefood, 2018; St. Angela's College, 2018; Hickey, 2018; Boland, 2017; Maguire, 2017; Sweeney, 2015; Gray, 2015; McCloat, 2012; 2013). This is premised on the belief that the food skills developed in Home Economics are essential life skills and all young people should have an opportunity to learn these. In November 2018, the Irish Houses of the Oireachtas Joint Committee

on Children and Youth Affairs' Report on Tackling Childhood Obesity recommended that the 'Government should consider the introduction of Home Economics as a compulsory subject on the Junior Cycle Curriculum for post-primary schools' (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2018, p.6). Consequently, it was not surprising that Home Economics teachers in this study suggested the implementation of this recommendation and viewed it a positive step in improving the status of the subject. Similarly, in Australia, research suggests young adults and parents (Nanayakkara et al., 2018; Pendergast et al., 2011), teachers (Ronto et al., 2017); and food professionals (Nanayakkara et al, 2017) would support making food education compulsory in Australia in order to raise its status. What is important in the Irish Houses of the Oireachtas Committee policy recommendation was the recognition, by influential policy makers, of the value of the esoteric (vertical) and common (horizontal) Home Economics disciplinary knowledge to the future health and wellbeing of students. Although this policy recommendation is not yet reflected in the structure of the curriculum, it is a welcome start towards dispelling a ubiquitously held belief around what type of knowledge is regarded as high status and important.

Conclusion

This paper examines the first reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics curriculum policy in Ireland in over 28 years. It draws on theoretical elements of Bernstein's pedagogic device to examine the macro policy development process and analyses the teachers' perspective on the reform of Home Economics curriculum policy at junior cycle. The reform of the curriculum policy is broadly welcomed by teachers as both timely and one which now offers more policy opportunities for Home Economics to contribute to the wider health and food policy agendas. Home Economics is the only subject on the curriculum in Ireland which teaches young people comprehensive food education, combining theoretical knowledge and understanding on nutrition, healthy eating, budgeting, meal planning, sustainability, and practical cooking and food skills. However, much work is needed to develop a better understanding among those not familiar with the current curriculum policy and in particular, the philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings that are espoused throughout the reformed Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification. The implementation of the policy recommendation, by the Irish Houses of the Oireachtas Committee, to offer compulsory Home Economics education for all students in junior cycle, would also assist in achieving a better understanding and appreciation of the subject. However, this would need to

be undertaken in the context of ensuring schools and teachers have adequate resources to effectively implement the policy.

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CHAPTER 8

Chapter 8 Teachers' experiences of enacting curriculum policy at the micro level using Bernstein's theory of the pedagogic device

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Teachers' experiences of enacting curriculum policy at the micro level using Bernstein's theory of the pedagogic device

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the experiences of teachers in the Republic of Ireland, as agents of the pedagogic device, in enacting curriculum policy at the micro level of the classroom. It explores their enactment of policy at a time of significant curriculum reform of junior secondary school education. Drawing upon the findings of in depth interviews with teachers, this study integrates Bernstein's Theory of 'Pedagogic Device' with Ball's concept of 'policy enactment' and 'policy actor' and provides valuable insights into the development of curriculum policy at the macro level and how this is translated and enacted at the micro classroom level. It explores teachers' experiences in translating the subject knowledge and pedagogical practices in the classroom and how these align to the official curriculum policy. Moreover, the study provides an insight into the correlation between the classification and framing of a subject and its perceived status among teachers and students. Particularly, the balance between the common and esoteric discourses and how this has a strong influence on the positioning of subjects in a school is explored.

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KEYWORDS
Policy enactment; teacher as policy actor; curriculum policy; Bernstein pedagogic device; home economics education

Introduction

Similar to other countries, junior cycle education policy (ages 12–15 years) in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) has undergone major reform with the publication and implementation by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) of the *Framework for Junior Cycle 2015* (Framework 2015). This resulted in a complete reform of curriculum policy, on a phased basis, pertaining to 21 subjects offered to students. At junior cycle, students typically choose between eight and ten subjects to study over the course of the three-year period (Department of Education and Skills DES, 2020). The development of the research-informed curriculum policy documents for each of the 21 subjects involves a lengthy and iterative process which maximises engagement with all stakeholders through public consultations and the establishment of subject development groups (NCCA, 2020). As

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Abstract
This study examines the experiences of teachers in the Republic of Ireland, as agents of the pedagogic device, in enacting curriculum policy at the micro level of the classroom. It explores their enactment of policy at a time of significant curriculum reform of junior secondary school education. Drawing upon the findings of in-depth interviews with teachers, this study integrates Bernstein's Theory of 'Pedagogic Device' with Ball's concept of 'policy enactment' and 'policy actor' and provides valuable insights into the development of curriculum policy at the macro level and how this is translated and enacted at the micro classroom level. It explores teachers' experiences in translating the subject knowledge and pedagogical practices in the classroom and how these align to the official curriculum policy. Moreover, the study provides an insight into the correlation between the classification and framing of a subject and its perceived status among teachers and students. Particularly, the balance between the common and esoteric discourses and how this has a strong influence on the positioning of subjects in a school is explored.

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Introduction

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classified according to subjects, such as Home Economics, which are discrete on the curriculum and are taught and assessed in isolation of each other despite having the overarching statements of learning and key skills. According to Bernstein (1990, 2000), the manner in which a society or the State selects, classifies and distributes knowledge through subjects on a curriculum is a means of social control and reflects the distribution of power. The pedagogic device sets out the general guidelines by which policy knowledge is interpreted, translated and evaluated at the various levels from conception to the school setting (Bernstein, 1990, 2000; Singh et al., 2013, 2015). However, Penney (2013) contends that the pedagogic device is 'intangible' and therefore, 'holds a degree of frustration' (p. 10).

Of particular interest to this research, Bernstein refers to the principles of 'classification', which relates to the arrangement, in this instance, of the HE curriculum and 'framing', which is concerned with how the message is communicated by teachers, through their pedagogic practices, to students (Sadovnik, 1991). Schools have flexibility, under Framework 2015, to design their junior cycle programme by identifying which subjects are offered, influenced by their school context. Bernstein (1990, 2000) contends this process of classifying and maintaining boundaries of subjects and curriculum is a form of social control and positions certain knowledge as being only accessible for some students who access to them. For this study, Bernstein's principles of classification and framing are used to describe pedagogic discourse and practice in the examining of the school subject (HE). It involves the 'instructional discourse' which is the HE subject knowledge (common or esoteric) and the 'regulative discourse' which is the HE pedagogical practices (Bernstein, 1990, 2000).

Within the pedagogic device, the recontextualisation field involves the dislocating of knowledge from the production field (i.e. where the creation of knowledge has taken place) and the re-locating to form pedagogical knowledge. It comprises two sub fields: the official recontextualising field (ORF) and the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF) (Apple, 2002). For HE curriculum policy in Ireland, the ORF is where the official pedagogic discourse is produced and involves the development of the Junior Cycle HE Specification (2017) by the National Council Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The PRF, in this HE education policy context, constructs the non-official pedagogic discourse and involves HE teacher associations and teacher educators. The reproduction field is the secondary context and encompasses the reproduction of pedagogic discourse in the HE classroom and is the local site where the policy is enacted or reproduced.

Integrating Bernstein pedagogic device with Ball's concept of 'policy enactment' and 'policy actor' allows us to explore teachers' experiences in translating the HE subject specification into practice. Braun et al. (2011, p. 586) identify policy enactment as the 'interpretation and translation, that is, the recontextualisation . . . of the abstractions of policy ideas into contextualised practices'. Research demonstrates the enactment of curriculum policy at the micro level of the classroom can often be contradictory to how it was envisioned when developed. Priestley et al. (2014) note the challenges of translating policy to practice and it can often involve the teacher adapting the policy to suit the classroom context. The findings presented in this study draw on Home Economics teachers' experiences of the enactment of curriculum policy at the micro level of the classroom.

Methods

Integrating Bernstein pedagogic device with Ball's concept of 'policy enactment' and 'policy actor' facilitated us to analyse how Home Economics teachers (HETs) enact curriculum policy at the micro level of the classroom. Purposive sampling was utilised, and an email was sent to HETs (n = 19) selected for their geographical location and the type of school they taught in. They were chosen to represent a variety of schools, reflective of the location and composition of schools in Ireland (Department of Education and Skills DES, 2020). These included: all-girls; all-boys; co-educational; urban; rural; public school; private, fee-paying school; and a designated DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) status school which normally has a high proportion of students from a socio-disadvantaged community. A semi-structured interview, comprising eleven open-ended questions and probes, was used to examine how HETs enact curriculum policy, specifically food education elements, in the classroom. Once they indicated willingness to participate in the study, a follow up email with a consent form and a detailed information sheet was distributed to each participant. In order to proceed with a scheduled interview, the teacher was required to meet two inclusion criteria: 1) teaching 5 years or more and 2) currently teaching the new Junior Cycle HE Specification. All nineteen teachers indicated their consent to participate; however, only 15 met the inclusion criteria. A pilot interview was initially conducted with two teachers (n = 2); however, this pilot data was not included in the analysis as changes were made to the protocol following piloting. The remaining 13 teachers were provisionally scheduled for a semi-structured telephone interview during February-April 2019. Ethical approval was granted from University London, City, Sociology

Research Ethics Committee (Reference number: ETH1819-0576). The interviews, on consent of the participants, were recorded and each file was a password protected saved file. Notes were taken during the interview which lasted between 35 and 45 minutes. All interviews were conducted by one researcher.

Ten in-depth interviews were conducted with teachers. At interview number eight, no new themes were emerging, and two further interviews were conducted to check this and to gauge the level of data saturation which was reached at interview number 10. Data saturation was evident as no new themes were emerging; the data from those interviewed had essential characteristics in common and each of the variety of schools was represented (Baker & Edwards, 2012; Morse, 2015). The researcher was cognisant of the demands on teachers' time with practical exam preparation underway and therefore, no further interviews were conducted after this point and the remaining three teachers were notified. All interview recordings were transcribed, and all transcripts were cross- checked against the audio file for accuracy. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, the transcripts were randomly ordered and assigned a code such as Teacher A, B, C, etc. Data analysis was conducted using the framework analysis method (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) which is regarded as a flexible, systematic, methodical approach in categorising and organising qualitative data derived from semi-structured interviews (Furber, 2010; Gale et al., 2013; Smith & Firth, 2011).

