

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
ACTIVITIES AND ATTITUDES OF HOME ECONOMICS TEACHERS

BY

HEIDI J. ADAIR FORRESTER

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

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University of Manitoba  
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To my husband, Ross

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## ABSTRACT

This descriptive study examines the professional development attitudes and activities of home economics teachers in Manitoba. One hundred and forty six out of the provinces' 248 public school home economics teachers responded to a mailed questionnaire. The majority of respondents teach at the junior high level in an urban area, with at least 10 years of teaching experience, and plans to teach for at least 10 to 15 more years. Few respondents had any further educational degrees beyond their bachelors degree. Professional association affiliation was used to divide the sample to determine if membership had an influence on the amount of participation and reasons for or for not attending professional development activities. Membership in two home economics associations in Manitoba is available to teachers, and supports professional development, the Manitoba Home Economics Association (MAHE) and the Manitoba Home Economics Teachers Association (MHETA). Fifty per cent of responding teachers belonged to both associations. The respondents were organized into four groups based on their affiliation for data analysis, MAHE and MHETA, MAHE only, MHETA only and non-members. Those respondents who were members of both associations were involved in more activities and perceived themselves to be more active than members of the other three groupings. Workshops and conferences, lectures and exhibits were reported as the most beneficial of the professional development activities, while writing articles or manuals were seen as the least beneficial. Respondents reported that they were motivated to attend in order

to keep up with new developments, to better serve their students and to update their knowledge. The three greatest deterrents to participation were lack of time, family commitments, and inconvenient scheduling of activities. No statistical differences were found in professional attitudes of the four groups based on professional association membership.



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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

It is essential that professional disciplines keep up to date in these times of rapid social and technological change. The profession of home economics has and continues to evolve in relation to the problems of families within society (Lund, 1976). The field of home economics began with the goal of improving the quality of family life, and throughout its history this has remained its central theme. The means to reaching this goal have changed over the years from the preparation of young ladies for domestic activities to helping all students make informed and ethical decisions about their everyday lives in families, communities and the world.

Curriculum guides written to reflect these changes place less emphasis on the practical skills of food preparation and clothing construction and more emphasis on practical problem solving in all areas of daily living. Teaching strategies have changed as well, with a shift in focus from delivering technical information to students, to helping them rationally decide and act in solving practical problems.

While professional development activities have been offered to teachers by professional associations to explore changes in the profession

and in teaching practice, the proportion of teachers attending has often been small. There is no doubt that, due to changes in society and developments in the field of home economics, there are demands for home economists to continue to update their knowledge. In spite of the obvious benefits from continuous professional development, such as up to date knowledge and networking opportunities, participation in professional development activities remains low and this raises a number of concerns (Lamble, 1983). "Practising a profession with excellence requires continual development of both the individual as well as the organization which represents the profession" (Vaines, 1980, p41).

Professional development activities require vast resources, including time, money and energy in planning and execution (Hall, 1990). Not all professionals choose to make this investment. Continuing engagement in professional development activities can be the result of personal commitment, encouragement by peers, and mandated by the professional association.

Mandated continuing professional education began in the early 1970's in the United States in the medical profession and has been revived recently by calls from the public and government that professionals were not up to date and therefore were not delivering the expected quality of

service to their clients (Queeny and Smutz, 1990). In Canada, by legislating professional acts, the government has placed the responsibility for continuing education, competence and professional practice under the control of professional associations (Watson, 1985). The Manitoba Association of Home Economists (MAHE) accomplished professional legislation and legal recognition of the profession on March 15, 1990 (MAHE News, 1990). The Professional Home Economics Act grants all practising home economists the right of title, i.e., the use of the designation "professional home economist" or the abbreviation PHEc. The act mandated MAHE to "promote the professional development and continuing education of the members of the association" and to "prescribe standards of continuing education to be required of all persons registered under this act" (Section 5, article f). The Association set up a system for monitoring the professional development of its members by awarding points for certain professional activities. Over a three year period a PHEc must accumulate 45 continuing education points to retain the professional designation. However, mandated continuing education is seen by some as either a threat to individual choice or a punishment, or both. The research on whether mandated continuing education improves professional practice is inconclusive (Cross, 1981).

The majority of professional development activities available to home economics teachers in Manitoba is provided by the two professional associations. The population of home economics teachers in Manitoba may belong to two professional home economics associations in the province. The Manitoba Home Economics Teachers' Association (MHETA) is a special area group of the Manitoba Teachers' Society which is concerned solely with the interests of teachers. Membership is open to anyone who is interested in home economics education or who is already a member of the Manitoba Teachers' Society and has paid the yearly fees. MHETA was formed to unite teachers, to act on common professional concerns and to take a leadership role in providing professional development (Bannerman, 1989). MHETA provides a journal and workshops for teachers to learn about new techniques and to have an opportunity to network with other teachers. There are no mandated standards for professional practice and teachers may only use the professional home economist designation if they are also members of MAHE and meet the continuing education standards.

The Manitoba Association of Home Economists (MAHE) is the provincial body representing all home economists in Manitoba. MAHE is responsible for the legislation and legal recognition of the profession. In order to be a member, applicants must hold a Bachelors of Home

Economics or a comparable degree from an accredited post secondary institution (MAHE News, 1991). Members work in a variety of settings including business, government, education and self employment. MAHE offers members up to date information through workshops, newsletters and an annual conference. Through federation with the Canadian Home Economics Association, members of MAHE are kept informed of happenings in the field across Canada with an annual national conference and a quality professional journal. MAHE also lobbies government with regard to members' concerns and societal issues affecting the quality of life for families and individuals in Manitoba. Members hold the professional home economics designation by meeting the mandated standards for continuing education.

The purpose of this study was to examine the professional attitudes of home economics teachers in Manitoba and to identify the factors which motivate or deter them from participating in activities for professional growth. The main objective of the study was to measure how active Manitoba home economics teachers are in professional development and which activities they feel are most beneficial and least beneficial to their work in the classroom. Another objective was to identify the factors which motivate or deter participation in professional development activities and



whether or not members of a professional organization differed on these factors and in their overall level of participation. Finally, the study was to determine if holding membership in a professional organization was related to a difference in the professional attitudes of teachers.

This exploratory study was carried out by way of a mailed self-completed questionnaire. It consisted of 50 items asking home economics teachers about their participation and the perceived value of professional development. Their replies were divided and examined according to their professional association membership. The following questions guided this study:

1. How active in professional development do Manitoba home economics teachers perceive themselves to be?
2. Is there a difference in the level of participation in professional development activities between home economics teachers with membership in both MAHE and MHETA, MHETA only, MAHE only, and those who do not belong to either organization?
3. What professional development activities do home economics teachers perceive as the most and the least beneficial to their work in the classroom?

4. Are there differences in the factors that motivate or deter participation in professional development activities between the four groups?

