

COUNTY EXTENSION HOME ECONOMISTS' UNDERGRADUATE
EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN HOUSING, DESIGN,
AND HOME FURNISHINGS

By

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PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the educational background in housing, design, and home furnishings of county extension home economists and their effectiveness in meeting the needs of extension clientele in that subject. Data collected by survey method of New Mexico county extension home economists is analyzed with regard to undergraduate housing courses taken by the home economists, extension educational programs in housing, and the adequacy of undergraduate education in preparing home economists to teach housing to their clientele.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Six broad areas of national concern--human nutrition, consumer concerns, children and families, housing, health, and community development--were developed from the goals of the home economics program within the Cooperative Extension Service (Home Economics Subcommittee of Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, 1974, p. 2).

These goals are to:

1. Enhance the quality of decision making and increase the knowledge and skills needed to carry out those decisions.
2. Improve the ability to effect and adapt to societal change by exploring solutions which most effectively deal with problems and concerns of individuals and families.
3. Recognize and identify unexpressed needs which affect individual and family well-being and future directions.
4. Increase ability to use and participate in the development of community services which contribute to the quality of family and community life.

The author's association with the New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service prompted a further look at that state's major objectives for the home economics extension program. Stated in the "Cooperative Extension Service Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1973-74" (1974, p. HE1) those objectives are:

To improve the quality of living of individuals and families in New Mexico by providing extension educational programs designed to:

1. Increase family stability and improve human relations.

2. Increase the ability of people to make decisions involving their own welfare.
3. Improve ability to make wise decisions as consumers, and to manage their money and other resources more effectively.
4. Improve ability in selection and care of housing, home furnishings and equipment for comfort, health and stability.
5. Increase knowledge of good food habits and improve food-buying practices for better health and nutrition of individuals and families.
6. Adapt and expand programs to reach a greater number of people, especially young and low-income families.

In summarizing the national situation and trends with regard to the area of housing, Focus II--Extension Home Economics cites the more rapid growth of the number of households as compared to the population as a factor which will create a housing crisis in the next ten to thirty years. The special housing needs of low-income families and the elderly emphasize the fact that adequate housing in a suitable environment is a major problem for many Americans. Rapidly rising costs, both in the home building industry and in home ownership itself, are national concerns with predictions of continued price increases. Studies by psychologists and sociologists indicate that a satisfying environment is needed by the individual in order to fully develop the human potential. Michelson (1970, pp. 148-169) reported findings from studies by Wilner, Loring and Fanning which substantiate a relationship between quality of housing and social and physical behavior.

In view of these situations, areas of program emphasis in housing the Cooperative Extension Service are outlined (Home Economics Subcommittee of Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, 1974, p. 18) as helping people deal with:

- Creating community awareness and understanding of the needs in housing.
- Housing choices as related to family needs, values, and resources.
 - a. Type of housing.
 - b. Financing.
 - c. Availability and cost of community services.
- Housing maintenance, repairs, and remodeling.
 - a. Skills in maintenance, care, and repair.
 - b. Responsibilities of renters and owners.
 - c. Choices and plans relating to remodeling.
 - d. Selection of materials.
- Interior design: selection of furnishings and equipment.
 - a. Selection, use, and care.
 - b. Principles of color, texture, and design.
 - c. Lighting.
 - d. Space utilization.
- Social-psychological aspects of housing.
 - a. Provision for privacy and human interaction.
 - b. Effect of color, space, lighting, and other factors in the environment on people.

That housing is a concern of the clientele served by the Cooperative Extension Service is reflected by two separate studies of homemakers. Shultz and Riggs (1972, p. 35), reporting on a survey of young West Virginia homemakers, stated that 94 percent would attend home economics programs if the subjects interested them. As a group, the first three preferences for subject areas were food shopping, interior decorating, and elementary clothing construction. Other areas of interest indicated by the homemakers included rearing children, money management and buying tips, advanced clothing construction, healthful low-calorie meals, understanding people, and creative crafts for the home.

In a three-county survey of Colorado homemakers interviewed by Ibsen and Alers-Montalvo (1967, p. 88) interest was expressed in eleven broad subject areas. Those areas and the percentage of respondents

interested were:

1. Home and home surroundings	63%
2. Financial and legal matters	58%
3. Physical and emotional health	56%
4. Food and nutrition	52%
5. Desires and wants for children	52%
6. Clothing and appropriate dress	49%
7. Home management	49%
8. Better life for self and family	44%
9. Teenagers	40%
10. Older people	39%
11. Job and job opportunities	37%

The women interviewed indicated the importance of the physical appearance of the family home and that the "family's home not only provides the basic need of shelter, it also indicates the family's well-being for all the community to view" (Ibsen and Alers-Montalvo, 1967, p. 87).

Subtopics listed under the heading of home and home surroundings included lawn care and related form of landscaping; remodeling for convenience or utility; decorating, beautifying the home; home furnishing, materials, and material buying; care and maintenance of the home and furnishings; and modern appliances.

The above guidelines from the Federal Extension Service, and supported by the New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service, plus the expressed interests of extension clientele clearly indicate that housing, design, and home furnishing must be included in the home economics phase of extension educational programs.

Statement of the Problem

This study was designed to learn whether or not county extension home economists feel they have an adequate educational background in housing, design, and home furnishings to feel confident in teaching and meeting the needs of their clientele in this subject-matter area.

Definition of Housing, Design, and Home Furnishings

In this study, the phrase "housing, design, and home furnishings" was used to refer to the subject-matter area including social and psychological aspects of housing, family needs relating to housing, home planning and interior design, and home furnishings.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between the educational background in housing, design, and home furnishings of New Mexico county extension home economists and their effectiveness in meeting the needs of extension clientele in that subject-matter area.