Nine of the 10 HETs were female which is reflective of the gender composition of Home Economics teachers in schools nationally. The teachers' experience ranged from 21 years to 5 years' experience with the average being 13.5 years. Six of the teachers worked in urban schools and four worked in rural school. Of these, two were official DEIS designated and one was a private, fee-paying school. In terms of composition, five of the teachers worked in schools which were co-educational, four worked in all-girls schools and one worked in an all-boys school. The school size varied from very large (1,200 students) to smaller schools (300 students) with the average size being 632 students.

Results

The 'classification and framing of home economics

The classification and framing of Home Economics emerged as a key influence on the

positioning of the subject in schools. In this study, many of the teachers referred to trying to address the notion that HE is not considered an 'academic subject' and promote the subject as teaching more than common knowledge. Teacher E referred to facilitating the school community to see what was being taught in the food preparation classes in order to somewhat dispel the notion that it was 'only a baking class'. Teacher A reiterated this and commented 'it's trying to move the perception away from 'we only cook buns" and a need to be 'seen for what we actually do'. Unsurprisingly, a hierarchy of subjects in schools was commented on by the teachers. One teacher commented, 'there is a kind of a subtle sort of pedestal of subjects like the core subjects' (Teacher A). Teacher H indicated the high demand of HE is mainly at junior cycle (there is a waiting list for entry to the class), and yet, the uptake does not translate to senior cycle where consideration for matriculation for entry to University takes priority. She commented the subject must compete with a science subject and a language, both of which are often required for entry to a particular University course. This is no reflection on the subject, she outlines, but rather attributes the issue to career guidance who suggest all students study one language and one science subject. Therefore, if HE is timetabled against one of these, it limits the availability for a student to study the subject at senior cycle. This hierarchy was also noted by Teacher J who commented, 'society tells them [students] you need a Science or a Business subject' for senior cycle which can often impact the choice of HE. Furthermore, teachers in this study commented on a dated perception of HE among the public and all regarded it as critical to the continued support and promotion of the subject that they become involved in the wider school community. This resulted in teachers taking on many extracurricular roles that were not necessarily expected of teachers of other subjects.

Teachers enacting the curriculum policy

In the teachers' experiences of translating the policy into pedagogic practice, they were consistent in their view of the perceived positive aspects of the curriculum reform whilst also outlining some of the challenges they face at the micro-level of the classroom. The modernisation of the curriculum and the inclusion of topics such as sustainability was noted by most of the teachers as positive. Teacher J commented 'the Home Economics of the 70s and 80s, that way of life, the emphasis, is completely and utterly changed, and the subject has to move with that, and I think the new Specification is allowing for that change'. The modernisation of the curriculum was also stated by Teacher D, 'it is hugely positive, there was a stage where we were really ready for a change . . . it is now up to date and modern'. Teacher B when commenting

on teaching the new curriculum noted, 'at the start I was quite sceptical . . . but having worked through it, I think as a teacher, it gives you great ownership of your classroom'. The relevancy of the topics and the importance of sustainable issues was commented on by Teacher E who stated, 'it gets people thinking about what their future will be like and how we can actually make sure we have a future to look forward to'. All the teachers commented positively on the practical food skills focus of the new Specification, with 50% of externally assessed marks being weighted towards a practical food exam. Teachers identified this as being a key attraction for students when choosing subjects to study. Teacher A commented '50% cookery exam is a huge positive and it's a huge draw as well for students to take up the subject at junior cycle . . . it will enhance the food literacy skills [of students]'. This was reiterated by Teacher J who noted 'we are moving away from a very rigid knowing how to cook the scones . . . it's not just making a dish but making a dish based on informed decisions and weighing up the options'.

The flexibility afforded to teachers in the HE Specification was noted by nine of the ten teachers. Teacher E stated, 'there is great scope . . . depending on the kids you have in front of you, you can tailor to them [students] or the community that you are living in so there is great value'. Teacher G advocated for the 'reduced volume, reduced prescriptive topics, there is more achievable and relevant topics to their lives and . . . I feel less pressurized'. However, they also conversely talked about the challenges this flexible and reduced prescription of content can bring. Teacher H expressed concern that whilst they enjoyed teaching the new curriculum, the anxiety about what an exam would look like was still of concern to them and their colleagues, they noted 'we are still in the old habit of what is the exam going to be . . . we still have the fear of it'. The notion of 'fear' was reiterated by Teacher C who explained 'I think teachers, especially those who aren't newly qualified, are afraid of the change. They are afraid they won't be able to give their students the best they can give them. They want to do well by their students'. The reproduction of the curriculum policy at the classroom site situates the HETs as key agents of the pedagogic device. Of importance here is the relations between the Home Economics teacher (transmitter) and the students in the classroom (acquirers) as the pedagogic discourse pertaining to HE is reproduced.

Teachers' pedagogical practices

The mission of Home Economics outlined in the Specification influenced the 'what' and 'how' the teachers reproduced in the classroom. The Specification reflects a strong focus on developing food and health literacy skills in students over the three-year period. It is evident from this

research that teachers are very cognisant of the necessity for teaching students' food related life skills which can contribute to their health and wellbeing now and in the future. Teacher F commented her focus in the classroom is on developing a 'positive attitudes towards food and wellbeing'. Teacher B noted a key objective is to develop students so that they can 'make informed decisions about health-related issues and in relation to food so that they will adopt a healthy lifestyle'. This sentiment was expressed by all the teachers in the study who were unanimous in the belief that they can make a difference in the lives of young people, now and in the future, by equipping them with essential life skills. All the teachers raised, on numerous occasions, the applicability of the subject to real- life. Teacher H noted, 'everything we do . . . is for their real life and not just as a subject on the curriculum with no relevance' and Teacher J emphasised the 'universal relevance' of the subject. Teacher C, who stated that the subject gives a 'good start to life in general', reiterated this and noted that students not only have the knowledge, but the food-related practical skills to transfer the knowledge to real-life situations. Teachers explained that students were more receptive when teachers utilised real-life examples in teaching. Teacher D explained, 'everything comes back to real life, no matter what we teach . . . if you can put a real-life scenario on it, it makes it much more real for them [students]'. Developing critical thinking and skills of discernment in relation to food and consumer issues was cited by teachers as having a central focus in the teaching and learning of HE. From a pedagogical perspective, a constructivist approach to teaching and learning in HE was widespread in all of the responses with teachers referring to the subject as facilitating the creation of a 'very student centered environment' and their role is to 'facilitate the learning in a structured environment'. All teachers referred to the application of theory to practice and the 'active, practical, hands-on, real-life' nature of the subject as a key pedagogical approach to the subject. As they discussed the teaching and learning of HE in the classroom, they all indicated the active involvement of the student in the class as adding value and enjoyment to the learning that takes place.

Nine of the ten teachers referred to the students' problem-solving in classes, as a central pedagogical approach they utilise. Interestingly, the concept of 'practical perennial problems' was reported by 3 of the 10 teachers, although many of the seven other teachers spoke about the practical and problem-solving underpinning approaches of the subject. The use of the design brief process as a tool to guide students through a problem or a brief was noted by three of the teachers who espoused the benefits of this approach in assisting the students to be more reflective and critical of their decisions. Teacher B revealed, 'you are giving the student a task and allowing

them to analyse it and from there it organically develops so they champion their own learning . . . because they are engaged and active, it allows them to ground their learning in reality'. This consolidation of learning was further reinforced by Teacher H who indicated, 'by letting them [students] do the problem solving . . . is what will help them close the gap between their knowledge, skills and the application to real life'.

Discussion

Not all schools are the same and how policy is enacted can be dependent on the policy enactment environment of the school and particularly, the power dynamics and competing priorities within this context (Braun et al., 2011). Traditionally, the subject Home Economics was regarded by society and education authorities as only having a place in the education of females to teach the essential skills for raising a family or working in domestic service (McCloat & Caraher, 2018). This led to many boys' schools, even today, not offering the subject. Despite Home Economics knowledge evolving as research emerged, the predominantly female subject led to a stereotypical image and it became negatively associated with 'middle-class domesticity' (Stage, 1997, p. 7). In order to shift away from the focus on domesticity, the curriculum reform process in the late 1990s in Ireland, at Leaving Certificate level (students aged 16–18), adopted a more scientific emphasis, even calling the subject Home Economics Scientific and Social (2004). Moreover, the reform of the Junior Cycle HE in 2017 (under the auspice of Framework 2015), acknowledged the centrality of the family but outlines the 'central focus of Home Economics as a field of study is achieving optimal, healthy and sustainable living for individuals, families and society' (Department of Education and Skills, 2017, p. 4). However, by its very definition Home Economics, which is the ORF Specification referred to in this research, 'draws on diverse disciplines integrating social, physical and human sciences' to solve everyday problems (Department of Education and Skills, 2017, p. 4); therefore, it utilises an inter and, trans disciplinary inquiry approach.

As Morais (2002) notes, classification and framing of the knowledge of a subject are particularly important conditions for learning. A 'strong' classification would indicate a subject has a well-insulated identity and boundary in its knowledge, skills and under- standing. In contrast, a 'weak' classification infers a more integrated curriculum where boundaries between it and another subject are more permeable because the subject does not have a strongly insulated

identity (Sadovnik, 2001). Bernstein (1990; 2000, p. 12) notes framing is 'concerned with how meanings are to be put together, the forms by which they are made public'. Boundaries of a subject, like Home Economics, can correlate to the power or status the subject has within a school, and on the curriculum, and this bore out in the findings of this research. Penney (2013) refers to boundaries as a 'productive point of tension between the past and possible futures' and inherent in the systems of classification and framing is the potential for developing subject 'curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in ways that will mark a challenge to status quo' (p. 7).