5. Will there be a difference in professional attitude between the four groups as measured by Halls' Professional Attitude Inventory?

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been limited consideration of the professional development of home economics teachers. This dearth of research and writing reflects a need for conceptual and empirical work in the area.

### Professional Development

Professional development may be defined as "all formal and informal education and activities that facilitate growth as a teacher" (Sinder, 1986, p.3). Any activity that upgrades knowledge, abilities, competencies and understanding in order to become more effective is considered to be a professional development activity (Stone, 1969). Such activities include membership in a professional organization, reading professional journals, attending professional meetings, pursuing graduate study or further certification, or attending workshops or inservice training (East, 1980).

The definition of professional development is important for research examining its effects. A broad definition including self-directed learning would result in more participants than if professional development was limited to credit courses or formal training. If narrowly defined, less than 10% of the adult population would be involved in formal learning for credit (Cross, 1981). Courses are not often pursued because of the time and cost

required and their emphasis on theoretical knowledge, which is regarded as having little value to teachers (Edelfelt and Gollnick, 1981).

There are three types of active adult participants. The first type are goal-oriented learners who use learning to gain a new skill or to meet a specific objective such as a raise or career advancement. Activity-oriented learners participate primarily to be involved. These learners are more interested in the social networking aspects of the activities. Finally, learning-oriented participants pursue learning for its own sake. Such life long learners are constantly involved in some continuing education activity (Cross, 1981). Although it is difficult to decide who will participate in professional development activities, research has indicated two strong predictors. The first is educational attainment. The more successful experience a person has had with education, the more likely they are to continue to pursue further education. The second powerful predictor is age. Younger adults, who are interested in career advancement and have more energy, are more involved in professional development than older adults (Cross, 1981, Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982). Older adults tend to be involved in more recreational learning and are more activity-oriented than goal-oriented. Income has been shown to have little effect on participation.

The most powerful predictor in continuing with the task, once it has begun, is satisfaction with the learning activity (Anderson and Darkenwald, 1979).

Tough (1968) studied the reasons why an adult begins and continues a learning project. In intensive interviews with 35 adults from urban Toronto, subjects were asked to elaborate on a set of 13 conscious reasons for starting and continuing a learning activity. Although the findings are only representative of urban, middle class, fairly well educated, young adults, there were three major findings. Most adult learners have a number of reasons for pursuing an activity. More important than a cataloguing of these reasons is the finding that they have different reasons for continuing than they had when they started. They were also found to have more reasons for continuing than they had for beginning. For example, respondents may have cited career advancement as their motive for beginning, but added interest in subject and social contact as reasons for continuing. Most learners are goal-oriented, citing the desire to use the knowledge and skill as the most important reason for their learning.

The American Home Economics Association (Fanslow et. al., 1980) surveyed its membership to identify areas of expertise of its membership and to more fully describe the activities of its membership. The results of their survey of more than 34,000 members with a 51% response rate,

revealed that 74% of the membership had not participated in a nationally-sponsored program during a five year period and 46% had not participated in a locally-sponsored program. Although the survey did not delve further into why they were not attending, it did ask what motivated members to belong to the association. Among the top reasons for belonging were updating of subject matter knowledge and obligation or commitment to the profession. Presumably, by belonging to the association and receiving a journal or newsletter with membership, members are updating their subject matter knowledge without attending programs.

A similar study was conducted of the members of the Connecticut Psychological Association (Allen et al, 1987). A survey of members' involvement in professional development activities and their attitudes toward continuing education, revealed that books and personal contact with other professionals were the most valuable. Conventions were the least favoured activity and seen as having more of a social than an educational value. Time pressures at work, family commitments and cost were the highest ranked barriers to participation. This reliance on more self-directed activities presents a problem with mandated continuing education programs that emphasize activities that can be documented. The researchers stressed that these practices need to be revised so that those activities which

professionals find most effective are accepted and validated (Allen et al, 1987).

The Tennessee Vocational Teacher Needs Assessment (Thomas et al, 1989) surveyed 419 vocational instructors to identify areas of teacher perceived needs for future professional development activities. Only 20% of respondents were home economists, with the remainder from a variety of vocational subject areas and trades. Their findings, based on 71% of teachers responding (Thomas et al, 1989), revealed that paid employment for upgrading skills and inservice training were the highest ranked professional development activities, whereas, conventional course work was ranked lowest. The researchers concluded that this was due to better job prospects for many in other trades and a lack of commitment to teaching.

A survey of the professional practices of physical education teachers in Idaho, Oregon and Washington (Zakrajsek & Woods, 1983), revealed that 77% of the respondents did not even belong to their state professional association. The most regularly read magazine of professional interest was Sports Illustrated and only half, had completed a credit course in the last two years. Conference attendance was very low, with 67% of respondents replying they had not attended a state sponsored professional conference and 98% had not attended a national conference. The findings revealed that

physical education teachers are not supporting their profession through conference attendance and membership or by reading professional journals. Time and distance were the main reasons reported for not being involved. The physical education teachers responded that they perceived themselves as coaches first and did not feel they had time to take a course. Because courses are offered in more populated areas, teachers in rural areas do not have adequate access to professional development activities.

Similar findings were reported by Nelson (1974) in her study of Manitoba home economics teachers, examining the relationship between self-actualization and participation in continuing education. Seventy-six of 100 randomly selected home economics teachers completed a self-actualization inventory and the scores were compared to their participation in professional development activities. Several reasons were selected by respondents as factors affecting their participation in these activities. Gaining up-to-date information, personally interested, meeting specific needs, social and professional contacts, and to strengthen the profession were the reasons most often reported. Reasons for not becoming involved included a lack of time, cost, not worthwhile, and family commitments. Nelson (1974) also found that teachers above the age of 46 scored lower on the self-actualization scale and participated less in professional growth



activities. Young teachers did not expect to teach very long (Nelson, 1974), which was similar to the findings of Thomas et al (1989). Nelson (1974) recommended further research to find means of increasing a positive professional attitude in teachers.

Findings such as these are found across all professions. In a study of primary care physicians the most important reasons cited for participating in continuing education were maintaining competence, increasing knowledge and skill, staying up to date and enhancing patient care (Wolf et al, 1986). The survey was conducted on 208 physicians who were attending courses sponsored by the University of Michigan medical centre. Due to mandated continuing education for physicians, the researchers assumed that concerns about malpractice and relicensure would be ranked high, on the contrary it was ranked low. These results are however, based on physicians attending certified courses and their motives may be different from those who are pursuing other means of professional development. Similar findings were reported by Brown et al. (1982), who noted a slight increase in continuing education after the mandate was passed for psychologists, but concluded that this was due to increased availability of activities. Those most in need of continuing education were not always the ones actively involved. It was also noted that to be more effective

continuing education requirements must be individually tailored to meet a persons needs (Brown et al., 1982).