Specific Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To obtain information regarding the undergraduate major and course work in housing, design, and home furnishings completed by county extension home economists.
2. To summarize educational programs presented by county extension home economists in the area of housing, design, and home furnishings.
3. To determine whether lack of resource personnel or lack of personal expertise caused cancellation of planned programs in the subject-matter area.
4. To determine whether the home economists felt a need for more or less time devoted to housing, design, and home furnishings.

5. To learn the opinions of county extension home economists about the adequacy of their undergraduate housing courses to meet the needs of their clientele.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Home economics covers a wide range of subject-matter areas and the professional in the field is expected to have learned a great deal about each of the areas during his or her undergraduate education. Much has been written about what should be included in the undergraduate curriculum for home economics. Spafford (1949, p. 27) stated:

An effective curriculum is well-balanced and functional. Home economics is a broad field involving many phases of subject matter and a wide variety of experiences. Family relations, child development, home management, family economics, foods and nutrition, clothing and textiles, housing, house furnishings and equipment, and family health are titles given to home economics courses. A close relation exists among the different phases of home economics as well as between home economics courses and certain courses taught outside the field.

Whether the emphasis for a home economics curriculum should be of a generalized or specialized nature has been debated for many years. Verner (1964, pp. 5-6) presented the problem of generalization versus specialization as one facing all fields of education. He said:

The mastery of multiple branches of knowledge becomes impossible. This dilemma has encouraged specialization--mastery of a subject area in depth within ever-narrowing limits. Every man, therefore, becomes a specialist in some sense. Thus, every man comes to face two fundamental problems. First, if an individual keeps within the narrow limits of his own specialization, he quickly loses touch with the real world about him and is unable to participate intelligently with others in the management of his environment. Furthermore, his own specialized knowledge becomes obsolete within a period of from five to twenty years unless he acquires new knowledge continuously. Therefore, each person

faces the task of constantly expanding the horizons of both his specific and his general knowledge.

One principal result of the growth of knowledge is a corresponding growth of technical innovations. Those innovations exert a major influence over the vocational life of an individual. They have changed the nature of work by rendering old skills obsolete while creating a need for new occupational skills. This change necessitates a different perception of the function and method of prevocational education. Rather than acquire specific skills, individuals must master the process of learning a complex of skills in specific vocational areas so that adjustment to future technical change can be accomplished with a minimum of personal displacement.

Henderson voiced the opinion that in today's job market it would be better to train specialists to meet the special needs of a diversified profession rather than try to train a "home economist" as a generalist to cover an extremely broad subject matter area. Because of the requirements of many state departments of education, which certify home economists for secondary teaching, college students are often graduated with fewer than forty credits in home economics subjects, which Henderson felt is inadequate preparation for teaching such subjects. She stated (Henderson, 1965, p. 762) that:

. . . when home economics graduates apply for graduate study in specialized areas of family housing and home art, or family economics and home management, or child development and family relationships, their lack of undergraduate background to begin advanced study is shocking. Often they even have too little in food and nutrition or clothing and textiles. Colleges need to be willing to set up bachelors programs that lead to specialization.

LeBaron (1964, pp. 77-78) further supported this view by stating that research in the various phases of home economics has added so much to the subject matter content that some degree of specialization has become necessary at the undergraduate level. Because home economics curricula also include courses for a general education as well as preparation for the profession, a four-year undergraduate program does

not allow enough time for the student to prepare in all phases of home economics. However, she did recognize that at present a less-than-ideal situation exists in that:

. . . a large percentage of home economics students prepare for high school teaching and for positions with the Cooperative Extension Service. They are expected to be well prepared in all the areas of home economics; however, this presents somewhat of a problem. Both these educational programs might be stronger if teachers and extension home economists could be employed as members of teams of home economists, each with depth of preparation in one or two aspects of home economics. For example, one might be proficient in food, nutrition, and household equipment; one in child development, the family, and home management; and a third in home art and clothing.

On the other hand, in "The Changing Mission of Home Economics," which reported the study of the problems, future, and objectives of home economics, the view that home economists should be trained as generalists was presented. McGrath (1968, p. 89) concluded that:

. . . home economics as an undergraduate major can best . . . meet present challenges by retaining a strong generalist major and expanding its interdisciplinary base in order to fully comprehend contemporary social problems and those of family life.

He further stated that for home economists to move into the mainstream of professional education

. . . the basic undergraduate program in home economics must be broadened. This curriculum for students who will serve as generalists in home economics rather than in its specialties must consist of a systematic and interdisciplinary major. . . .

Tripple (1971, p. 83) also advocated the generalized approach for those involved in education in the field of home economics.

It is my premise that, at the undergraduate level, a student in vocational home economics education should be prepared to become a home economist and an educator. If specialized training for specialized groups is needed, it should be gotten through inservice or post-baccalaureate work.

She added that if students are trained as home economists and educators in the broad sense of the word, they will not be restricted to the school situation but will be readily employable in departments of welfare, utility companies, child care centers, the Cooperative Extension Service, or public housing agencies, as well as other areas.

For the most part, county extension home economists in New Mexico do serve as generalists across all areas of home economics as they are involved in informal educational programs. In the study of home economics extension at six land-grant institutions, Brannan (1961, pp. 57-58) reported that a bachelor's degree in home economics from a recognized institution was generally accepted as the basic preparation for home economics extension work. In fact, the basic preparation for extension home economists was essentially the same as that for home economics teachers. The curriculum requirements among the different institutions, however, varied greatly in the number of credits in the basic sciences, technical subject matter, and professional courses, as well as in the departmental organization through which the courses were given.