The competing forces between subjects which are regarded as having a strongly insulated esoteric discourse, such as Maths, and those which are regarded as more common can be seen in this study. Esoteric knowledge refers to the category of discourse which defines a discipline or disciplinary knowledge and common is the knowledge that can be acquired from everyday context (Singh, 2002). This hierarchy of subjects in schools was commented on by teachers in this research particularly the prioritisation of subjects which are considered essential for matriculation for entry to University. Similarly, research in Australia and Canada outlines that HE and food education is undervalued by school leaders and is considered much less important than English or Maths (Ronto et al., 2017a, 2017b; Slater, 2013). This is reiterated by Lai-Yeung (2015) in a survey of school Principals in Hong Kong. Alvunger (2018) notes the concept of a strong and weak grammar of a subject facilitates an analysis of the curriculum content but this also correlates to the status of a subject and how it is perceived by teachers and students (Sadovnik, 2001; Singh et al., 2013). In particular, the balance between the common and esoteric discourses (Bernstein, 2000) in HE seems to influence the positioning of the subject. In this study, teachers referred to trying to address this and promote the subject as teaching more than common knowledge. Home Economics has struggled in the past with negative connotations and what Schenider (2000) referred to as 'white gloves and white sauce' (p. A18) associations. Moreover, Attar (1990) referred to HE as a 'Cinderella subject' and discussed the 'fantasy constructions' that the school subject teaches (p. 15). Home Economics has been negatively associated with teaching household skills which the public deemed as non-academic and menial. Through curriculum policy reform, the new Specification detailed in this research aims to have a more positive influence on the perception of the subject as it attempts to insulate the esoteric knowledge of the subject and move beyond common discourses, something which was not undertaken in previous curricula. The Specification has aimed to, what Penney (2013) refers to as, '(re)-define what constitutes legitimate knowledge and legitimate pedagogic practices' (p. 15) for HE at Junior Cycle. This is achieved using specific disciplinary knowledge and practices

(such as practical perennial problems; systems thinking; critical theory and emancipatory action) that can be linked back to the philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings of HE. The curriculum development process was informed by the academic work of Brown and Paolucci (1978) who, in defining Home Economics from a philosophical and pedagogical perspective, explain the importance of a critical or emancipatory system of action, applied in a practical way, to address recurrent or perennial problems facing individuals, families and society. The use of critical or emancipatory system of action draws on the work of Habermas (1971) and encourages critical reflective thinking skills to develop a holistic view of society and the complexities of practical perennial problems in daily family life. The use of the term 'practical' is more than technical skills but rather the application of reflective, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. However, interestingly, the teachers still regard the HE specification as 'flexible' which would denote a weak classification. Because of a lack of insulating of the subject and fragmenting of the philosophical underpinning inter- nationally, HE knowledge has been regarded by society as mostly common. The view that the subject is not academic but 'common sense' and anyone can teach it is a view that has plagued the subject over many years (Cunningham-Sabo and Simons, 2012; Nanayakkara et al., 2018). This is reflected in the way that the responses from the teachers in this study show that students and parents perceive subjects that are counted for University entry as having a higher status.

Teachers discussed their experiences of developing initiatives to promote the subject. The findings in this study identified a direct correlation between teachers who showed ingenuity and developed initiatives and those who reported a positive view of the subject in the broader school community. However, it could also be interpreted that a lack of understanding of the esoteric knowledge relating to the subject means HETs are often drawn into many extracurricular activities, as their subject is perceived to be so broad, unlike other teachers of what is traditionally perceived as 'academic subjects'. This is not necessarily to reflect a negative position but rather to demonstrate a lack of under- standing of what HE encapsulates. Indeed, all the teachers in this study reported a positive perception and status of the subject within the school community that they teach. They described the subject as being 'positively viewed' and 'regarded very highly' by key stakeholders in the school community including school leadership, board of management, teachers, parents and students. However, whether this is evident in school planning of staffing, resources, timetables and subject choice is questionable.

McCuaig and Hay (2014) refer to how Bernstein's pedagogic device can identify ways in which educational discourse is reproduced from the macro policy level to the micro classroom level. Consequently, despite a prescriptive curriculum, teachers will reproduce and enact the curriculum policy into their own working practices influenced by their classroom context. Braun et al. (2011) contend enacting policy can be complex, sophisticated and involves a process of interpretation and recontextualisation. The reproduction of the HE pedagogical discourse in the classroom has two interdependent dimensions, the 'what' (instructional discourse) and the 'how' (regulative discourse) (Bernstein, 2000; Daniels, 2004). Teachers in this study still experienced some 'anxiety' in relation to the assessment of the new curriculum. The enacting of any new curriculum can cause tension and challenges (Penney, 2020, 2013; Priestley et al., 2014) and anxiety experienced by the teachers in relation to the assessment can be linked to a legacy of weaker classification of the subject. As noted earlier in this paper, the HE Specification reflects a heightened focus and subject matter centred on developing food, health, and culinary skills in students. This is not surprising as it reflects a strong public discourse around health issues. Therefore, this is a key influencer on the reproduction of Home Economics official knowledge at the micro level of the classroom. Teachers in this study identified a perceived impact Home Economics can have on student's health and well- being, now and in the future and there was a strong sense of belief in the value of what they are teaching emanating from this research. This is despite there being no longitudinal research specifically investigating the impact of early food education on health over a lifespan. There is, however, research which demonstrates a positive correlation with those who have studied Home Economics, food education and cooking skills at an early age and their food knowledge; diet quality; cooking practices; healthy food practices later in life (Burton et al., 2017; Lavelle et al., 2016; Wolfson et al., 2017; Worsley et al., 2015; Wolfson & Bleich, 2015). Equally, a lack of food and cooking skills has been associated with an increased consumption of processed foods, which lack nutritional quality, and a consequential poor overall diet (Mills et al., 2017; Monsivais et al., 2014; Poti et al., 2015). All the HETs raised, on numerous occasions, the applicability of the subject to real-life and the positive association it has with developing food, health, and culinary skills in young people which are essential life skills now and in the future. However, Evans et al. (2013) noted that when education policy was translated in complex organisations, young people were ambivalent towards the health messages.

The HE Specification refers to students requiring critical decision-making skills to address real-world, practical perennial problems of individuals, families and society now and in the future

(DES, 2017). Campbell and Crowe (2011) notes this has resulted in HETs embedding key pedagogies, such as teacher demonstrations and student practical laboratories, as central to their teaching of the subject in the classroom. This constructivist approach to teaching and learning, which is advocated for in the new curriculum, was reflected in this research where all the teachers explained their use of practical, experiential pedagogical approaches. Teachers noted, in their experiences, this was required so that critical thinking and skills of discernment in relation to food and consumer issues could be developed in students. Research identifies how food education can contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of adolescents and their families (Boddy et al., 2019; Burton & Worsley, 2014; Ronto et al., 2016; Vidgen, 2016). This further concurs with Lavelle et al. (2016) who advocates for sustained food education which empowers the individual with skills and competencies necessary to encourage long-term healthy life- style approach. Consequently, it was not surprising that HETs in this study explained a key rationale of their pedagogical approach was to empower students to adopt a healthy, sustainable approach to living now and in the future.

Conclusion

Drawing on Bernstein's Theory of 'Pedagogic Device' and Ball's concept of 'policy enactment' and 'policy actor', this paper provides valuable insights as to the experiences of teachers enacting curriculum policy at the micro level of the classroom, specifically from a Home Economics perspective. And in doing so, it explores how curriculum policy is translated from macro policy to the micro level of the classroom. Issues of status and misperceptions around the subject have beleaguered Home Economics internationally over the years and from this research, this issue still prevails to some extent in Ireland. Although the new Junior Cycle HE Specification (2017) attempts to insulate the philosophical and pedagogical knowledge of the subject, this is only in its infancy in terms of enactment and the impact of this reform on the broader understanding of the subject will take many years to filter through. Teachers, as agents of the pedagogic device at the micro level of the classroom, play a critical role in translating the macro level curriculum policy. Our analysis shows HETs are enacting the intended curriculum policy and are focused on developing practical food, health, and culinary skills so that the students are empowered to make healthy and sustainable food choices as individuals and within their families and society now and in the future. Evidentially, HETs in the classroom facilitates the empowerment of students with the knowledge and skills which are required to engage in

critical and reflective thinking around food and health. This is consistent with the Junior Cycle HE curriculum policy and what it hopes to achieve after the three-year course of study. What has emerged from this research is the experiences of Home Economics teachers in enacting the curriculum policy is based on a coherent, and indeed homogenous, understanding of the philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings of the subject. In a broader context, this paper demonstrates how Bernstein's Theory of 'Pedagogic Device' can be effectively utilised, as a theoretical framework, to analyse how the curriculum policy is translated from macro policy to the micro level of the classroom by the teacher as an agent of the pedagogic device. It also demonstrates that enacting curriculum policy, at the micro level, is contextually bound and can be influenced by competing priorities within the school context.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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CHAPTER 9

Chapter 9 General Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

This chapter presents a reflection on the key outcomes of the thesis, their contribution to knowledge and the implications for food and education policy and practice. The strengths and limitations of the research will also be discussed along with my reflections on the doctoral research process. The chapter concludes with recommendations arising from the research and areas for future research are identified.

Summary of Key Outcomes & Contribution to Knowledge

The aim of this thesis was to explore the practice and interpretation of food policy in Home Economics curriculum in the education setting. This comprised the development and enactment of Home Economics curriculum policy from upstream at the macro policy development level to enactment downstream at the micro school and classroom level. In doing so, the thesis examines the role of Home Economics in providing the philosophical and pedagogical underpinning for food education as a food policy action in secondary schools. Basil Bernstein's theory of 'Pedagogic Device' (Bernstein, 1990, 2000) was integrated with the work by Stephen Ball and his colleagues (Ball et al., 2011a, 2011b; Braun et al., 2011; Ball, 2012) on policy enactment as a hybrid theoretical lens to gain a deeper understanding of the macro policy level of curriculum development and the interpretation of this policy at the micro level of the school and classroom. This enabled the researcher to analyse the practice and interpretation of food policy in the education setting through Home Economics curriculum policy.

To achieve this aim, five research questions and associated research objectives were developed. The research questions, which were aligned to research objectives (illustrated in table 6), proved to be appropriate to achieve the aim of the thesis. On reflection, and had the researcher more time for the PhD process, it would have been very interesting to include an additional study which may have focused on the views of other key stakeholders in the policy process such as students and parents.

Research Question	Research Objective
RQ 1: What is the curriculum policy pertaining to food education internationally?	***RO 1:*** Analyse the curriculum policy pertaining to food education internationally.
RQ 2: How has Home Economics curriculum policy evolved in primary and secondary schools from the 1800s to the 21st Century in the Republic of Ireland?	***RO 2:*** Explore the evolution of Home Economics curriculum policy in primary and secondary schools from the 1800s to the 21st Century in the Republic of Ireland.
RQ 3: What is the relationship between Home Economics and Food Education in Irish secondary schools?	***RO 3***: Critique the subject Home Economics in Irish secondary schools as a food education intervention.
RQ 4: How did the macro policy process pertaining to the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics in the Republic of Ireland unfold?	***RO 4:*** Examine the macro policy process pertaining to the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics in the Republic of Ireland.
RQ 5: What are the experiences of Home Economics teachers in enacting curriculum policy at the micro level of the school and classroom?	***RO 5:*** Analyse the experiences of Home Economics teachers in enacting curriculum policy at the micro level of the classroom.