Holmes et al (1988) interviewed 32 classroom teachers and 16 administrators from 16 District of Columbia public schools about their concerns and needs for professional development. Respondents felt that staff development should be the schools' responsibility. Inservice programs which use the teachers as presenters and focus on the exchange of techniques and new materials were perceived to be the most valuable. All teachers were adamant about not scheduling these activities when they might interfere with family life. Tuition assistance and release time were identified as incentives to participation. This research was based on a small sample and may not reflect the feelings and needs of all subject area teachers.

Most of the research has linked motivation to participate in professional development activities to past experiences. There is also some evidence that professional training will affect their later participation in professional activities. In their survey of 777 home economics graduates from the University of North Carolina, Draper, Shanner and Roscoe (1982) questioned the effectiveness of traditional means of promoting professional development. These traditional methods included student chapters of

professional organizations and awarding scholarships and awards. Their questionnaire consisted of three parts: (1) professional activity and recognition as an undergraduate, (2) professional affiliation and education since graduating, and (3) current demographic information. Of the 777 questionnaires distributed, 276 usable responses were returned. The results of their inquiry revealed that teachers, compared to non-educationally oriented home economists, were more affiliated with professional associations. They also found that the more involved they were as an undergraduate, i.e. held membership in home economics related organizations, served as an officer in the organization or received a home economics award, the more likely they were to remain in the profession. Although older women were more often affiliated with professional associations than younger women, advanced education was not related to professional affiliation.

Although most research has focused on what motivates participation in professional development and has not been useful in distinguishing between participants and non-participants (Scanlan and Darkenwald, 1984); few studies have spent any time examining the factors that deter participation. Barriers to participation can be divided into three categories. Situational barriers are those which are beyond the control of the participant

which include lack of time and money. Dispositional barriers are the personal attitudes of the participant. These are often difficult to measure because it is easy and more acceptable to respond that the time or cost are too much rather than responding that they are not interested or too old. Finally institutional barriers are issues surrounding the activity, such as location and transportation, lack of relevant or interesting course offerings and lack of information regarding courses (Cross, 1981, Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982).

Scanlan and Darkenwald (1984) surveyed 686 health care professionals in New Jersey to find out why they were unable or did not desire to participate in continuing education activities. From a factor analysis of the data, six factors emerged as deterrents to participation: (1) disengagement, which is a lack of feeling of connection or commitment to the profession, (2) lack of quality, (3) family constraints, (4) cost, (5) lack of benefit, and (6) work constraints. Virtually all of the factors, with the exception of work constraints, demonstrated predictive power in relation to participation. Four of the factors (lack of quality, cost, lack of benefit and work constraints) were felt to be important for organizations planning future activities. These factors provided evaluations of activities that could be changed.

This research was replicated with the general public's attitude toward participation in organized adult education (Darkenwald and Valentine, 1985). A questionnaire was distributed to 2000 randomly selected households in an affluent area of New Jersey. A very low response rate of 10% identified six factors as barriers to participation: lack of confidence, lack of course relevance, time constraints, low personal priority, cost and personal problems. Of these factors, time constraints and lack of course relevance were ranked the highest, although most items were ranked fairly low. From these results, Darkenwald and Valentine (1985) suggested that a persons' decision to not participate may be based on a combination of several factors rather than isolated to only one factor.

Research has examined the factors that motivate or deter professionals from participating in professional development activities, although, more limited consideration has been given to deterrents. Limited evidence suggests that past experience with professional development activities plays a major role in deterring future participation. The review of the literature suggests that involvement in professional development is multi-dimensional. Factors such as situational factors and the nature of the activity have a direct influence on participation. However, the professional

attitude of the teacher also plays a major role in determining their decision to participate.

### Professional Attitude

Professional attitude has been closely linked with a professional's participation in continuing education experiences. The values and beliefs that a professional holds will influence their actions and practices. To act as professionals, members must be educated and socialized into the profession and must internalize the philosophy of the profession. Professionalism involves more than merely knowing the mission statement of the profession. It occurs in the minds of professionals, in their thoughts, values and beliefs, and is made explicit through their actions and practices (Griggs, 1984). Professional attitudes determine behaviour.

Much of the research of professional attitudes is based on the research of Hall (1968) who assumed there was a correspondence between attitude and behaviour. The purpose of his study was to examine how professional attitude is formed and how it is affected by the organization in which a professional practices. Hall examined five attitudinal attributes as measures of the level of professionalization.

1. the use of the professional association as a major reference,
2. a belief in service to the public,

3. belief in self-regulation,
4. a sense of calling to the field,
5. autonomy.

Hall (1968) developed a questionnaire of 50 Likert-type items to measure the five attitudinal attributes and to measure the level of bureaucracy in an occupational setting. Respondents were asked to complete the survey according to how they perceived the statements to correspond to their organization. The results of the professionalization scale were correlated with the level of bureaucratization they perceived within their organization. This was done in order to compare the level of professionalization of an occupation in a variety of settings.

The major finding of his work was that the structural and attitudinal aspects of professionalization do not necessarily vary together. The strength of each of the attitudinal attributes depends on the socialization which takes place during training and in the work they are involved in the profession. In addition, the social structure of the occupation affects attitudes. For example, if the occupation is self-regulating, the respondents believed strongly in this, regardless of the level of bureaucracy in the occupational setting.

Snizek (1972) modified Halls' professional inventory based on a factor analysis of Halls' and Snizeks' own data. His results revealed that half of the fifty items designed by Hall had a low factor loading on the five components of professionalism. Of the fifty items, some items revealed little fit, others seemed to fit with multiple components while other items fitted with components other than the ones in which they were intended. Snizek (1972) deleted twenty five items to reduce the empirical overlap and found the scores before and after the modification to be very similar. With the revisions to the Hall (1968) instrument, Snizek reported little change in reliability coefficients.

Certainly any decrease in the total number of scale items will diminish the scale's total reliability. Hall's data reveal a drop from .86 to .84; Snizek's data from .80 to .78. More importantly, a deletion of the specified items should generally increase the stratified reliabilities of the scale's dimensions. (p.112)

Snizek also felt that the shortened inventory provided a clearer, more precise measurement tool.

Hall (1990) used the shortened survey in his research on the factors related to the participation of agricultural education teachers in professional development activities. Hall's research examined the effect of demographic variables, motivational and deterrent factors and the results from the attitude scale on professional development participation. His findings,



based on a 74% return rate, indicated a positive relationship between attitude toward the profession and participation. He found that four demographic factors had significant impact on participation: (1) former professional association membership, (2) contract length, (3) financial contribution of school district toward professional development activities and (4) children, i.e. sons or daughters, who were teachers.