In order to learn the subject-matter background provided by majors in either home economics extension or home economics education, a review was prepared of curricula listed in recent catalogs of land-grant institutions with more than 800 undergraduate home economics majors. Because of the author's interest in the New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service, the three largest universities of that state were also included. Table I reveals the percentage of total credits devoted to housing and interior design courses in comparison to the other home economics subject-matter areas--foods and nutrition, clothing and

TABLE I
 PERCENTAGE OF HOME ECONOMICS COURSES
 AT MAJOR UNIVERSITIES

University, Major, Total Quarter or Semester Credits	Required Percent of Total Credits					
	Housing & Interior Design	Foods & Nutrition	Clothing & Textiles	Family Relations & Child Development	Management	Total Home Econom- ics Subject Matter
University of California-Davis Catalog, home economics education, 180q	0.0	7.7	3.3	4.4	6.6	22.0
Colorado State University General Catalog, home economics extension, 192q	3.6	6.8	6.2	6.2	6.2	29.0
Southern Illinois University Undergraduate Catalog, extension specialization, 192q	3.1	9.4	5.7	4.7	8.3	31.2
Iowa State University General Bulletin, home economics education, 195q	5.1	6.7	5.1	5.1	5.1	27.1
Kansas State University General Catalog, home economics/ extension option, 124s	2.4	4.8	2.4	18.5	2.4	30.5
Michigan State University Academic Programs, home economics education, 180q	3.3	6.6	5.5	7.7	4.4	27.5
University of Minnesota Bulle- tin, home economics education, 186q	2.2	9.1	5.9	2.7	3.2	23.1
University of Nebraska Bulletin, extension in home economics, 128s	0.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	2.3	23.3
Eastern New Mexico University Bulletin, home economics education, 128s	2.3	9.4	8.6	7.9	7.9	36.1
New Mexico State University Bulletin, home economics education, 132s	4.5	6.8	11.4	8.4	9.1	40.2

TABLE I (Continued)

University, Major, Total Quarter or Semester Credits	Required Percent of Total Credits					
	Housing & Interior Design	Foods & Nutrition	Clothing & Textiles	Family Relations & Child Development	Management	Total Home Econom- ics Subject Matter
University of New Mexico Bulletin, home economics education, 128s	2.4	4.7	5.5	9.4	7.8	29.8
University of North Carolina- Greensboro Bulletin, home economics education, 120s	2.5	7.5	7.5	5.0	2.5	25.0
North Dakota State University Bulletin, home economics education, 183q	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	33.0
Oklahoma State University Check Sheet, home economics education, 124s	2.6	6.4	8.9	7.2	7.2	32.3
Oregon State University Catalog, home economics education, 192q	3.1	7.8	6.2	7.8	6.8	31.7
Pennsylvania State University Bulletin, home economics education, 130q	4.6	6.2	4.6	12.3	6.9	34.6
Purdue University Announcements, general home economics teaching, 130s	2.3	4.6	2.3	6.2	6.9	22.3
University of Rhode Island Undergraduate Bulletin, home economics education, 128s	2.3	7.0	7.0	7.0	2.3	25.6
University of Tennessee General Catalog, home demonstration methods, 189q	1.6	9.0	6.3	6.3	6.9	30.1
Texas Tech University Bulletin, home economics education, 127s	7.1	7.1	7.1	9.4	7.1	37.8
Average Percent	3.1	7.1	6.2	7.5	5.8	29.6

textiles, family relations and child development, and management--as listed by home economics department and course numbers. In preparing the review, a major in home economics extension was examined if offered by the university; if not, a major in home economics education was examined. In the table, each catalog examined is listed by university, major requirements reviewed, and the total quarter or semester credits required for graduation.

University catalogs have many different formats and it was regrettable that several major institutions did not list a specific curriculum for home economics students. Three of the university catalogs reviewed, Auburn University, University of Missouri-Columbia, and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, stated that students must select a specific subject-matter major to meet the requirements for either home economics extension or home economics education. For that reason, those universities were not included.

In reality there may be more flexibility in planning a curriculum for an individual at many institutions. The outline as listed in catalogs may or may not reflect the curriculum as completed by students but was used as the basis for comparison.

Only courses listed under subject-matter areas as being required of all students within that major were included. Many universities do offer electives within home economics subjects, but it was felt that this would be an individual matter which could not be compared in this review. Professional courses, such as orientation, seminar, and home economics education, that do not teach specific subject-matter information, were not included. Also, relevant courses may be taught by other departments within a university; for example, design within an art

department or marriage in the family within a sociology department. However, these courses were not included because of the greater difficulty of determining course content from listings.

Housing has long been considered a concern of home economics and was included along with food and clothing in the earliest home economics curricula as one of the three areas for study (McCullough, 1959, p. 853). For example, the 1875-76 catalog of the Industrial University of Illinois included home architecture in its course of domestic science. The Lake Placid Conferences on Home Economics Proceedings, 1899-1908, list among standing committees one on shelter. Ellen H. Richards presented a Syllabus on Shelter as a part of these proceedings.

The importance of housing in a home economics curriculum was expressed by Nygren (1963, p. 828).

Food, clothing, and shelter are three resources with which home economics has chosen to concern itself. These resources are important because the nature of decisions about these resources create impacts which affect the quality of living. Home economics has been searching for the factors which affect living in order to help people make valid decisions regarding these resources. Because people have great need for information to assist them in making housing decisions, because we are in sympathy with a human approach to their problems in decision making, and because we understand many of the factors related to making housing decisions, I consider housing an opportunity for service for us.

The relevance of home economics curricula to post-graduate professional and personal needs was presented in a study by the college and university section of the Louisiana Home Economics Association. Nichols (1961, p. 200) reported that of the 293 women who had received degrees between 1954 and 1959 and who responded to the questionnaire, 111 were or had been employed as teachers, 59 as extension agents, 36 as home service consultants, 29 as dietitians, and 39 in other jobs.