Table 6: Research Questions aligned to Research Objectives

Research demonstrates there is a renewed interest internationally in researching food education in the education context, particularly in Australia (Nanayakkara et al., 2017; Fordyce-Voorham, 2018; Ronto et al., 2016; Pendergast et al., 2011; Burton and Worsley, 2014; Vaitkeviciute et al., 2015). Many of these articles investigate the attitudes of teachers or students or food professionals towards food literacy on the curriculum. However, it was evident from the literature review that there is a dearth of published research, and none in the Republic of Ireland, on the interpretation

of Home Economics education policy, from a food perspective, in the education setting at different levels (macro, meso and micro). Most of the studies focused on the micro level and none of the articles reviewed examined the macro policy development in education. Therefore, the main originality in this research lies in the examination of food policy at three different levels of education policy - macro, meso and micro and the connections between these levels. At the time of writing there is no similar research in Ireland or the United Kingdom, that examines the contribution of Home Economics education to the wider food and policy health arenas, and which analyses the practice and interpretation of food policy in the education setting through Home Economics curriculum policy. Research is limited internationally (Boddy et al., 2019; Smith, 2016; Renwick, 2016; Worsley et al, 2015; Ronto et al., 2016; Burton and Worsley, 2014; Pendergast et al., 2011) in this field and the focus is not from a policy development perspective but more so from the experiences of food literacy in schools. This is predominantly based in Australia and the policy gaps can be explained by the lack of a coherent national education policy system of governance with varying policies at state and territory level. In the United Kingdom, aside from publications by Rutland and Turner (2020); Owen-Jackson and Rutland (2016) and Rutland (2017), there are no recent publications referencing Home Economics as it has, in name, disappeared from the curriculum and the training of Home Economics professionals has ceased (McCloat and Caraher, 2019; 2018).

Another first of its kind in Ireland, the thesis documents a published peer-reviewed paper which examines the evolution of Home Economics curriculum policy in primary and secondary schools from the 1800s to the 21st Century in Ireland. This is a valuable reference source for Home Economics academics, students and professionals. It is important to have the history of the subject documented, by a Home Economics professional, so that future generations can reflect on the subject and utilise it to inform future policy developments.

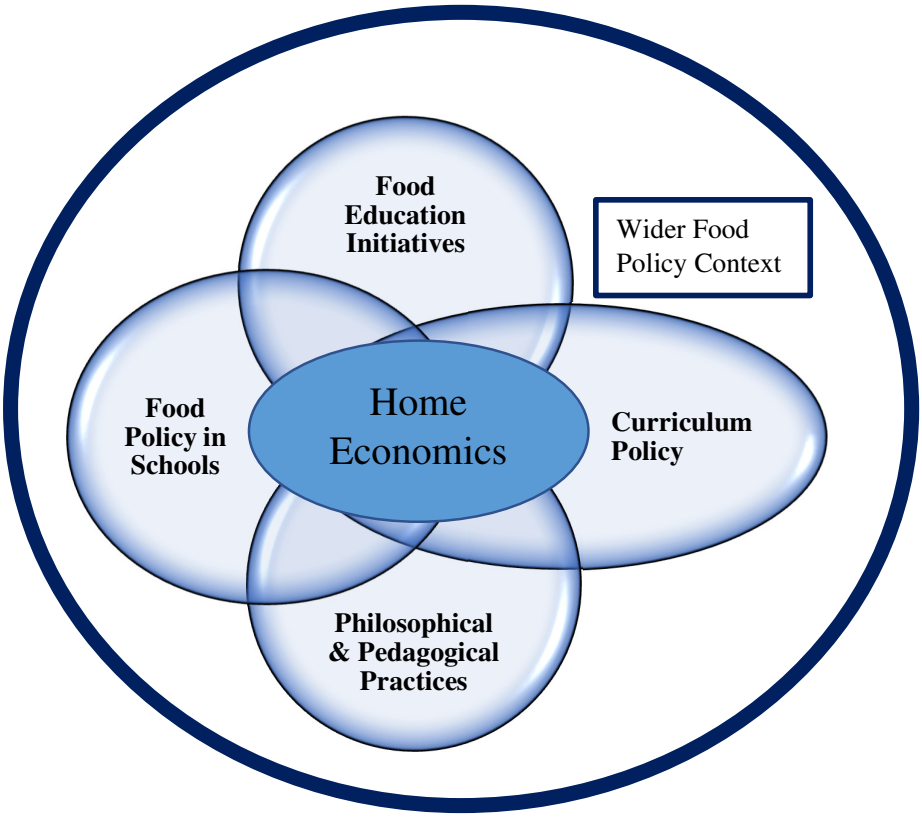

Figure 9: Wider food policy context with Home Economics situated at the nexus

This thesis spanned the research fields of food education initiatives; philosophical and pedagogical practices; curriculum policy and food policy; with Home Economics situated at the nexus between these areas and located within the wider food policy context, this is illustrated in figure 9. This study is the first that bridges a policy gap which examines the development of Home Economics curriculum policy upstream at the macro level with the experiences of teachers enacting the policy downstream at the meso and micro level of the school and classroom using the theoretical lens of Bernstein's theory of pedagogic device (Bernstein, 1990; 2000). And in doing so, it examines the role of Home Economics in providing the philosophical and pedagogical underpinning for food education as a policy action in secondary schools at a time of significant curriculum reform.

The results of these analyses are published in Chapters 4 - Chapter 8 which form the series of a number of peer-reviewed articles. Each of the research questions will be discussed in detail and how their findings are reflected in the published articles (McCloat and Caraher, 2020; 2019; 2018; 2016). It is recognised that even within the school setting there are broader food policy issues outside the classroom teaching situation such as before and after school activities; food served in schools; local food environment etc. but in this thesis, the central hub of research is located with Home Economics education. In broader health promotion literature (Townsend et al., 2011;

Townsend and Foster, 2011), a multifactorial whole of school approach to health promotion is advocated for as well as resemblance between what is taught in the curriculum and what is practiced in schools. It is not unusual for food related activities to often undermine what is taught in Home Economics (Boddy, 2019), although some Home Economics teachers do try and play a positive role in changing these practices (ibid, McCloat and Caraher, 2020).

The thesis was informed by the author's direct role in the policy development of the reform of Home Economics curriculum under the *Framework for Junior Cycle* (2015). The author was initially commissioned, as a subject expert in Home Economics, by the National Council Curriculum Assessment (NCCA) to write the *Background Paper for Junior Cycle Home Economics* (NCCA, 2016). This paper set out the philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings of Home Economics and was then utilised to inform the development of the *Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification* (DES, 2017). The author was then further commissioned by the NCCA to work with a Subject Development Team to develop the *Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification (2017)* over a 12-month period at the macro policy level.

The next section of this chapter discusses how each research question was addressed and how they are reflected in the published peer-reviewed articles.

Research Question 1: What is the curriculum policy pertaining to food education internationally?

Study 1 analysed the curriculum policy pertaining to food education internationally. In looking at the macro policy level, an international case study was undertaken across nine countries to look at best practice internationally from a Home Economics/food education perspective. Only formal curriculum policy, which was nationally agreed, or in the case of Australia (State of Victoria, regionally agreed, at junior, secondary school level was included.

This study was published as a peer-reviewed journal article in the *Cambridge Journal of Education* (McCloat and Caraher, 2019). This was one of the first of its kind that looked at Home Economics across seven countries and at the time of writing there was no similar article published in a peer-reviewed journal. The last time a comparative study which was somewhat related, looking at cooking in schools but not specifically Home Economics curriculum, published in a

journal was Stitt (1996). Pendergast and Dewhurst (2012) undertook a comparative study on food literacy and Home Economics, but this examined the perspectives of teachers internationally not an international comparative of curriculum policy. In 2018, Tull published a book chapter, which compared food education across a number of countries but did not focus specifically on Home Economics curriculum policy at secondary school level but rather took a broad-spectrum approach from primary right up to vocational education training.

The countries included in Study 1 in this thesis were based on the suitability of their Home Economics / food education curriculum policy meeting one of the following four criteria:

Criteria	**Country Selected**
1. An established historical policy for providing mandatory food education on the curriculum	Japan, Finland
2. A relatively recent change in policy to have mandatory food education	Northern Ireland
3. An established policy but optional food education on the curriculum	Ireland; Malta; Australia (State of Victoria)*
4. An ad hoc, piecemeal approach to food education	England

Table 7: Selection Criteria for Study 1. *Different standards from State to State in Australia

From a policy perspective, a lot of lessons can be learned from Japan and Finland where the concept and importance of teaching children food education as essential life skills is embedded as a mandatory element of the curriculum for males and females at junior high school (ages 12-15 years). It is regarded as essential that students develop comprehensive, practical food skills and this is often situated as part of wider food policy initiatives in schools including free school meals (Arai, 2012; Hokkanen and Kosonen, 2013). In Japan, food education in schools is situated within a wider societal context, called the Basic Law of Shokuiku which was enacted in 2005 (Reiher, 2012) and it appears to feed into the overall perception and importance of food education to every member of society. This is underpinned by the provision of school meals, which started in Japan in the late nineteenth century, and the consumption of which is compulsory for all students and teachers. They are regarded as a core part of the curriculum of learning and therefore, there is consistency between curricula and the food served in schools (Moffatt and Gendron, 2019).

Northern Ireland have moved towards compulsory food education with a change to curriculum policy. This initially took place in 2007 and a further redevelopment of the *Home Economics Specification* occurred in 2017 which mandates that all students in Key Stage 3 (11-14 years), in State funded schools, study the new Specification. However, the implementation of this has been fraught as there remains a limited supply of qualified teachers each year coupled with access to practical facilities in schools and limited financial supports (Caraher, Wu and Seeley, 2010; Caraher et al., 2013; McCloat et al., 2021). This clearly demonstrates the need for forward planning when such policies are to be implemented.

This comprehensive and sustained approach to developing food skills was not witnessed to the same extent in the remainder of the four countries (Republic of Ireland; England; State of Victoria, Australia; or Malta). There is no doubting the popularity of the subject Home Economics in the Republic of Ireland where, in 2019, 36% (n=23,043) of the total cohort of Junior Certificate students studied the subject (SEC, 2019). However, it remains an optional subject on the curriculum, despite numerous attempts to have it changed (McCloat and Caraher, 2020), and is traditionally timetabled against what are perceived to be more male subjects such as Materials Technology. This raises issues around the stereotyping of the subject and the life skills it teaches. Furthermore, it engenders a cycle of female Home Economists who study the subject in University as a profession which becomes very challenging to break and has become engrained in society. However, the curriculum policy is a comprehensive and holistic one which is grounded and underpinned with a pedagogical and philosophical approach. A similar situation occurs in Malta where the subject is also an optional area of study but is rooted in a socio-ecological approach to the pedagogy and content of the curriculum (Ministry of Education and Employment, 2014). This may have been influenced by Malta being a British Colony before it gained independence in 1964 (Malta Tourism Authority, 2020).