Hall (1990) created a professional attitude index by coding the responses on Hall's (1968) attitude inventory. The coding allowed a score to be calculated with the higher the index score, the higher the professional attitude. In addition, the data was further analyzed by a factor analysis to see if the responses loaded into the five attitudinal categories cited by Hall (1968). All but two of the statements loaded into the five categories. The close match between these results using the instrument and those of Hall (1968) and Snizek (1972) further demonstrates the tool's validity in measuring professional attitudes.

Amos and Nelson (1979) examined several research studies on professionalization and based on the common elements, they developed an instrument to survey 333 home economics teachers from Upper New York State, about their beliefs concerning their profession. One study on which Amos and Nelson (1979) based their study was the work of Hall (1968). A

random sample was drawn from a computer generated list of all upper New York State home economics teachers. The major objective of their study was to investigate the background of teachers and assess the perceptions of teachers towards home economics as a profession and themselves as professionals. Amos and Nelson (1979) developed four categories of professional characteristics. These are: (1) orientation to profession, (2) orientation to peers and profession, (3) orientation to clients, and (4) orientation to school as an organization. The results of their survey revealed that most teachers felt home economics was a profession but less strongly identified their work in their classes as being professional. Their results also reflected teachers feelings of insecurity, helplessness and isolation in their classroom or school setting. Teachers expressed a commitment to their professional group but felt that the professional meetings were unimportant.

Amos and Nelson (1979) concluded that home economics in the public schools lacks a common focus and that too many teachers were off doing their own thing rather than working towards strengthening the profession. They also inferred from their results a need for more support for individual teachers and encouragement to get involved in their

profession. This, they felt, would enable teachers to better meet the needs of learners and schools.

The role of the professional education organizations in professional development and professionalism is often underrated and has not been extensively studied (Edelfelt, 1989). Teachers' participation in these organizations is voluntary and often involves sharing ideas and experiences with other teachers. Teachers are involved more in professional development activities related to teaching which are prepared by teacher organizations, because they are more practical (Edelfelt and Gollnick, 1981).

Hutchinson (1976) studied the role that the professional organization plays in influencing professionals views concerning the profession and professionalism. His research was of 590 teachers in Pennsylvania who were members and non members of the American Vocational Association. The results based on a 51% return rate revealed that members held different views on issues than non members. Members saw more of a need for state affiliated professional organizations and the need for these organizations to become politically active and to help improve the image of the teaching profession. In general, members had more positive views towards the profession, professional organizations, and their role in education.

Wilson (1973) studied the relationship between the participation of home economics teachers in professional development, their information of curriculum practices and professional commitment. Of a random sample of 200 home economics teachers from Massachusetts, 140 teachers responded (73% response rate). The majority, 75%, were members of their local teachers association, 40% were members of both local and national association and 10% did not hold any membership. Reading journals and contact with other teachers for information and assistance were the most often cited means of professional development. Professional commitment was measured using the Loftis Measure Of Professional Commitment (MOPC) and results revealed a positive correlation between participation, knowledge and the use of practices, and professional commitment. Wilson (1973) found that those respondents who held memberships in associations scored higher in all areas. They scored higher on the MOPC and used more up to date curriculum practices and participated in more professional development. Professional commitment was found to be independent of age, level of education, marital status and years of experience. One finding of particular importance was that all groups responsible for delivering professional development activities, universities, professional organizations, local school districts and home economics supervisors, received low

effectiveness ratings (Wilson, 1973). The low ratings were reported due to the limited contact the teachers received from each of the groups. The home economics supervisor was the one seen as least effective in delivering quality professional development, however, this was assumed to be as a result of a lack of funds and personnel at the state level. Professional development must meet the needs, interests and abilities of the teachers in order to be effective. Planning professional development activities is only the beginning, organizations must also foster meaningful participation (Wright, 1985).

The review of the literature revealed a wealth of information in the area of professional development but little in the field of home economics. Much of the literature is based on studies conducted in the United States on teachers in general rather than those in specific subject areas. There is a need for empirical work in the field of home economics education in Canada in order to strengthen an understanding of our situation and concerns. The majority of studies have focused on why people participate rather than also looking at why they are not involved. Some research has looked at the impact the professional association has had during training on later participation, but does not look at its continued impact throughout professional practice. Research into the attitudes of a professional will

provide valuable information to help us better understand why some professionals participate and others do not. As well, the research will reveal what motivates home economics teachers to become involved in professional development activities and what activities they feel are most personally and professionally beneficial.

### CHAPTER III: METHODS

#### Population and Data Collection

The survey was distributed to all home economics teachers in the Province of Manitoba who were teaching in a junior or senior public high school. Participants were identified from the directory published yearly by Manitoba Education and Training. There were approximately 248 teachers listed in the directory. The questionnaires were mailed January 25, 1993 and were accompanied by a cover letter explaining the study (Appendix 1). The respondents were assured of anonymity in the letter and the questionnaires were not coded in any way in order to guarantee this. A self-addressed stamped reply envelope accompanied the questionnaire to simplify its return.

A reminder notice was sent to all participants two weeks after the initial mailing. Six teachers responded that they did not teach home economics. One teacher responded that she taught cooking skills to four severely disabled children and had no training in home economics so she did not consider herself to be a home economics teacher. Two teachers had no home economics background and did not feel qualified to respond. One teacher had moved and was not replaced and one teacher was on sick leave

and not able to respond. One questionnaire was returned without sufficient information and was omitted from the analysis. Thus of the original 248 questionnaires, only 238 comprised the appropriate population. Of these, 147 questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 61%.

### Instrumentation

The instrument and cover letter was developed for this study and was reviewed by a pilot group made up of volunteer first year teachers who graduated from the University of Manitoba Faculty of Education. They were asked to complete the survey in order to establish an approximate length of time needed to complete the instrument. They were also asked to comment on the clarity of instructions and question format. The instrument was then revised based on their recommendations and was mailed to all participants in the population. The final questionnaire consisted of four sections (Appendix 1). The first section was a list of professional development activities. Teachers checked off the activities they had participated in since July 1, 1992, and which of these activities they perceived as beneficial to their work in the classroom. The second section of the questionnaire consisted of four closed-ended questions asking teachers to check all factors that motivated or deterred their participation in professional development activities. Respondents were then asked to identify



the top three factors that influenced their decision whether or not to participate.

The third section of the questionnaire consisted of the 25 item Professional Attitude Inventory (Hall 1990, Hall, 1968). Fourteen of the twenty-five items were reverse coded in the calculation of a professional attitude index. The higher the score, the higher the degree of professional attitude. Hall (1990) reported a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .76 for the 25 item scale. The final section of the questionnaire consisted of 9 items which surveyed demographic information, such as age and professional association affiliation; this data was used to describe the different groups within the population.

The questionnaire results were analyzed by within population comparisons of home economics teachers based on their professional association affiliation. The population of home economics teachers were divided according to their membership in the professional home economics associations: (1) Manitoba Association of Home Economists (MAHE) and The Manitoba Home Economics Teachers Association (MHETA), (2) MHETA only, (3) MAHE only, and (4) non members. The data was analyzed by frequency distributions of the entire population and also of the four different groups. A chi square analysis was used to determine if the

differences were significant or due to chance with a 0.05 alpha level selected.