A substantial majority of the graduates responded that, out of the twenty goals listed, four should receive greater emphasis. Those four goals were:

1. The ability to be creative and apply imagination in solving problems.
2. The ability to select or plan housing facilities and furnishings for self or for one's family.
3. The ability to use various principles of psychology in working with people.
4. The ability to understand and use equipment in the home.

In indicating courses that had been most valuable since graduation, they listed food preparation, clothing, and home management. Housing and home furnishing courses were felt by the largest number of respondents to have been valuable but inadequate to meet their needs. Most frequently mentioned as courses not taken but needed since graduation were housing, home furnishings, and food preservation (Nichols, 1961, p. 200).

The review of literature revealed that little research has been done with regard to the needs of extension home economists in the area of housing, design, and home furnishings. It did indicate that a study of the home economics extension curriculum in relation to job requirements would be valuable.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE AND FINDINGS

In discussing the extension home economics program in housing with professionals in both the Cooperative Extension Service and the field of housing, the opinion was frequently expressed that county extension home economists may give fewer programs in housing, design, and home furnishings than in some other home economics areas. The question was raised as to whether the county home economists feel adequately prepared to confidently teach in that subject-matter area.

Procedure

It was felt that some insight into the educational background of extension home economists and the needs of their clientele in the area of housing and furnishings could be gained from persons currently employed in county home economics positions by the Cooperative Extension Service. Because of the limitations of time and distance, a survey method, using a questionnaire, was employed to collect the data. Due to the author's association with the New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service, contacts were made with administrative personnel in that state. The extension training officer and a district supervisor agreed to distribute and collect the questionnaires through the inter-county mailing procedure.

A questionnaire was prepared which asked the respondents to indicate educational preparation in the area of housing, design, and home furnishings, to describe recent extension programs presented in that subject-matter area, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the undergraduate education in preparing them to meet the housing, design, and home furnishing needs of their clientele. The instrument included some questions requiring the respondent to check an appropriate answer, but the majority of questions required short answers. The questionnaire was evaluated by professionals in the field of housing and suggested changes were made (see Appendix).

Questionnaires were mailed to all (36) extension home economists employed with the New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service with 28 responses received. Descriptive statistics, frequencies and percentages, were used to analyze the data collected.

Although the study was limited to New Mexico, it was felt that the findings could be applicable to home economics educational programs of the Cooperative Extension Service in other states.

Undergraduate Education in Housing, Design, and Furnishings

In order to determine educational backgrounds, the county extension home economists were asked to indicate their undergraduate major and the length of time since receiving that degree. Table II shows that the largest number (64 percent) had majored in either home economics education or vocational home economics. Fourteen percent had majored in general home economics and seven percent in home economics extension or demonstration.

TABLE II
UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR

Major	Number of Responses N = 28	Percent
Home economics education or vocational home economics	18	64.3
General home economics	4	14.3
Home economics extension or demonstration	2	7.1
Home and family life	1	3.6
Family economics and home management	1	3.6
No response	2	7.1

Thirty-five percent of the home economists had received their undergraduate degree within the last five years and almost forty percent had received that degree more than fifteen years ago. One-fourth of the home economists had received the degree from six to fifteen years ago. The responses regarding the number of years since receiving the undergraduate degree are summarized in Table III.

Since different universities have varying course requirements, it was felt that an indication of the number and titles of courses in housing, design, and furnishings taken by the home economists might provide a better understanding of their academic background in the field. Table IV shows that more than 71 percent of the respondents indicated they had taken one or two courses with the remaining 29 percent having taken three or more courses.

TABLE III
 NUMBER OF YEARS SINCE UNDERGRADUATE
 DEGREE RECEIVED

Number of Years	Number of Responses N = 28	Percent
Within last 5 years	10	35.7
6 to 10 years	3	10.7
11 to 15 years	4	14.3
More than 15 years	11	39.3

TABLE IV
 NUMBER OF COURSES IN HOUSING, DESIGN,
 AND FURNISHINGS

Number of Courses	Number of Responses N = 28	Percent
1 course	10	35.7
2 courses	10	35.7
3 courses	2	7.1
4 courses	2	7.1
5 or more courses	3	10.7
No response	1	3.7

In summarizing courses taken, the differences between course titles at various universities must be kept in mind. Similar course titles listed by the home economists were grouped together if possible; but when a title, such as "housing and home furnishings," indicated a single course, it was kept as a title separate from either "housing" or "home furnishings." It is possible that more grouping of titles could have been done had course descriptions been available. The courses listed most frequently by the home economists were design (18 percent) and home furnishings (18 percent). Interior design received almost 17 percent of the responses, home planning almost 12 percent, and housing and home furnishings, 10 percent of the responses. A summary of the courses listed is presented in Table V.

Educational Programs Planned and Presented in Housing, Design, and Furnishings

The educational programs of the Cooperative Extension Service were developed to meet the needs of the clientele. Local advisory or program-planning committees aided the home economists in developing, planning, and evaluating the home economics programs. Such program-planning committees were composed of local people interested in home economics educational programs, including representatives of organized extension groups as well as representatives from non-extension groups. Additional assistance was also available to the county extension home economists from subject-matter specialists at New Mexico State University.