Conversely, the study demonstrated the situation pertaining to food education as being in disarray in England. A piecemeal approach, with limited contact time for students, no sound pedagogical underpinning and once off training for those who implement the new curriculum, led to wide variation in terms of implementation and little to no impact in schools (Jamie Oliver Foundation, 2017; British Nutrition Foundation, 2017). Furthermore, the disregard for the teaching of food related subjects was further compounded by the removal of the opportunity for students to study an academic focused food subject in senior cycle (ages 16+). Routes were maintained through vocational education but again this demonstrates a lack of regard for the wider food policy issue and reverts to a very strong technocratic, skills based, approach to food. Policy makers in England

were called on to move away from a skills only approach to a more holistic curriculum which focused on the broader food issues such as nutrition, food science, political, social and ethical issues pertaining to food (Owen-Jackson and Rutland, 2016). However, this remains unaddressed within the curriculum policy in secondary schools in England. This can be traced to the removal of Home Economics as a subject and the subsequent cessation of training of Home Economics specialist teachers (Ballam, 2018).

One of the key strengths of the study was how it demonstrated that Home Economics, in an international context, is a wide-ranging education programme which maximises practical experiential learning. The comparative analysis illustrated, for almost all the countries explored, Home Economics is tasked as the subject on the curriculum to teach food education, both practical and theoretical. The subject incorporates nutritional knowledge, practical food and culinary skills and scientific theory in an integrated and sequential manner. Therefore, it is ideally placed to deliver a holistic and comprehensive food education to young people. Internationally, it was evident that countries where Home Economics teachers were educated as specialists in a University setting, the subject maintained a coherent subject presence on the secondary school curriculum (McCloat and Caraher, 2019). Although the scope of the research did not allow for this to be further investigated, there was a very clear link established and it is conceivable that a professional group of teachers, with specialised education, can promote and advocate for the subject.

This first study set the scene and explored the broader policy context of the thesis on an international stage which also raised key policy issues as identified above. As it was an innovative study and one of the first of its kind, at the time of writing, it was invaluable in setting the scene on an international stage for the researcher to move forward with the study in an Irish context. Study 1 informed the development of the next study (Study 2) in the thesis which was to explore how Home Economics curriculum policy evolved in Ireland from the 1800s to the 21st century. Furthermore, the strengths of countries such as Finland and Japan and conversely, the disarray in England, provided valuable lessons that were referenced when the development of the Home Economics policy was being undertaken in Study 4 and 5.

Research Question 2: How has Home Economics curriculum policy evolved in primary and secondary schools from the 1800s to the 21st Century in the Republic of Ireland?

Study 2 explored the evolution of Home Economics curriculum policy in primary and secondary schools from the 1800s to the 21st Century in Ireland. In the first published journal article of its kind in Ireland, the peer-reviewed paper, published in *Irish Educational Studies* (McCloat and Caraher, 2018), documented how Home Economics curriculum policy emerged in the 1800s in primary schools and evolved over the centuries to form a secondary school subject. A key strength is how it charts the development of the subject in the 1800s to its current format on the curriculum in 2017 in Ireland. It draws on primary sources in the national archives and provides a very comprehensive timeline of how Home Economics curriculum policy developed situated within an ever-changing societal and political context. Most significantly, it charts how policy evolved when Ireland was governed under British Rule in the 1800s up to the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922 when the Dáil (Irish Houses of Parliament) overseen legislation from then on.

Interestingly, the study demonstrated how Home Economics, as a subject, acquired its strong gender bias which has negatively impacted the subject ever since and was apparent in Study 1. When it emerged in the 1800s within a strongly gendered curriculum, policy makers believed its education focus was on developing essential life skills for young women to learn about the practical concerns of family cookery and home management. Consequently, it had a perceived lack of relevance in a patriarchal curriculum which had a strong literary basis. Moreover, the subject was criticised by feminists for promoting a picture of domestic ideology for the middle-class and the 'perfect housewife' by reinforcing the role of the woman in the home in Ireland (Clear, 2000). The stereotyping of the subject emerged in Study 1 and was very much evident in the analysis of the data for Study 2. This study showed the focus of the subject content consistently reinforced the gendered nature of the uptake of the subject and it was not until 1965 that the first male students took a State Examination in the subject in Ireland. This has continued to be a challenge for the subject and the proportion of females (87% in 2019) still far exceeds that of male students (13% in 2019) who took the Leaving Certificate State Examination in Home Economics (SEC, 2019). Similarly, for the 2019 Junior Certificate Examination, of the total number of students, 82% (n=18,852) were female and 18% (n=4,191) were male (SEC, 2019).

However, Study 2 demonstrated the continued popularity of Home Economics, as a subject of choice, among young women through the centuries. Although the focus and underpinning rationale of Home Economics education was to enhance the quality of life of families, it is

apparent that the content and pedagogical approaches of the curriculum policy evolved over time to ensure continued relevance to societal needs with various curriculum reform initiatives. Analysis of the historical documents for Study 2 shows how curriculum policy in Ireland evolved and yet this would be in contradiction to some popular public perception of a subject that remains static and traditional in its approach.

Future wisdom can be gleaned from studying history and the past. From a policy perspective, Study 2 facilitated the researcher to explore some of the emerging themes from Study 1, including status; gender issues; historical development of policy; influences on and rationale for Home Economics education, as they evolved over time in Home Economics curriculum policy in Ireland from the 1800s to 2017. This was the first time the history of Home Economics curriculum policy was formally documented in a peer-reviewed journal article. A key strength of Study 2 is how the findings examine the contribution of the subject Home Economics to the food and health knowledge and skills of young women through the centuries. However, the learning from Study 2 was how an evolving and dynamic rationale for Home Economics education could continue to be of relevance in addressing the issues, from a food and health perspective, of the twenty-first century. This enquiry formed the basis for Study 3, 4 and 5 which are discussed next in this chapter.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between Home Economics and Food Education in Irish secondary schools?

Study 3 explored how the subject Home Economics in Irish secondary schools was situated, in 2016, as a food education intervention prior to the development of a new curriculum policy. The output of Study 3 was a peer reviewed, published paper (McCloat and Caraher, 2016) which is in Chapter 6 of this thesis and this study also significantly contributed to Chapter 2. A key strength of the output of Study 3 is how accessible, and of interest, the paper is to professionals. This is evidenced in the fact that it currently has 7,179 reads as reported on ResearchGate (21st April 2021).

Although Home Economics is an established subject on the curriculum, as outlined in Study 1 and 2, not at all students can study it in schools and in Ireland, the uptake is gender biased. From a societal and health perspective, the paper concluded that ensuring all students had an

opportunity to study Home Economics is a worthwhile investment from a public health perspective.

The literature review undertaken and published for Study 3 fills a gap which is evident in Irish and international research. There remains a dearth of published research in Home Economics in Ireland. By publishing the review of literature, the Study contributed to the advancement of the understanding of the relationship between Home Economics and food education in Irish secondary schools. Furthermore, by publishing the article in a journal which is not directly linked to Home Economics, it exposes those outside the field to Home Economics education and hopefully will lead to a greater understanding of how it contributes to food education.

Research Question 4: How did the macro policy process pertaining to the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics in the Republic of Ireland unfold?

Study 4 examined the macro policy process upstream pertaining to the reform of Junior Cycle Home Economics in the Republic of Ireland. Using Bernstein's pedagogic device as a theoretical lens, the study examined how the macro policy was developed in the field of recontextualisation. It also draws on the findings of in-depth interviews (n=10) to examine the Home Economics teachers' perspectives on the reformed policy. This Study is a macro to micro policy process as it pertains to the school and classroom setting. The findings from Study 4 have been submitted in the form of a manuscript, which, at the time of submission is under peer-review (since August 2020), to the *International Journal of Home Economics*.

The reformed curriculum policy was broadly welcomed by the Home Economics teachers in the study who regarded it as timely, relevant and modern. To date, there is limited acknowledgement of the contribution of Home Economics in wider food and health policy arenas and in fact there has been many attempts at marginalising the subject and reducing its value to a simplistic and technocratic approach of 'how to cook'. Teachers in this study perceive the reformed curriculum policy opened new opportunities for Home Economics to contribute more effectively to the wider health and food policy agendas. In Ireland, Home Economics is the only subject on the curriculum which teaches holistic and comprehensive food education, seamlessly integrating theoretical knowledge and understanding on nutrition, healthy eating, budgeting, meal planning, shopping, sustainability with practical cooking and food skills. However, there is a need to raise awareness of the philosophical basis and pedagogical approaches that are advocated in the Home Economics

curriculum policy. Moreover, this could be achieved by the implementation of the policy recommendation, by the Irish Houses of the Oireachtas Committee in November 2018, to offer compulsory Home Economics education for all students at junior cycle. From a policy perspective, this Report signalled a very significant step, by members of the Government Committee, policy makers and legislators, in affirming the positive role Home Economics education can play in teaching students essential practical food skills which is underpinned by scientific and nutritional theory.

Study 4 key contribution to knowledge is that it details the macro policy development process upstream in the field of recontextualisation (Bernstein, 1990; 2000). The unique opportunity which involved the researcher being part of the Home Economics policy development, as a subject expert in Home Economics, resulted in a rich understanding of the upstream, macro policy development process. The use of interviews with Home Economics teachers enabled a deeper examination of their perspective on the reformed policy and how it reflected the philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings of Home Economics. The analysis in Study 4 was facilitated by using Bernstein's pedagogic device as a theoretical lens. Because of this approach, there is no similar study at the time of writing, in either national or international research in Home Economics policy.

Research Question 5: What are the experiences of Home Economics teachers in enacting curriculum policy at the micro level of the classroom?

Study 5 analysed the experiences of Home Economics teachers in enacting curriculum policy downstream at the meso and micro level of the school and classroom. The epistemology underpinning the research process in Study 5, draws on Bernstein's work on curriculum and pedagogic practice and the 'Pedagogic Device', which allows the links to be drawn between macro level policy, as in formal curricula documents, and the micro level interpretation of this at school and classroom level. This is further integrated with the work of Stephen Ball and his colleagues (Ball et al., 2011a, 2011b; Braun et al., 2011; Ball, 2012) on the concept of 'policy enactment' and the experiences of the teacher as a 'policy actor' in shaping how the Home Economics curriculum policy is translated and enacted into practice at the meso and micro level.