### Limitations

There are limitations in any research design and there are some in this study as well. Self-completed survey research often has cited a low return rate as a limitation (Hall, 1990). In order to achieve a higher response rate, a reminder notice was sent after two weeks. The surveys were mailed out to all teachers listed in the directory from Manitoba Education and Training. The directory proved to have a number of errors, which were taken into account in the data analysis. The lists of motivations and deterrents supplied in the questionnaire were as extensive as possible. However, respondents choice was limited to those listed and may not reflect all possibilities (Wolf et al, 1986).

## CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

### Description of the Sample

The sample of 146 home economics teachers in the Province of Manitoba, was examined. Demographic information was obtained in the final section of the questionnaire which provided information about age, location, educational background, teaching experience and future plans. Forty percent of the respondents were currently teaching only junior high level home economics, 38% were teaching both junior and senior high courses, and only 21% were solely senior high teachers. The majority of teachers, (58%) were located in an urban setting (either Winnipeg or Brandon), 35% were located in a rural school. Only 7% were teaching in a northern setting (above the 53rd parallel).

The vast majority of the teachers (81%) held a bachelors degree as their highest degree. Further education does not seem to be a priority as only 3% had a Masters degree, 5% had a post baccalaureate certificate and only 9% had a degree in another area.

The average age of the respondents were not spread out evenly over the five age groupings provided. The largest percentage of teachers (77.4%) were between the ages of 30 and 49. This large number of

colleagues moving through the system together may cause administrative and institutional problems as they begin to retire. In Table 1 is reported the percentage of teachers in each age grouping.

Table 1

Age of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency n = 146	Percent
20 - 29	14	9.6
30 - 39	46	31.5
40 - 49	67	45.9
50 - 59	17	11.6
60+	2	1.4

Unlike age, the number of years of teaching experience was evenly distributed across each of the five year experience ranges. The highest percentage of the respondents, 23%, had been teaching for 16-20 years. This may suggest that more teachers will be retiring in upcoming years and making room for new graduates. However, according to the responses of

teachers, a high percentage reported that they plan to continue teaching for a long time to come. Fifty-one percent of respondents reported that they would be teaching for ten or more years, and only 37% reported that they would be teaching for less than ten years. In Table 2 is the frequency of teachers reporting in each category of experience and in Table 3, their reported future plans.

Table 2

Years of Teaching Experience

Number of Years	Frequency	Percent
	n = 146	
0 - 5	24	16.4
6 - 10	29	19.9
11 - 15	32	21.9
16 - 20	34	23.3
21 - 25	18	12.3
25+	9	6.2

Table 3

Number of Years of Anticipated Teaching

Number of More Years	Frequency	Percent
	n = 146	
did not respond	3	2.1
0 - 5	17	11.6
6 - 10	37	25.3
11 - 15	51	34.9
16+	38	26.0

Respondents were asked to indicate which of the professional home economics associations they belong to: MAHE and MHETA, MHETA only, MAHE only, or neither association. This information was vital to all further data analysis in which responses were divided according to their membership. Fifty-two percent reported belonging to both MAHE and MHETA, 32% to MHETA only, and 5%, belonged to MAHE only. Ten percent of respondent did not belong to either association and were categorized as non-members.

When asked about their involvement in the organizations through committee or executive work, 58% of respondents had not participated. Furthermore, when this high percentage is taken into account with the number of members who have only participated once or twice, this extremely high percentage should be of concern to both associations. In Table 4 is reported the number of times a respondent was a member of a committee or executive for either association.

Table 4

Committee or Executive Participation

Number of Committee or Executive Positions	Frequency n = 139	Percent
0	80	57.6
1	28	20.1
2	16	11.5
3	7	5.0
4	3	2.2
5+	5	3.6

### Summary

Home economics teaching in Manitoba is an aging profession with over 75% between the ages of 30 and 49. The majority teach at the junior high level in an urban setting. Most teachers have at least ten years of teaching experience and plan to continue teaching for at least 10 to 15 more years. Very few teachers have furthered their education beyond their bachelors degree. Fifty percent of teachers belong to both of their provincial professional associations.

### Involvement in Professional Development

Five questions guided the research in this study. The first question examined how active in professional development do home economics teachers perceive themselves to be. Respondents were asked to indicate on a scale from one to five, the level to which they perceived themselves to be involved in home economics-related professional development activities. The results for the sample are presented in Table 5, and show an even distribution of respondents across all five points of the scale.