To determine the number and topics of educational programs presented in the area of housing, design, and home furnishings the county

TABLE V
 COURSES TAKEN IN HOUSING, DESIGN,
 AND FURNISHINGS

Course Title	Number of Responses N = 60*	Percent
Design	11	18.3
Home furnishings	11	18.3
Interior design	10	16.7
Home planning	7	11.6
Housing and home furnishings	6	10.0
Furniture refinishing, upholstery	6	10.0
Housing	3	5.0
History of furniture styles	2	3.3
Environmental design	1	1.7
Kitchen planning	1	1.7
Furniture making	1	1.7
Consumer decisions in furnishings	1	1.7

* Because home economists were able to list more than one course, N is based on the total number of responses.

extension home economists were asked to list and briefly describe the programs in this area for which they had been responsible during the last year. Twenty-three of those returning the questionnaire indicated that they had been responsible for programs in the area. Two reported that they had only recently been employed and had not yet planned such programs. Two other home economists indicated that, because of their responsibilities with the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, their work in housing has been restricted to that which related incidentally to kitchen planning and storage.

A wide variety of topics were listed by the home economists as subjects for educational programs in housing, design, and home furnishings. Those dealing with upholstery, furniture refinishing, selecting and making draperies, selecting colors for the home, and mobile homes were listed more frequently than others. Table VI summarizes the program topics listed.

One home economist mentioned preparing a monthly newsletter primarily concerning housing and another stated that she occasionally made radio broadcasts and wrote news articles that related to home furnishings. One also said that, because of the reluctance of her Indian audience to attend group meetings, the housing program was conducted almost completely by home visits and newsletters. Ideas for her newsletters were adapted from materials by the extension housing and home furnishing specialist. Another mentioned consultations with a 4-H home environment project leader.

In conducting extension home economics education, the county home economist may either present programs herself, arrange for an extension specialist to do the presentation, or arrange for another resource

TABLE VI
TOPICS OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS PRESENTED

Topic	Number of Responses N = 43*	Percent
Upholstery	6	13.9
Selecting colors for the home	4	9.3
Furniture refinishing	3	7.0
Selecting and making draperies	3	7.0
Mobile homes	3	7.0
Rug making	2	4.7
Accessories for the home	2	4.7
Sewing home accessories	2	4.7
Lighting	2	4.7
Dish gardens, terrariums, dried arrangements	2	4.7
Selection and care of carpets	2	4.7
Art in the home	1	2.3
Selecting furniture	1	2.3
Patio decorating	1	2.3
Home-made furniture	1	2.3
Simple carpentry techniques for women	1	2.3
Quilting	1	2.3
Kitchen improvements	1	2.3
Making and placing wall hangings	1	2.3
Inexpensive decorating ideas	1	2.3
Storage ideas	1	2.3
Macramé hangings	1	2.3
4-H "Teen's Room" project	1	2.3

* Because home economists were able to list more than one topic, N is based on the total number of responses.

person to teach the program. Of the 43 programs presented, 32 (74.4 percent) were actually presented by the home economists. In four of these cases, it was indicated that special assistance or materials were obtained from the extension housing and home furnishing specialist. Seven (16.3 percent) of the programs were actually presented by the specialist and four (9.3 percent) by other resource persons.

When asked if programs had been planned in the area of housing, design, and home furnishings but subsequently not presented, only two affirmative responses were given. One home economist had moved from one county office to another which resulted in a change of plans. The other stated that a program had been cancelled by the expected audience. On the other hand, a third home economist noted that an additional program on home furnishings had been presented although it had not been included in the original program planning for the year.

The majority of the home economists responded that they had not had to cancel programs because of lack of resource personnel or lack of expertise. Two did indicate the cancellation of programs and another stated that a program had been poorly prepared and poorly received following the cancellation of a resource person. Additional comments to the question indicated that several felt hesitant in planning programs in housing, design, and home furnishings because of their limited background.

The home economists were asked to indicate whether they felt a need to spend more or less time in housing, design, and home furnishings. More than two-thirds of those returning questionnaires indicated that they would like to spend more time in the area. One stated that she would be spending half of her time in the housing field in the

coming year, since it had been selected as a major thrust for her county. Two of the home economists stated they felt they would probably spend about the same amount of time as in the past. Although none said they would prefer to spend less time on the subject, several did not respond to the question. One of those commented that through the program planning procedure, based on needs as seen by a county program-planning committee, the home economist had little choice in selecting topics to be covered, but that she would be willing to spend whatever time was required. Another stated that because full-time housing agents were employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Cooperative Extension Service to meet such needs in her county, she does not plan programs in housing, design, and home furnishings.

A wide variety of topics were listed as areas in which the home economists would like to spend more time. General topics such as basic design principles, furnishings, and housing and design were listed most frequently. Other specific topics mentioned included mobile homes, inexpensive decorating, the psychology of housing, apartment living for young couples, utilization of present furnishings, and upholstery. Suggested topics for educational programs are summarized in Table VII.

In a comparison of the amount of time now spent in housing, design, and home furnishings with the amount spent three years ago, 39 percent of the home economists indicated they felt they were now spending more time. One noted that, since she was employed as the extension housing home economist to serve the Navajo Indian Reservation, all of her time has been devoted to housing. Almost 18 percent indicated that they were spending about the same amount of time, with

TABLE VII
SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Topic	Number of Responses N = 24*	Percent
Furnishings	6	25.0
Housing and design	4	16.6
Mobile homes	2	8.2
Inexpensive decorating	2	8.2
Basic design principles	1	4.2
Psychology of housing	1	4.2
Color combinations	1	4.2
Upholstery	1	4.2
Apartment living for young couples	1	4.2
Utilization of present furnishings	1	4.2
Wall coverings	1	4.2
Window treatments	1	4.2
Floors and floor coverings	1	4.2
Storage	1	4.2

* Because home economists were able to list more than one topic, N is based on the total number of responses.

one of these commenting that the amount of time does vary as determined by the program planning committee. Over 21 percent of the home economists responded that they were spending less time than three years ago. One noted that, due to the employment of the housing home economist to work on the Navajo Reservation, she was spending less time on the subject herself. Another home economist stated that housing, design, and home furnishings had not been included by the program planning committee. One home economist reported that three years ago she was not employed as a county extension home economist but was teaching housing at the university level. Six did not respond to the question but otherwise indicated that either they had not been employed for three years or worked only with the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. Table VIII summarizes the responses comparing the amount of time presently spent in housing and furnishings with the amount of time spent three years ago.