The findings of Study 5 have been published in a peer reviewed education journal, *Teachers and Teaching, Theory and Practice* (McCloat and Caraher, 2020). This is achieving the authors'

objective to contribute to the research base in Home Economics and advance the understanding of the field to those outside the profession. A key contribution of Study 5 is it's use of Bernstein's work to locate food policy within an educational and pedagogical model by making the link between macro policy formation and the interpretation and enactment of the policy in the micro setting of the school and classroom. Furthermore, the study locates Home Economics within a wider food policy setting and situates this within a pedagogical frame.

It is evident that issues of status and gendered connotations still prevail around the subject. The new curriculum policy does attempt to insulate the philosophical and pedagogical knowledge of the subject which will hopefully have a positive impact on the broader understanding of the subject. The teacher, as an actor in the pedagogic device in reproducing the Home Economics knowledge, plays a critical role in facilitating the empowerment of students with practical food, health and culinary skills so that they can develop a positive relationship with food and make sustainable and healthy food choice now and in the future.

Strengths and Limitations

The strengths and limitations of the research design of each study has already been discussed in detail in Chapter 3 and in the respective chapters of this thesis. This section provides an overview of the strengths and limitations of the thesis overall. Areas for future research, arising from this thesis, are identified at the end of this Chapter.

Strengths

Firstly, this thesis extends the research and literature in the Republic of Ireland in the much under researched field of Home Economics. It contributes in a meaningful and applicable way and extends the body of knowledge of Home Economics nationally and internationally by analysing the development and enactment of Home Economics curriculum policy.

Secondly, although the research is focused on the practice and interpretation of food policy in the secondary school educational setting in the Republic of Ireland, the findings can be applied to the development and implementation of future food policy actions and curriculum reform in Home Economics and food education internationally.

Thirdly, this thesis provides original insights into policy development and enactment in Home Economics. It examines the development of new Home Economics curriculum policy upstream at the macro level by having a direct involvement in the policy development process. The thesis then proceeds to examine the experiences of Home Economics teachers in enacting the curriculum policy downstream at the meso and micro level of the school and classroom.

Fourthly, the thesis situates Home Economics within the wider food policy arena. It is acknowledged that a multifactorial approach to food policy is required if healthy and sustainable behaviour change is achieved. Within a whole school approach, this thesis demonstrates how Home Economics education can contribute towards achieving this as part of a multifactorial response within a broader framework of healthy schools.

Fifthly, the thesis is one of the first of its kind, at the time of writing, in the Republic of Ireland and to the best of the author's knowledge, one of the first internationally that explores the practice and interpretation of food policy in the education setting through the development and enactment of Home Economics curriculum policy. This emphasises the originality of the research and the work contained in the thesis.

Finally, this thesis documents, and published for the first time in a peer-reviewed journal, the evolution of Home Economics curriculum policy in primary and secondary schools from the 1800s to the 21st Century in Ireland. This will be a valuable resource for Home Economics academics, students, and professionals to reflect on the past and use it to inform the future.

Limitations

Although there are many strengths to this thesis overall, some limitations must be noted.

Firstly, due to the focus of the research objectives of this thesis and the limitations of time and scope of this research, the voice of other key policy actors, namely, parents, students, department officials, school management were not examined in the research presented in this thesis. However, the author's role in helping formulate policy and the commissioned work that was undertaken facilitated the views of these key stakeholders to be considered and included as the policy was developed.

Secondly, the thesis is situated in an interpretivist paradigm and utilises qualitative research methodological approaches. Consequently, the data is subjective in nature. In order to mitigate

any perceived biases, the researcher ensured that methodological rigour was applied throughout the process, as explained in Chapter 3, and this ensured the conclusions delineated in this thesis are valid and reliable.

Thirdly, purposive sampling was utilised in Study 5 as teachers were required to meet certain inclusion criteria. Therefore, no attempts are made by the author to generalise the findings to all Home Economics teachers in the Republic of Ireland despite valuable findings which can be applied.

Reflections on Doctoral Research Process

My PhD journey commenced with my professional interest in advancing research in the field of Home Economics. The doctoral research process challenged me intellectually and emotionally to achieve this; however, I am proud of what I have achieved and very much enjoyed engaging with the process.

Over the course of this research period, I often felt that I was forging a path that not many have travelled in the Republic of Ireland. The field of Home Economics is very under researched at Doctoral level in the State with only a handful of PhD theses available which are specific to research in the field. Despite this, I was constantly inspired by the willingness and generosity of people to assist in whatever way they could or be part of the research data collection. The passion, belief, realism in acknowledging the challenges and genuine enthusiasm for progressing the field of Home Economics was evident in those I spoke with. It was this I drew on when, over the course of the journey, I faced many creative challenges. Identifying and preparing manuscripts for journals is all par to the course of PhD by publication and can be tedious at the best of times. However, it inevitably becomes more challenging when you are researching in a field that is not only multidisciplinary but also very misperceived or regarded as being in the minority in many English-speaking countries, such as the UK, where most of the main publishing houses are located. Consequently, I found myself struggling with changing the nomenclature and the use of 'Home Economics' to ensure an appeal to the audience of the journal.

As my journey progressed, I have had several opportunities to engage with non-research stakeholders to disseminate my PhD research and by engaging in the PhD process, I developed the confidence and the ability to speak from an evidence base perspective. I believe passionately

about the importance of disseminating research outside academia so that the research field can be promoted and advanced. I was able to utilise the research I had engaged with as part of my PhD to offer a critical perspective on the role of Home Economics education from a food and health policy perspective on a number of fronts. In 2014, I was appointed by the then Government of Ireland Minster for Health to the National *Healthy Ireland Council*. The inaugural national Council, of which the President of Ireland is the Patron, was established to provide strategic vision and leadership on the health policies of Ireland. I was one of twenty Council members, selected through a national recruitment process, from various health agendas and the only Council member directly from an education perspective. Having started my PhD journey at this point and as a result of engaging critically with literature on my topic, I was able to bring research informed policy suggestions at this high-level forum which resulted in various food-based education policy initiatives. Through this I was able to develop an awareness among key policy makers of the field of Home Economics and the potential of Home Economics education. Most notably, I was an invited panellist, along with one other Council member, to participate in the launch of the Healthy Ireland Network with distinguished panellists of the Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister); the Minister for Health; and the Minister for Health Promotion in Dublin Castle in May 2017. As a presenting member of this panel, I had the opportunity to present on the importance of educating young people on essential food life skills and the role Home Economics can play in this regard. Having undertaken some of the research for my PhD at this stage, gave me the confidence to engage at this level and present from an evidence base. It also enabled me to engage in constructive dialogue with fellow panellists and members of the audience and to challenge assumptions and statements which were not factually based around this area.

Drawing further on the research I was engaging with for my PhD, in May 2018, I led out on a detailed submission to a Consultation being undertaken by the *Government of Ireland Oireachtas Committee on Children and Youth Affairs on Tackling Childhood Obesity*. The Oireachtas are the legislature in Ireland and comprise the lower house (which is called the Dáil) and the upper house (called the Seanad). This resulted in being called as an 'Expert Witness' to the official Oireachtas hearing of the *Committee on Children and Youth Affairs on Tackling Childhood Obesity* in Leinster House (the Irish Parliament Buildings) on the 30th May 2018. As a result of being immersed in my PhD research at this point, I again felt confident and well-equipped to write a detailed, critical, research informed witness statement. Had I not been researching at this level; I would have found this most challenging. The witness statement was very well received by the members of the Oireachtas Committee and entered into the official records of the House. Most

notably, it also contributed to a key policy recommendation being published as part of the final *Report on Tackling Childhood Obesity*, "The Joint Committee recommends that the Government should consider the introduction of Home Economics as a compulsory subject on the Junior Cycle Curriculum for post-primary schools" (Recommendation 11, p.6, Houses of the Oireachtas, 2018). These opportunities were professionally rewarding as they stimulated conversations and dialogue around educating young people in Home Economics.

Recommendations

In drawing this thesis to a close, I now outline recommendations directly arising from the research and identify potential areas for future research.

Firstly, Home Economics is already an established subject on the curriculum in many countries, with educated specialist Home Economics teachers, and so this should be utilised as a mechanism through which practical, sustained food education is offered to all students at junior secondary school. At the meso level of school and classroom, this would necessitate in Home Economics being a mandatory subject for all junior secondary school students and may require some investment in schools where such practical facilities do not currently exist. Specifically, for the Republic of Ireland, it is strongly recommended that the outcome of the *Government of Ireland Oireachtas Committee on Children and Youth Affairs on Tackling Childhood Obesity Report on Tackling Childhood Obesity*, (Recommendation 11, p.6, Houses of the Oireachtas, 2018) be implemented in the immediate future which would see the introduction, on a phased basis, of Home Economics as a compulsory subject on the Junior Cycle Curriculum for post-primary schools as a mandated macro policy. This would situate Home Economics education, as part of a multifactorial school response, within the wider food policy framework.

Secondly, this research demonstrates how Home Economics education provides the pedagogical and philosophical underpinning to teach food education in a holistic and comprehensive way. Rather than implementing and funding piecemeal, short and non-sustainable interventions, it is recommended that investment be made in educating more Home Economics teachers and placing Home Economics and its pedagogical approaches at the centre of any new interventions in an education setting. Where Home Economics no longer has a presence, it is recommended that a pilot Home Economics teacher education programme be established in a University with a view to renewing the subject over a period of time.

Thirdly, the re-branding and promotion of the profession needs a sustained and concerted effort across all organisations and their members. A forward thinking and progressive image branding strategy is required to promote the subject to the public, industry, and society. It is recommended this is led by the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) who are ideally placed to lead on this initiative with cooperation from national organisations in member countries. At the meso level of the school, this could be adopted by Home Economics teachers to promote the subject to the entire school community and its wider stakeholders.

Fourthly, it was very apparent from conducting the literature review for this thesis that there is a dearth of current Home Economics specific research published in international peer-reviewed journals. Although academics working in the field of Home Economics are conducting and publishing research, it is not directly related to Home Economics but rather to more specific research areas in food, sustainability, textiles, family etc. with no apparent link back to the subject. Therefore, it is recommended that more discipline specific research is conducted on the nature and impact of Home Economics by academics. There is potential for this to be conducted cross nationally from a policy and practice perspective.