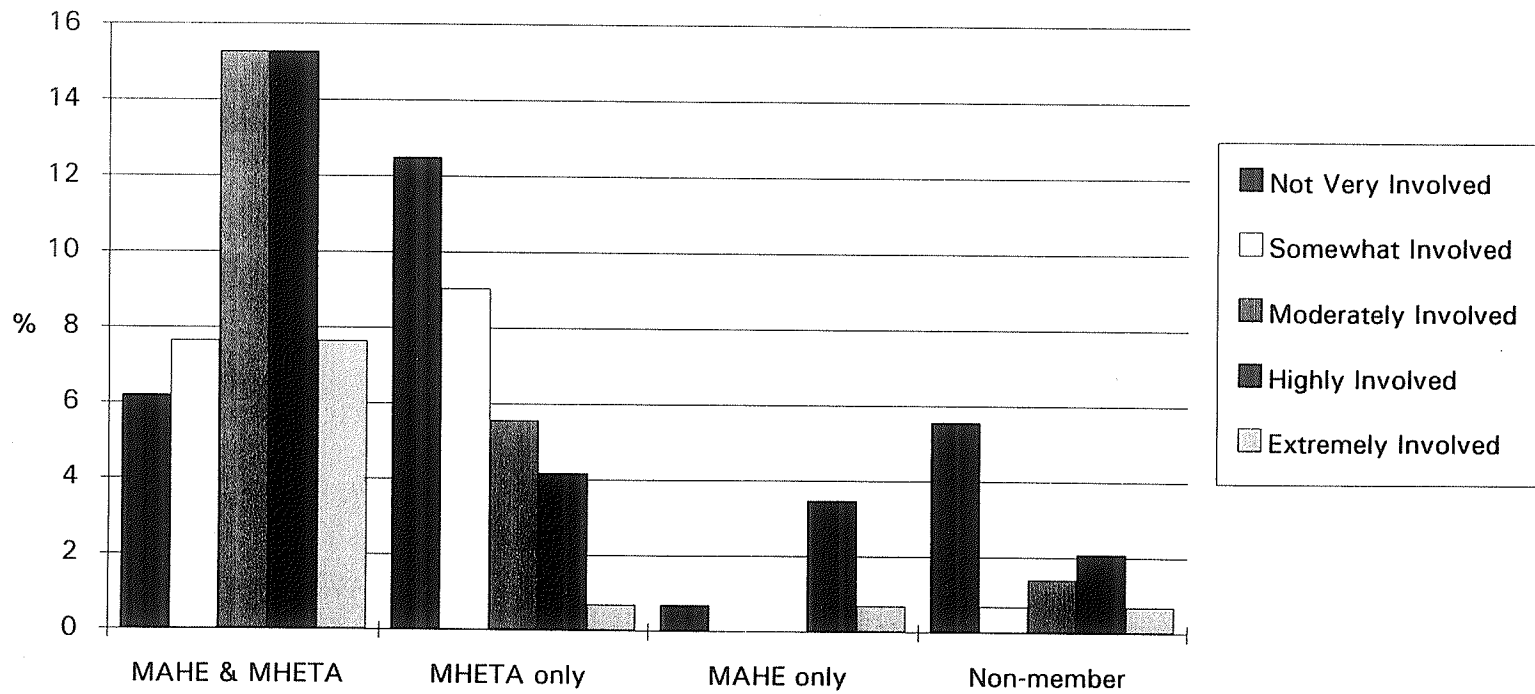
Table 5

Perceived Level of Involvement

Level of Involvement	Frequency	Percent
	n = 145	
1. not very involved	36	24.8
2. somewhat involved	25	17.2
3. moderately involved	32	22.1
4. highly involved	37	25.5
5. extremely involved	15	10.3

When the data was further analyzed by a Mantel-Haenszel Chi Square test, according to the respondents' membership in the professional associations, significant differences were noted (Chi square = 8.916, df = 1,  $p < 0.003$ ). The Mantel-Haenszel chi square was used in this analysis due to the fact that some of the cell sizes were too small and a correction factor was needed to clarify the results. Figure 1 shows the level of involvement sub-divided by membership group. Members of both associations perceived themselves to be highly to extremely involved. Members of MHETA only

**FIGURE 1 - Perceived Level of Involvement (by membership group)**



perceived themselves to be not very to somewhat involved, with one person who responded that they were extremely involved. The opposite results were reported by MAHE only members who viewed themselves as highly involved. The non-member group had its highest number of respondents in the not very involved category.

### Level of Participation

The second research question explored the differences in the level of participation in professional development among the members of the four groups. Participants were asked to indicate the number of times they had participated in eighteen professional development activities over the past year. The range of responses were from zero to 72 activities over twelve months, with 14% of the population selecting the most frequent response of zero. Fifty-four percent of the sample had been involved in six or fewer activities in the past year and 66% had been involved in less than ten activities.

The data were further analyzed according to professional organization membership. Respondents who were non-members were involved in four or less activities with only one non-member participating in as many as nine activities. The mean for the non-member group was 2.5 activities. Members of MAHE-only responses ranged from zero to 16 with

one member reporting involvement in 22 activities. The mean for this group was 8.7 activities. MHETA-only members were involved in up to 24 activities with one member involved in 62 activities over the year. The mean for MHETA-only members was 6.9 activities in a year. Those respondents who belonged to both associations ranged from zero to 72 activities, with a mean of 8.1 activities in the past year.

Several respondents indicated that they had been involved in a great deal of professional development, however, very little of it was in the home economics area. They were currently committed to professional development in other subject areas such as guidance, language arts and special education. One respondent was adamant that she was a teacher first and a home economist second. Therefore, she was more involved in professional development for teaching than in home economics and felt that the entire survey ignored her role as a teacher. In fact, when asked to indicate her level of involvement she ranked herself at both ends of the spectrum, very low for home economics and extremely involved in professional development for teachers.

Respondents were also asked to estimate the number of hours and personal money they had spent on each activity. The number of hours reported ranged from one-half hour to 480 hours. Those activities requiring

the greatest number of hours were university courses, writing an article or training manual, and committee participation. The mean for the population was 69 hours.

The number of dollars spent on professional development ranged from \$3 to \$1000. University courses, and conferences required the largest commitment of funds. The mean for the population was \$175 during the one-year time period. Several respondents indicated that they did not keep track of their professional development and therefore found it difficult to estimate the number of hours or dollars spent.

#### Activities Reported as Most and Least Beneficial

The third question in the study examined what activities teachers felt were the most and least beneficial to their work in the classroom. Respondents were asked to indicate four out of a list of eighteen professional development activities. The activity selected as most beneficial was a workshop or conference. This result was contrary to the literature in which participants reported not attending conferences or reported them as having little benefit (Fanslow et al., 1980, Allen et al., 1981, Zakrajsek & Woods, 1983). The other three activities also selected with a high degree of frequency were lecture or tape, exhibit, and observations. In Table 6 is reported the distribution of responses for all of the eighteen activities listed.

Table 6

Most Beneficial Professional Development Activities

Professional Development Activity	Frequency	Percent
Workshop or conference	126	88.7
Lecture or tape	62	43.6
Exhibit	49	34.5
Observation	48	33.4
Individual study	39	27.4
University course	33	23.0
Non-University course	31	21.8
Presentation to professionals	29	20.4
Committee participation	28	19.7
Teleconference	10	7.0
Writing for public action	10	7.0
Other	7	4.9

Four participants did not respond to this question so the number of subjects in the sample is 142. In addition, 18% only picked one activity instead of the four they were requested to select. It is very interesting to note that activity fourteen and fifteen, writing a book review or position paper for publication, were not selected by any respondent and activities ten through sixteen which all involve writing, were selected by very few respondents. The category eighteen labelled "other", was interpreted by respondents to

include activities such as professional meetings, presentations to non professional groups and professional development in other subject areas.

When asked to identify the professional development activity they perceived to be least beneficial, the respondents again indicated that all of the activities that involved them in having to write something for publication, were not beneficial to their work in the classroom. There was no activity which was not selected, however, the number of respondents who did not select more than one activity was substantially higher than for the previous question. Respondents may have found it difficult to label an activity as not being beneficial and therefore opted to not complete the question. Several respondents commented that all activities could be beneficial and that they could not judge because they had not participated in all of them. In Table 7 are reported the frequencies of distribution of responses for all of the eighteen activities.