TABLE VIII
COMPARISON OF TIME SPENT IN HOUSING AND FURNISHINGS

Amount of Time	Number of Responses N = 28	Percent
More	11	39.3
Same	5	17.9
Less	6	21.4
No answer	6	21.4

Preparation To Meet Needs of Clientele

The home economists were asked to evaluate whether or not they felt their undergraduate courses had adequately prepared them to meet the needs of their clientele with regard to housing, design, and home furnishings. Over half of the group (57 percent) felt a need for further undergraduate training. A variety of topics were suggested and are summarized in Table IX.

Several home economists expressed a desire for further training in all areas of housing, design, and furnishings. One felt that consumerism as applied to furnishings, including practical and economical furnishings, would have been more valuable to her than the study of period furniture styles. Another stated that due to current economic conditions and the concern with energy consumption and the environment, the public is more concerned with using what they have on hand in the way of furnishings. Also, many people are becoming interested in doing home projects as a creative outlet. This is reflected in the large number of topics dealing with refinishing furniture, upholstery, "making do" with furnishings, and "do-it-yourself" ideas. Another felt that home economists should have a broader background in basic housing design because they often have more practical experience in the area than engineers and architects. One home economist felt that perhaps a vocational type course in upholstery, repairing, and refinishing furniture would be more appropriate, rather than including such topics in an undergraduate college program. Several did comment that they had taken all the courses in housing and furnishings offered by their university at the time.

TABLE IX
SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR FURTHER UNDERGRADUATE STUDY

Suggested Topic	Number of Responses N = 47*	Percent
All areas of housing and furnishings	7	14.9
Construction specifications, materials	6	12.9
Household repairs, carpentry, plumbing	5	10.6
Upholstery	5	10.6
Making draperies and slipcovers	5	10.6
Refinishing furniture	4	8.5
Lawn care, landscaping, horticulture	2	4.3
Practical information of selection of furnishings	2	4.3
Fabrics in furnishings	2	4.3
Architecture courses	2	4.3
"Making do" with apartment furnishings	1	2.1
"Do-it-yourself" ideas	1	2.1
Mobile homes	1	2.1
Economical home furnishings	1	2.1
Art courses	1	2.1
Color, line, and design	1	2.1
Home planning for the Southwest	1	2.1

* Because home economists were able to list more than one topic, N is based on the total number of responses.

On the other hand, one home economist felt that, at the time of her undergraduate work, she needed to learn the basic principles in all phases of home economics. Along with two others she stated that experience and continued in-service training are more practical than course work due to constant changes in information and situations.

To compare educational preparation in the six basic areas of home economics, the home economists were asked to rank the order in which they felt their undergraduate education had prepared them to teach in the different subject areas. Five reported that they felt equally prepared in all areas. Nine percent of the remaining 21 home economists ranked housing, design, and home furnishings as the area in which they felt most adequately prepared. Five percent of the home economists ranked housing as second in level of preparation, 29 percent ranked it as third, nine percent ranked it as fourth, 29 percent ranked it fifth, and 19 percent ranked it sixth. In comparison, as summarized in Table X, 43 percent of the home economists ranked clothing and textiles as first in the level of educational preparation and 43 percent of the home economists ranked food, nutrition, and health as the subject in which they felt most adequately prepared.

To determine if personal interests had an effect on extension presentations, the home economists were asked to rank their interests in all home economics areas. Of the 26 responses, 12 percent indicated they were most interested in the area of housing, design, and home furnishings, 27 percent ranked housing as second in their level of personal interests, 19 percent ranked it third, 23 percent ranked it fourth, 15 percent ranked it fifth, and 4 percent ranked it as the area in which they were least interested. In comparison, Table XI indicates

that 42 percent of the home economists ranked food, nutrition, and health as the area of highest interest and 38 percent of the home economists ranked clothing and textiles as the subject in which they were most interested.

TABLE X
RANK OF EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION
IN HOME ECONOMICS SUBJECTS

Subject	Rank of Educational Preparation N = 21											
	1		2		3		4		5		6	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Clothing and textiles	9	(43)	3	(14)	1	(5)	5	(24)	3	(14)	0	(0)
Food, nutrition, health	9	(43)	8	(38)	2	(9)	0	(0)	1	(5)	1	(5)
Family finances and consumer concerns	0	(0)	1	(5)	3	(14)	4	(19)	3	(14)	10	(48)
Family relations and child development	1	(5)	4	(19)	5	(24)	5	(24)	3	(14)	3	(14)
Housing, design, and home furnishings	2	(9)	1	(5)	6	(29)	2	(9)	6	(29)	4	(19)
Management and equipment	0	(0)	4	(19)	4	(19)	5	(24)	5	(24)	3	(14)

TABLE XI
 RANK OF PERSONAL INTEREST IN
 HOME ECONOMICS SUBJECTS

Subject	Rank of Personal Interests					
	N = 26					
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
	N %	N %	N %	N %	N %	N %
Clothing and textiles	10(38)	5(19)	4(15)	2(8)	2(8)	3(12)
Food, nutrition, health	11(42)	3(12)	5(19)	4(15)	0(0)	3(12)
Family finances and consumer concerns	0(0)	3(12)	3(12)	5(19)	9(35)	6(23)
Family relations and child development	2(8)	5(19)	5(19)	5(19)	4(15)	5(19)
Housing, design, and home furnishings	3(12)	7(27)	5(19)	6(23)	4(15)	1(4)
Management and equipment	0(0)	3(12)	4(15)	4(15)	7(27)	8(31)

It should be noted that if the first, second, and third ranked choices of the home economists were combined, 73 percent of the respondents indicated food, nutrition, and health most frequently, 72 percent indicated clothing and textiles, and 58 percent of the respondents indicated housing, design, and home furnishings most frequently. This indicated that, although more home economists ranked food, nutrition, and health and clothing and textiles as first in level of personal interest, a large percent of them ranked housing, design, and home furnishings as second or third choice.