Finally, there is no escaping the gendered nature of the subject. Although this was not a focus of this research it did manifest itself in the findings throughout the thesis. It is strongly recommended that a concerted effort be made by professionals and organisations alike to attract, publicise, and promote the subject with a target of having a more gender balance in the profession.

Recommendations for Future Research

The research objectives and scope of this thesis were clearly defined; however, arising from the findings of this thesis, there are a number of areas for future research.

Firstly, a longitudinal study at the meso level of the school, that investigates teachers' experiences of enacting the Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification over a three-year cycle would be desirable. Three-years is the duration of the Junior Cycle in secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland, the end of which students take the Junior Cycle examination. This longitudinal study could comprise mixed methods including survey with a larger cohort of teachers; classroom observation and semi-structured interviews to examine changes over the three-year period; and focus groups discussions. The in-class observation would facilitate an exploration of the

pedagogical approaches used in the classroom and how these are developmentally incorporated to suit the needs of students over a three-year period.

Secondly, this longitudinal study could be complemented by exploring the experiences of Home Economics students over the three-year cycle as they commence their studies in Year 1 and progress through the three years of studying Junior Cycle Home Economics. This would provide for rich data on the implementation of policy from both the teacher and student' perspective. It would also serve to understand the value of Home Economics education to the students.

Thirdly, there are other key stakeholders and policy actors in the education system that have a direct influence on how policy is implemented at the macro, meso and micro level. These include Department of Education and Skills officials; National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA); school management and leadership; Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) who provided professional development training for teachers on new curricula; and teacher educators in the Universities and Colleges. Research on their experiences and perceptions on policy development and implementation, using a Bernstein approach, would be valuable and would enrich the existing study presented in this thesis.

Fourthly, Home Economists often believe they must legitimise their existence because of a perception of being misunderstood or not valued by the public. This was commented on by the Home Economics teachers in this study. However, to date there is limited published, and current, data pertaining to this and no research that is explored from an Irish context. A further research study could focus on exploring the perception of Home Economics among the public comparing those who had the opportunity to study the subject with those who have not.

Fifthly, a further research study could examine the relationship of the Home Economics curriculum to the wider WHO/UNESCO *Global Standards for Health Promoting Schools* which were updated and launched on the 15th February 2021 (WHO, 2021). This would contribute to having evidence-based research on how Home Economics education contributes to wider health promotion agenda in schools.

Concluding Remarks

The research in this thesis explored how food policy is practiced and interpreted in the education setting through Home Economics curriculum policy. Using the theoretical lens of Bernstein's (1990, 2000) pedagogic device, the research united the perspectives of food policy and Home Economics education from a policy to practitioner perspective. It examined the development of Home Economics curriculum policy from upstream at the macro policy development level to enactment downstream at the micro school and classroom setting. In doing so, the thesis examined the role of Home Economics in providing the philosophical and pedagogical underpinning for food education as a food policy action in secondary schools.

The thesis contributes not only subject matter to food policy research but also, from a methodological perspective, focuses on the development of food policy from upstream at the macro policy level to the enactment of the policy downstream. A key contribution of the research is the use of Bernstein's pedagogic device, integrated with Ball's policy enactment, to locate food policy within an educational and pedagogical model by making the link between macro policy formation and the interpretation of the policy in the micro setting.

This thesis has made a significant contribution to research in the field of Home Economics nationally in the Republic of Ireland and internationally because of its original focus and research. It locates Home Economics within a wider food policy setting and situates this within a pedagogical framework. It is evident that single-issue approaches, for example once off cooking initiatives, to encourage healthy and sustainable behaviour change are insufficient but rather Home Economics education in a school setting should be located within a wider health and food policy arena that supports a healthy school approach. The next challenge will be to implement the recommendations which it sets out through advocacy and working with policy makers in the area.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethics Form

Ethics ETH1819-0576: Amanda McCloat (Low risk)

Date	09 Jan 2019
Researcher	Amanda McCloat
Project	Home Economics teachers' perspectives on the role of Home Economics education as a food policy action
School	School of Arts and Social Sciences
Department	Sociology

Ethics application

Risks

R1) Does the project have funding?
No

R2) Does the project involve human participants?
Yes

R3) Will the researcher be located outside of the UK during the conduct of the research?
Yes

R4) Will any part of the project be carried out under the auspices of an external organisation, involve collaboration between institutions, or involve data collection at an external organisation?
No

R5) Does your project involve access to, or use of, material that could be classified as security sensitive?
No

R6) Does the project involve the use of live animals?
No

R7) Does the project involve the use of animal tissue?
No

R8) Does the project involve accessing obscene materials?
No

R9) Does the project involve access to confidential business data (e.g. commercially sensitive data, trade secrets, minutes of internal meetings)?
No

R10) Does the project involve access to personal data (e.g. personnel or student records) not in the public domain?

No

R11) Does the project involve deviation from standard or routine clinical practice, outside of current guidelines?
No

R12) Will the project involve the potential for adverse impact on employment, social or financial standing?
No

R13) Will the project involve the potential for psychological distress, anxiety, humiliation or pain greater than that of normal life for the participant?
No

R15) Will the project involve research into illegal or criminal activity where there is a risk that the researcher will be placed in physical danger or in legal jeopardy?
No

R16) Will the project specifically recruit individuals who may be involved in illegal or criminal activity?
No

R17) Will the project involve engaging individuals who may be involved in terrorism, radicalisation, extremism or violent activity and other activity that falls within the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)?
No

Applicant & research team

T1) Principal Applicant

Name
Amanda McCloat

T2) Co-Applicant(s) at City

T3) External Co-Applicant(s)

T4) Supervisor(s)
Prof Martin Caraher

T5) Do any of the investigators have direct personal involvement in the organisations sponsoring or funding the research that may give rise to a possible conflict of interest?
No

T6) Will any of the investigators receive any personal benefits or incentives, including payment above normal salary, from undertaking the research or from the results of the research above those normally associated with scholarly activity?

No

T7) List anyone else involved in the project.

Project details

P1) Project title

Home Economics teachers' perspectives on the role of Home Economics education as a food policy action

P1.1) Short project title

Home Economics Teachers' Perceptions

P2) Provide a lay summary of the background and aims of the research, including the research questions (max 400 words).

This research is a qualitative utilises a semi structured interview approach. Participants will be Home Economics teachers (n=20) teaching in the Republic of Ireland with a minimum of 5 years teaching experience. They will be teachers of the new Junior Cycle (aged 12-15) Home Economics Specification. Participants will be recruited based on purposive sampling methods and will represent a variety of school types (rural, urban, disadvantaged (DEIS) school status). The sample will include:

Disadvantaged (DEIS) status – 40% (this will be equally broken down into rural and urban)

Non DEIS – 60% (this will be equally broken down into rural and urban)

The total number of schools will be 50% single sex and 50% mixed school.

The data will be recorded and analysed using NVivo computer package and from this themes will be identified which will form the basis of the discussion. The Home Economics teaching profession in Ireland is mainly women; therefore, this sample will be all females.

P4) Provide a summary and brief explanation of the research design, method, and data analysis.

This research forms the final component of a PhD by publication. The PhD focuses on the role of Home Economics education as a food policy action. The previous three papers have focused on firstly, how Home Economics can be regarded as a food education intervention; the second paper investigated the evolution of Home Economics in primary and post-primary schools in Ireland; and the third paper conducted an international review of food education on the curriculum across nine countries. Results from this study will be presented in a paper which will be paper number four.

This research aims to investigate Irish Home Economics teachers' perspectives on the role of Home Economics education as a food policy action.

The research objectives are:

• To gather data on teachers' perceptions on the standing of Home Economics in their school and in society

• To evaluate the importance and worthwhileness they place on Home Economics education

• To identify the pedagogical underpinning in Home Economics that supports the discipline to be a food policy action

• To identify the philosophical underpinning in Home Economics that supports the discipline to be a healthy food policy action

• To ascertain, in light of Irish curriculum policy reform, the opportunities and limitations for Home Economics education as a food policy action on the curriculum

P4.1) If relevant, please upload your research protocol.

P5) What do you consider are the ethical issues associated with conducting this research and how do you propose to address them?
The participants will be voluntarily recruited and not deemed to be a high risk group. They will all be adults and will voluntarily give their consent to participate in the research. The data collected will be anonymised and confidentially stored in password protected files. No teacher or school will be identifiable from the research findings.

P6) Project start date
01 Mar 2019

P7) Anticipated project end date
30 Sept 2019

P8) Where will the research take place?
The research will take place in the Republic of Ireland. The participants will be Home Economics teachers and the interview will take place in person, at a mutually convenient location for the teacher and researcher.

P10) Is this application or any part of this research project being submitted to another ethics committee, or has it previously been submitted to an ethics committee?
No

Human participants: information and participation

The options for the following question are one or more of:
'Under 18'; 'Adults at risk'; 'Adults potentially without the capacity to consent'; 'None of the above'.

H1) Will persons from any of the following groups be participating in the project?
None of the above

H2) How many participants will be recruited?
20

H3) Explain how the sample size has been determined.
As this is a qualitative piece of research, the number of participants in this sample has been determined to be about the correct numbers for data replication and saturation to begin to occur.

H4) What is the age group of the participants?

Lower Upper

26 65

H5) Please specify inclusion and exclusion criteria.

They must be a teacher of Home Economics in a school in the Republic of Ireland.

They must have minimum 5 years teaching experience at Junior Cycle.

They must be currently teaching 1st year Junior Cycle Home Economics and the new Specification.

They must have been trained in the Republic of Ireland.

H6) What are the potential risks and burdens for research participants and how will you minimise them?

There are none. The issues to be explored are not of a sensitive nature. Full anonymity and confidentiality will be assured to all participants.

H7) Will you specifically recruit pregnant women, women in labour, or women who have had a recent stillbirth or miscarriage (within the last 12 months)?

No

H8) Will you directly recruit any staff and/or students at City?

None of the above

H8.1) If you intend to contact staff/students directly for recruitment purpose, please upload a letter of approval from the respective School(s)/Department(s).

H9) How are participants to be identified, approached and recruited, and by whom?

Home Economics teachers from a variety of school types will be initially identified by myself and approached via email or phone. Once they meet the inclusion criteria, I will send them an information sheet and ask if they are willing to participate in the study. If they give their consent, arrangements will be made for a convenient time and date for the interview.

H10) Please upload your participant information sheets and consent form.

H11) If appropriate, please upload a copy of the advertisement, including recruitment emails, flyers or letter.