Table 7

Least Beneficial Professional Development Activities

Professional Development Activity	Frequency	Percent
Written book review	54	38.0
Written position paper	47	33.0
Written thesis	47	33.0
Written book	45	31.6
Written training manual	35	24.6
Journal club	23	16.1
Written article	23	16.1
Committee participation	20	14.0
Teleconference	19	13.3
Lecture or tape	14	9.8
Workshops, exhibits, courses and individual study	45	31.5

Motivators and Deterrents for Participation

The fourth question explored what factors motivated or deterred participation. Respondents were asked to identify factors that motivated or deterred them from participating in professional development activities. A list of fifteen possible motivators were given and the respondents were asked to select three of these which had the greatest influence on their participation. In Table 8 are reported the percentage of responses for each



Table 8

Motivators to Participation

Motivator	Frequency	Percent
New developments	76	52.7
Better serve students	75	52.0
Update knowledge	73	50.6
Maintain competence	52	36.1
Interact with colleagues	47	32.6
Affirm that I am up to date	24	16.6
Meet specific need	23	15.9
Increase work satisfaction	16	11.1
Collect continuing education points	11	7.6
Renew social contacts	7	4.8
Financial gain	4	2.7
Get away from teaching	3	2.0
Career advancement	3	2.0
Support profession	3	2.0
Enhance professional image	2	1.3

of the fifteen motivators. The strongest motivators to influence participation were the desire to find out about new developments, to better serve their students, and to update their knowledge and skill. These were consistent with the activities in which teachers reported they had participated. To learn about new developments and to update knowledge or

skill, more "hands-on" activities, such as workshops were considered more useful than writing an article or book.

Significant differences were found by comparing the motivators reported by respondents grouped according to their membership in professional organizations. A Mantel-Haenszel Chi Square test was done on each of the motivators and each membership group. Teachers who belong to both MAHE and MHETA selected motivators such as maintaining professional competence, networking and collecting continuing education points, significantly more often than any of the other three membership groups. The results of the chi square test are reported in Table 9. Maintaining professional competence, networking, and collecting continuing education points were of importance to this group because of the legislation that mandated continuing education in Manitoba.

Of the twelve possible deterrents to their professional development participation, the three consistently selected by all respondents were: (1) lack of time, (2) family commitments and (12) inconvenient scheduling of activities. In Table 10 are reported the percentage of respondents selecting each of the twelve factors as deterrents.

Table 9

Mantel-Haenszel Chi Square Results for Motivators to Participation

Motivator	Value (df= 1)	p
New developments	1.511	0.219
Better serve students	3.286	0.070
Update knowledge	2.150	0.143
Maintain competence	11.534	0.001
Interact with colleagues	7.156	0.008
Affirm that I am up to date	0.141	0.707
Meet specific need	0.126	0.722
Increase work satisfaction	0.499	0.480
Collect continuing education points	17.361	0.000
Renew social contacts	0.231	0.631
Financial gain	0.514	0.473
Get away from teaching	0.088	0.767
Career advancement	0.305	0.581
Support profession	3.424	0.064
Enhance professional image	2.580	0.108

Table 10

Deterrents to Participation

Deterrent	Frequency	Percent
Lack of time	79	54.8
Family commitments	52	36.1
Inconvenient scheduling of activities	51	35.4
Do not like to be away from school	38	26.3
Work commitments	31	21.5
Activities are not of interest	30	20.8
Activities are not in my subject	29	20.1
Limited activities available	23	15.9
High cost	23	15.9
Disappointing past experiences	13	9.0
No encouragement	5	3.4
Do not like to attend alone	3	2.0

The results of a Chi Square analysis performed on this data according to the four groups, indicated no statistical differences in perception of deterrents according to professional affiliation and are reported in Table 11.

Table 11

Mantel-Haenszel Chi Square Results for Deterrents to Participation

Deterrent	Value (df=1)	p
Lack of time	0.000	0.991
Family commitments	0.008	0.927
Inconvenient scheduling of activities	3.673	0.055
Do not like to be away from school	0.668	0.414
Work commitments	2.487	0.115
Activities are not of interest	0.725	0.394
Activities are not in my subject	1.142	0.285
Limited activities available	2.525	0.112
High cost	0.046	0.830
Disappointing past experiences	6.393	0.011
No encouragement	0.033	0.855
Do not like to attend alone	0.587	0.444

When asked when they would most likely participate in a workshop or course, the results were all quite low, with only 37% of respondents indicating that they would participate in either of these activities. The highest percentage of respondents (58%) indicated they would attend a workshop only during school hours. The survey was distributed shortly after the government announced education funding cuts and as a cost saving measure, the school divisions began cutting professional development days. This may have impacted on the teachers responses, who may have feared

that if they agreed to participate at times other than during school hours, they would lose further inservice days.

Participation in all courses received a low preference rating.

However as one respondent commented, participation depended on the topic; if the topic was pertinent, she would make time for it. In Table 12 are reported the percentage of respondents for each activity.

Table 12

Willingness to Participate in Workshops and Courses

Workshop	Would Attend	Would Not Participate
During school hours	58.7	41.3
Immediately after school	22.3	77.7
Evenings	35.5	64.5
Weekends	37.4	62.6
Courses	Would Attend	Would Not Participate
Summer	43.3	56.7
Fall	22.5	77.5
Winter	18.0	82.0
Intersession	17.1	82.9

### Professional Attitude Inventory

The final research question examined what differences existed in attitudes between respondents in each of the four groups. The third section of the questionnaire consisted of the 25 item inventory of Hall (1990) used to measure professional attitude. Of the 25 items, negatively-worded items were reverse coded in order to calculate a total score. The total possible scores ranged from 25 to 125, with a mean of 83.7 for the entire sample. There were virtually no differences in scores divided according to the four membership groups, Members of both MAHE and MHETA had a mean score of 84.5, MHETA-only members had a mean score of 83.4, MAHE-only members scored 84, and non-members had a mean score of 80. These differences were found to be non-significant, ( $df(4) = 0.72, p = 0.58$ ).

The results were further analyzed according to the five attitudinal attributes cited by Hall (1968) as measures of the level of professionalization.

1. the use of the professional association as a major reference,
2. a belief in service to the public,
3. belief in self-regulation,
4. a sense of calling to the field,
5. autonomy.

Results of an analysis of variance found the differences among the members of MAHE and MHETA, MAHE only, MHETA only and non-members to be not significant for four of the five attitudinal attributes. The first category, the use of the professional association was found to be significant for members of MAHE and MHETA,  $df(3) = 4.01$ ,  $p = 0.0090$ . The results of the analysis of variance are reported in Table 13.

Table 13

Analysis of Variance of Attitudinal Attributes and Professional Association

Membership

Attribute	F value (df = 3)	p
Use of professional association	4.01	0.0090
Belief in service to public	1.96	0.1236
Belief in self-regulation	0.39	0.7635
Sense of calling	0.37	0.7728
Autonomy	0.82	0.4832



## CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

There is no doubt, that in these rapidly changing social and economic times, professional development is essential for teachers. As society calls for more accountability and government continues to cut funding for continuing education, teachers must make better use of their professional development time and energy. This exploratory study examined the current attitudes and professional development practices of Manitoba's home economics teachers.

### Participation in Professional Development Activities

The first research question explored how active in professional development teachers perceived themselves to be. In general the results were evenly spread across the five point scale with a smaller number reported as being highly involved. The second research question examined the level of participation among home economics teachers in Manitoba. The number of activities that teachers were involved in was quite high, ranging from 0 to 72 over a twelve month time period, with a mean of 7.04 activities.