A contingency table was prepared to compare the number of housing, design, and home furnishings courses taken by the home economists with their ranking of housing in education preparation. Table XII shows that of the home economists who had one or two courses, only 12 percent ranked housing as first or second in level of preparation while 59 percent ranked housing as fifth or sixth in level of preparation. Of the home economists who had three or more courses in housing, none ranked it as fifth or sixth in level of preparation, whereas 25 percent ranked it as first or second and 75 percent ranked it as third or fourth in level of educational preparation.

TABLE XII
NUMBER OF HOUSING COURSES AND RANK
IN EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION

Rank of Housing in Educational Preparation	Number of Housing Courses Taken N = 21			
	1-2		3 or more	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1-2	2	(12)	1	(25)
3-4	5	(29)	3	(75)
5-6	<u>10</u>	(59)	<u>0</u>	(0)
Total	17		4	

It would have been of interest to examine the rank of housing, design, and home furnishings in educational preparation in relation to the content of the courses rather than just the number of courses taken. However, the data were not detailed enough to carry out such an analysis. Thus, it can only be concluded that those home economists who had more courses in housing, design, and home furnishings felt better prepared than those who had fewer courses.

To determine the effect of the rank of housing, design, and home furnishings in education preparation on the home economists' desires to spend more or less time in housing a second contingency table was prepared. None of the home economists indicated that they wished to spend less time in housing, design, and furnishings. Table XIII shows that regardless of the ranking of housing in education preparation, the home economists indicated a desire to spend the same amount or more time in the field of housing, design, and home furnishings.

A third contingency table was prepared to compare the rank of housing, design, and home furnishings in educational preparation with the number of programs presented by the home economists in that field. Table XIV shows that of the home economists who ranked housing as fifth or sixth in level of educational preparation, 60 percent gave no programs or only one program in the field of housing. Of the home economists who ranked housing as third or fourth, 75 percent gave from two to four programs in the field of housing. However, the home economists who ranked housing as first or second had each presented one program in housing, design, and furnishings. It should be remembered that many factors have influenced the selection of program topics, such as the recommendations of county program-planning committees and the

TABLE XIII
RANK OF HOUSING AND DESIRED AMOUNT
OF TIME SPENT

Amount of Time Desired in Housing	Rank of Housing in Educational Preparation N = 79					
	1-2		3-4		5-6	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
Same	0	(0)	0	(0)	2	(25)
More	<u>2</u>	(100)	<u>7</u>	(100)	<u>6</u>	(75)
Total	2		7		8	

TABLE XIV
RANK OF HOUSING AND NUMBER
OF PROGRAMS PRESENTED

Number of Housing Programs Presented	Rank of Housing in Educational Preparation N = 21					
	1-2		3-4		5-6	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-1	3	(100)	2	(25)	6	(60)
2-4	<u>0</u>	(0)	<u>6</u>	(75)	<u>4</u>	(40)
Total	3		8		10	

restrictions of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program.

Summary

The data collected show that almost two-thirds of the county extension home economists had majored in home economics education at the undergraduate level. Seventy-one percent of the respondents indicated that they had taken one or two courses in housing, design, and home furnishings.

Only 82 percent of the home economists had been responsible for educational programs in the area of housing, design, and home furnishings during the last year. Of those who gave no programs or only one program in the field of housing, almost two-thirds ranked housing low in the level of educational preparation. A variety of topics were listed by the county extension home economists as subjects for educational programs. Topics dealing with upholstery, furniture refinishing, selection and making draperies, colors for the home, and mobile homes were listed most frequently. Although few respondents indicated that programs had been cancelled because of lack of resource persons or lack of expertise, several did comment that they were hesitant to plan programs in housing and furnishings because of their limited background.

Over half of the home economists indicated a need for further undergraduate training in housing, design, and home furnishings in order to meet the needs of their clientele. Frequently suggested topics for further undergraduate study included housing construction information, household repairs, upholstery, making draperies and slip-covers, and furniture refinishing.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Housing has been selected as one of six broad areas of national concern for the home economics phase of the Cooperative Extension Service. Housing has also been indicated by those served by the Cooperative Extension Service as an area of interest.

This study was designed to learn whether county extension home economists feel they have an adequate educational background in housing, design, and home furnishings to confidently teach and meet the needs of their clientele in this subject area.

A questionnaire was prepared to collect the data from home economists employed in county positions with the New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service. Thirty-six questionnaires were distributed with 28 responses returned. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the data.

Conclusions

From the analysis of the data the following conclusions may be drawn.

1. A majority of county extension home economists majored in home economics education at the undergraduate level.

2. County extension home economists who had taken only one or two courses in housing, design, and home furnishings ranked that subject as

low in level of educational preparation in comparison to other home economics subjects.

3. Home economists who ranked housing, design, and home furnishings low in level of educational preparation tended to present fewer programs in the subject than those who ranked it higher.

4. County extension home economists felt a need for further training in housing, design, and home furnishings. Several expressed a need at the undergraduate level for more background information on basic principles of housing, design, and home furnishings as well as specific topics such as mobile homes, inexpensive decorating, apartment living, and using available furnishings.