H12) Describe the procedure that will be used when seeking and obtaining consent, including when consent will be obtained.

Once the participant has initially agreed to participate in the study after the initial contact, they will receive the information sheet. This will give them further details and a week will be allowed where they can consider if they are willing to give their consent to participate in the research.

As the lead researcher, I will then obtain consent from the participants. The interviews will take place face-to-face so participants will sign the consent form before the interview. If a participant requires an online interview, the consent form will be posted in advance with a paid postage return envelope. The interview will not take place until I have received a hard copy of the consent form.

H13) Are there any pressures that may make it difficult for participants to refuse to take part in the project?
No

H14) Is any part of the research being conducted with participants outside the UK?
Yes

Human participants: method

The options for the following question are one or more of:
'Invasive procedures (for example medical or surgical)'; 'Intrusive procedures (for example psychological or social)'; 'Potentially harmful procedures of any kind'; 'Drugs, placebos, or other substances administered to participants'; 'None of the above'.

M1) Will any of the following methods be involved in the project:
None of the above

M2) Does the project involve any deceptive or covert research practices?
No

M3) Is there a possibility for over-research of participants?
No

M4) Please upload copies of any questionnaires, topic guides for interviews or focus groups, or equivalent research materials.
M5) Will participants be provided with the findings or outcomes of the project?
Yes

M5.1) Explain how this information will be provided.
The research will be published in a journal article. On the consent form, teachers will be able to indicate if they would like a copy of any publications resulting from this research.

M6) If the research is intended to benefit the participants, third parties or the local community, please give details.

M7) Are you offering any incentives for participating?
No

M8) Does the research involve clinical trial/intervention testing that does not require Health Research Authority or MHRA approval?
No

M9) Will the project involve the collection of human tissue or other biological samples that does not fall under the Human Tissue Act (2004) that does not require Health Research Authority Research Ethics Service approval?
No

M10) Will the project involve potentially sensitive topics, such as participants' sexual behaviour, their legal or political behaviour, their experience of violence?
No

M11) Will the project involve activities that may lead to 'labelling' either by the researcher (e.g. categorisation) or by the participant (e.g. 'I'm stupid', 'I'm not normal')?
No

Data

D1) Indicate which of the following you will be using to collect your data.
Interviews
Audio/digital recording interviewees or events

D2) How will the privacy of the participants be protected?
Complete anonymity of the participants

D3) Will the research involve use of direct quotes?
Yes

D5) Where/how do you intend to store your data?
Data and identifiers to be kept in separate, locked filing cabinets
Password protected computer files

D7) Will the data be accessed by people other than the named researcher, supervisors or examiners?
No

D8) Is the data intended or required (e.g. by funding body) to be published for reuse or to be shared as part of longitudinal research or a different/wider research project now or in the future?
No

D10) How long are you intending to keep the research data generated by the study?
The data will be held for 10 years. After which it will be destroyed.

International research

I1) State the location(s) of your fieldwork.

Region
Country wide

Country
Ireland

I2) Will the researcher be travelling to a country outside the UK where the Foreign & Commonwealth Office has issued an orange or red travel advisory?
No

I3) Have you identified and complied with all local requirements concerning ethical approval, research governance and data protection?
Yes

I3.1) Provide details of the local requirements, including contact information of any agencies, research ethics committees etc.
This research will be recorded officially with St. Angela's College, Sligo which is the third level College that I am employed with.

Contact name
[redacted]

Organisation
St Angela's College, Sligo

Telephone number
[redacted]

Email
[redacted]

Address
Lough Gill
Sligo
Ireland

I4) Will the research be carried out in a country where people will be able to contact City directly using the complaints procedure?
Yes

Health & safety

HS1) Are there any health and safety risks to the researchers over and above that of their normal working life?
No

HS3) Are there hazards associated with undertaking this project where a formal risk assessment would be required?
No

Attached files

Information Sheet.doc

Consent Form.doc

Interview Questions.docx

Participant Information Sheet

Title of study Home Economics teachers' perspectives on the role of Home Economics education as a food policy action

Name of principal investigator

- Amanda McCloat (PhD Researcher)

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you would like to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?

This research aims to investigate Home Economics teachers' perspectives on the role of Home Economics education as a healthy food policy action. The research being conducted for part fulfillment of a PhD.

Why have I been invited?

As a Home Economics teacher, with a minimum of 5 years teaching experience, we value your perspectives on the role of Home Economics education as a food policy action.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in the project is voluntary, and you can choose not to participate in part or all of the project. You can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen if I take part?

- If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to participate in an interview conducted by Amanda McCloat which will last approximately 45 minutes. The research will require only one face to face or virtual meeting (depending on your preference). The location of which will be a convenient location and time determined by you.
- At this interview I will be conduct a semi-structured interview which will be recorded. However, data will be anonymized and confidentially stored in password protected file. No teacher or school will be identifiable from the research results.

What do I have to do?

At the interview you will be asked questions and based on your experience as a so wis Home Economics teacher you will be asked to respond. You can, at any point, withdraw from the interview or not answer any question if you so request.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no direct or indirect negative impacts on participating in this research.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

If you do participate in this research, you will be contributing to the body of knowledge and research around Home Economics. Insights will also be gleaned as to the opportunities and limitations of Home Economics as a food policy action.

What will happen when the research study stops?

The recorded data will be destroyed after the study ceases.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

- The interview will be audio recorded. Only the researchers will have access to this recording and it will be stored as a password file using an anonymous name.
- The file will be retained for a period of 5 years after the date of conferring of PhD. After this time, the file will be destroyed.

What should I do if I want to take part?

if you wish to take part, please email Amanda McCloat on [redacted]

What will happen to results of the research study?

The findings from the research will be published in a peer review Home Economics journal. A copy of this article will be forwarded to all participants in the research. The research will also form part of the final thesis. In both cases the data will be reported in an anonymously.

What will happen if I do not want to carry on with the study?

Participation is voluntary and the participant can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and they can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalized or disadvantaged in any way.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been approved by City, University of London, School of Arts and Social Science, Sociology Research Ethics Committee.

Further information and contact details

Professor Martin Caraher (Supervisor)
[redacted]

Data Protection Privacy Notice: What are my rights under the data protection legislation?

City, University of London is the data controller for the personal data collected for this research project. Your personal data will be processed for the purposes outlined in this notice. The legal basis for processing your personal data will be that this research is a task in the public interest, that is City, University of London considers the lawful basis for processing personal data to fall under Article

6(1)(e) of GDPR (public task) as the processing of research participant data is necessary for learning and teaching purposes and all research with human participants by staff and students has to be scrutinised and approved by one of City's Research Ethics Committees.

For more information, please visit www.city.ac.uk/about/city-information/legal

What if I have concerns about how my personal data will be used after I have participated in the research?

In the first instance you should raise any concerns with the research team, but if you are dissatisfied with the response, you may contact the Information Compliance Team at dataprotection@city.ac.uk or phone 0207 040 4000, who will liaise with City's Data Protection Officer [redacted] to answer your query.

If you are dissatisfied with City's response you may also complain to the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.org.uk

What if there is a problem?

If you have any problems, concerns or questions about this study, you should ask to speak to a member of the research team. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this through City's complaints procedure. To complain about the study, you need to phone 020 7040 3040. You can then ask to speak to the Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee and inform them that the name of the project is: Home Economics teachers' perspectives on the role of Home Economics education as a food policy action.

You could also write to the Secretary at:
[redacted]
Research Integrity Manager
Research & Enterprise
City, University of London
Northampton Square
London
EC1V 0HB
Email: [redacted]

City holds insurance policies which apply to this study. If you feel you have been harmed or injured by taking part in this study you may be eligible to claim compensation. This does not affect your legal rights to seek compensation. If you are harmed due to someone's negligence, then you may have grounds for legal action.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

22nd January 2019. V1

Consent Form

Title of Study: **Home Economics teachers' perspectives on the role of Home Economics education as a food policy action.** Please initial box

1	I confirm that I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the participant information sheet, which I may keep for my records.	
	I understand this will involve:	
	• be interviewed by the researcher	
	• allow the interview to be audio recorded	
	• make myself available for a further interview should that be required	
2	This information will be held by City as data controller and processed for the following purpose(s) Public Task: The legal basis for processing your personal data will be that this research is a task in the public interest, that is City, University of London considers the lawful basis for processing personal data to fall under Article 6(1)(e) of GDPR (public task) as the processing of research participant data is necessary for learning and teaching purposes and all research with human participants by staff and students has to be scrutinised and approved by one of City's Research Ethics Committees.	
3	I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published. The identifiable data will not be shared with any other organisation.	
4	I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.	
5	I agree to City recording and processing this information about me. I understand that this information will be used only for the purpose(s) set out in this statement and my consent is conditional on City complying with its duties and obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).	
6.	I agree to the arrangements for data storage, archiving, sharing.	

7	I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publication.	
8	I agree to take part in the above study.	

9	I would like a copy of any publications resulting from this research.	

Name of Participant _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Name of Researcher _____ Signature _____ Date _____

When completed, 1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher file.

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

January 2019 V1

Q1: Tell me about your teaching experience and why you chose to become a Home Economics teacher Prompt: • Years of teaching experience • Teaching levels (junior and senior) • What type of school do you teach in (urban/rural and disadvantaged (DEIS)/single sex/co-ed) • Reasons why become HE teacher • What third level College did you study in order to qualify to be a HE teacher?
Q2: What is your perceptions on the standing of Home Economics in your school? Prompt: • What factors contribute to this • Is it changing
Q3: ***What is your perception on the status of Home Economics in society?*** Prompt: • What factors contribute to this • Is it changing
Q4: What do you consider to be the importance or worthwhileness of Junior Cycle Home Economics education in school? Prompt: • Mission • Skills / values it teaches
Q5: What do you consider to be the pedagogical underpinning in Home Economics that supports the discipline to be a healthy food policy action? Prompt: • Approach to teaching
Q6: What do you consider to be the philosophical underpinning in Home Economics that supports the discipline to be a healthy food policy action? Prompt: • Life skills

• Family as core unit
Q7: In light of curriculum reform and the new Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification – what are the strengths/opportunities for Home Economics education as a healthy food policy action on the curriculum? Prompt: • Strengths • Opportunities
Q8: In light of curriculum reform and the new Junior Cycle Home Economics Specification – what are the limitations/barriers for Home Economics education as a healthy food policy action on the curriculum? Prompt: • Limitations • Barriers
Is there anything further that you would like to add? Thank ***you for participating in the interview***

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