5. County extension home economists felt their clientele would benefit if more time were devoted to housing, design, and home furnishings. They indicated specific topics in which in-service training would enable them to better meet the needs of their clientele. Such topics included specific information on building construction, household repairs, upholstery, furniture refinishing, and making draperies and slip covers.

Implications

The findings suggest possible changes which would affect both the undergraduate home economics curricula of colleges and universities and the in-service home economics training programs of the Cooperative Extension Service.

Colleges and universities should continuously evaluate the content of curricula for students interested in positions with the Cooperative Extension Service. As the study indicated a majority of the county

extension home economists had majored in home economics education or home economics extension, those majors in particular should be reviewed to be certain that students gain a broad background in the area of housing, design, and home furnishings. Students interested in positions with the Cooperative Extension Service should be encouraged to take courses which include: basic principles of housing and interior design, the selection of practical and durable home furnishings, budget decorating and using available furnishings, sewing for the home, basic building construction and home repairs, and home accessories.

The Cooperative Extension Service has long recognized the need for in-service training programs for its employees to provide a continual up-dating of subject-matter information and to supplement the undergraduate education. In-service training programs should include: furniture refinishing and upholstery, home repairs, budget furnishings and using available furnishings, sewing for the home, and the selection of practical and durable furnishings. Depending on the needs of their clientele, home economists might be encouraged to take vocational courses in upholstery and furniture refinishing for more in-depth information.

The Cooperative Extension Service should also continue to encourage its employees to enroll in graduate study programs. Such programs should be selected to strengthen and broaden the home economics subject-matter background of the county extension home economists, if such background is lacking in undergraduate education, as well as provide in-depth study of a specific subject. In the field of housing, design, and home furnishings, study might include: the relationship between housing and environment, psychological effects of housing,

consumerism and home furnishings, and building construction.

Recommendations

In a more lengthy study of the effectiveness of the undergraduate education in preparing county extension home economists to meet the housing needs of their clientele, several other factors would need to be included.

Because of the differences in course titles between universities, a better comparison of undergraduate courses taken by the county home economists could be made if course descriptions and content were known.

A listing of all subject-matter presentations by the home economists for one year would provide a basis for comparison of housing programs with the total home economics extension program. A scale ranked by the home economists indicating the level of importance to their clientele of specific housing, design, and home furnishing topics would provide more comparable responses regarding needs.

Because of the role of program-planning committees in outlining the educational program of the county extension home economists, it might also be of interest to learn the feelings of members of such committees about the importance of housing, design, and home furnishings in the total program.

It might also be interesting to do a follow-up study over a period of time on a class of graduates in home economics education or home economics extension to learn how they feel about the adequacy of their undergraduate education. A follow-up study of county extension home economists participating in in-service training programs would indicate

whether such programs were adequately preparing them to meet the needs of their clientele in housing, design, and home furnishings.

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TO: County Extension Home Economists

FROM: Dorothy Valentine

As many of you know, I am working on my master's degree at Oklahoma State University. As a part of my thesis I am doing a study of the undergraduate educational needs in housing, design, and home furnishings of county Extension home economists. Would you please take a few minutes to complete the following confidential questionnaire and then return it to Mildred Latini before March 18 in order that she can forward it to me. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. What was your undergraduate major?
2. Did you receive your undergraduate degree within the last 5 years____, 6-10 years____, 11-15 years____, or more than 15 years ago____?
3. Do you work with the adult program____, youth program____, or both____?
4. How many undergraduate courses did you have in housing, design, and/or home furnishings? What were they?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
5. List and briefly describe programs in the area of housing, design, and furnishings that you were responsible for in the last year. Please indicate whether the program was presented by you, the Extension housing specialist, or another resource person.
6. Did you plan programs in these areas that you were not able to carry out? What caused the change in plan?
7. Have you had to cancel programs in these areas because of lack of resource personnel or lack of expertise?

8. Would you like to spend more or less time in these areas? If more, what specific topic?
9. Do you feel you are spending more____ or less____ time in housing, design, and furnishings than you did three years ago?
10. Considering your present job requirements, do you wish more had been included in your undergraduate housing courses? If yes, what specific topics should have been included?

Do you wish you had taken additional courses? If so, what topics?

11. Realizing that home economists have varying personal interests in subject areas, please rank your interests in the left column below on a scale of 1 (highest) to 6 (lowest). Rank in the right column the order in which you feel your undergraduate education prepared you to teach in the subject areas.

Personal
interest

Educational
preparation

_____	Clothing and textiles	_____
_____	Food and nutrition, health	_____
_____	Family finances and consumer concerns	_____
_____	Family relations and child development	_____
_____	Housing, design, and home furnishings	_____
_____	Management and equipment	_____

Please feel free to add any additional comments.

VITA

Dorothy Anne Valentine

Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Science

Thesis: COUNTY EXTENSION HOME ECONOMISTS' UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATIONAL
NEEDS IN HOUSING, DESIGN, AND HOME FURNISHINGS

Major Field: Housing and Interior Design

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in El Paso, Texas, August 4, 1945, the
daughter of Kenneth and Louletia B. Valentine.

Education: Graduated from Las Cruces High School, Las Cruces, New
Mexico, in 1963; received the Bachelor of Science in Home
Economics degree from New Mexico State University, with a
major in General Home Economics, in May, 1967; completed
requirements for the Master of Science degree in July, 1975.

Professional Experience: Employed as Eddy County Extension Home
Economist (4-H) with the New Mexico Cooperative Extension
Service since July, 1968.

Professional Organizations: Member of American Home Economics
Association, New Mexico Home Economics Association, National
Association of Extension Home Economists, and New Mexico
Association of Extension Home Economists.