Fourteen percent reported that during that time period they were not involved in any home economics related professional development. In that

one year time period, one day was set aside by Manitoba Education and Training as a province wide inservice day for all teachers to meet with others teaching the same discipline. Teachers were paid by school divisions for that day and were expected to attend conferences in their area. If these respondents were not attending, that raises the concern of how many more teachers, not only in home economics, but in all areas, were supported at taxpayers expense but not attending. If the present system is not meeting the needs of nearly one-fifth of the teachers, it should be seriously examined and revised to better use the time and resources, required to put together such a day. Some schools have made use of this day by designing school based professional development programs which better meets the immediate needs of their teachers and school rather than attending the general conferences.

The third research question examined the activities teachers perceived as most and least beneficial to their work in the classroom. Hands on activities such as workshops, lecture or tapes, exhibits and observations were preferred. Much of the research reviewed in this study found that workshops and conferences are more often seen as having little value and are poorly attended. Respondents also indicated professional meetings and professional development in other subject areas as other

beneficial activities, even though they were not included on the main list of activities. In general, teachers reported that all activities could be beneficial, but some indicated they could not judge the merit if they had not participated in that activity. Even so, activities requiring writing, such as articles, book reviews or theses, were seen as least beneficial.

These data provide valuable information for both MAHE and MHETA and other organizations which provide professional development for home economics teachers. Energy and resources should be funnelled into activities teachers feel are most beneficial. However, the lack of interest in activities that involve writing and that strengthen the theoretical and intellectual dimensions of our profession and communicate our concerns and mission to other disciplines, should be of concern. Home economists who are working in these areas should be encouraged and efforts made to make use of their work.

Respondents also indicated the factors that motivated and deterred them from participating in professional development. Teachers were primarily motivated to participate in order to find out about new developments, to better serve their students and to update their knowledge.

A lack of time and family commitments were the primary barriers to participation identified by home economics teachers. This is consistent with

the evidence found in the review of the literature. It is worth noting however that of the twelve options respondents could select, inconvenient scheduling of activities was the next most often selected barrier to participation. Analysis of replies showed that teachers were more willing to participate if workshops are scheduled during school hours. This is an important institutional barrier that should be studied and acted upon by professional organizations. Professional development activities should be scheduled at times when the largest number of teachers are willing to attend, unfortunately this is also when they are the most costly to schools.

The list of deterrents within the questionnaire was not complete. A number of respondents cited additional reasons for non-participation. Two teachers noted that it was hard to arrange for a substitute teacher with no qualified substitutes available in their area. One respondent reported little encouragement from the school administration. Another teacher complained of negative past experiences, when professional development sessions turned into opportunities to complain about their jobs and students. Teachers in rural and northern areas where professional development opportunities are limited, felt that they were not well served by their professional organizations. A variety of activities, such as teleconferences,

videotapes of workshops and developing networks to disseminate information, should be employed to better serve persons in remote areas.

In summary, home economics teachers are involved in professional development to varying degrees from not at all to highly involved. Fourteen percent of the teachers are not involved in any professional development while others are involved in up to 70 activities in the year. Professional organizations must find more ways to encourage greater participation in the activities that they plan. Further study into activities which teachers prefer and are willing to attend may help ensure greater participation. Although nothing can be done to alleviate the deterrents of the lack of time and family commitments that are commonly reported throughout the literature, the inconvenient scheduling of activities that was raised by respondents in this survey needs to be addressed. Research into the professional development preferences of teachers may also help to meet the needs of the teachers serving in rural or northern communities who do not have an equal access to professional development activities.

#### Role of the Professional Group

There is evidence in the literature that the membership in professional organizations plays an important role in professionals' participation in continuing education activities. The two professional

organizations for home economists in Manitoba provide professional development activities for provincial teachers. To assess their relative contribution, membership in MAHE and/or MHETA was used as a means of dividing the data for further analyses. For a number of the research questions previously discussed, significant differences were found among respondents who belonged to both organization, MAHE-only, MHETA-only, or neither organization.

For example, results showed that teachers who belonged to both organizations and teachers who were MAHE-only members, perceived themselves to be more involved than members of MHETA-only or were non-members. Teachers who were members of both organizations and members of MAHE-only also reported that they were involved in more professional development activities than the other two groups.

The difference in perceived level of involvement may be due to a number of factors. The first factor may be that mandated continuing education for all MAHE members encourages more involvement. Respondents who belonged to both MAHE and MHETA were strongly influenced by the need to maintain professional competence and collect continuing education points. This is most likely due to the legislation that mandates continuing education for all professional home economists. Only

specific professional development activities are considered acceptable by MAHE. The list of activities used for this study was based directly on the criteria used by MAHE for awarding continuing education points.

Committee participation was added to this list because it was felt that this form of networking provides valuable current information through working with others. Other items included in the MAHE guidelines such as individual study need to be further studied and clarified. Replies indicated that individual study is very hard to document; MAHE has no way to validate it for record keeping.

Secondly, the difference in perceived level of involvement may be due to different perceptions of respondents who belong to both organizations compared to the members of only one organization or non-members. Members of both MHETA and MAHE have strong professional identities. They likely perceive themselves to be more professional than non-members and feel an obligation to support their profession through their membership. They have more ready access to a variety of professional development activities because most information about professional development is provided through newsletters and journals.

A third possible explanation for the difference in perceived level of involvement may be the distinction between teacher and home economist.

Fifty percent of teachers belong to both MAHE and MHETA. Yet some teachers seem to make distinct divisions between their roles as teacher and as home economist. The specific question referred to professional development in general, yet several respondents indicated they assumed the question addressed their perceived level of involvement in home-economics related professional development, and therefore ranked their involvement as low. This interpretation may be due to the fact that the first question referred specifically to their involvement in home economics related professional development and all other questions referred to professional development in general. This also may have biased their responses throughout the questionnaire. Further research should pursue why teachers feel such a distinct division and how this affects the home economics program in their classrooms. The two organizations also need to work more closely on providing professional development to ensure they are meeting the needs of teachers. Stronger links between MAHE and MHETA need to be developed to strengthen the profession rather than divide it.

The low participation of members on committees and/or executives is also of concern. Results showed that 58% of respondents had not been involved on any committee or held an executive position on either



organization. To strengthen the profession, the organizations have to find ways of recruiting more of those that were not involved to become active in their associations. Organizations cannot survive and grow if they rely on the same members to do all of the work. By getting more involved, teachers can better see the work that is being done on their behalf, contribute to the professional development, and be involved in the dialogue about the directions of the profession.

The role of the professional organization in teacher professional development can not be overlooked. Respondents who were members of both MHETA and MAHE were involved in more activities and perceived themselves to be more active in professional development than members of the other three groupings. They were strongly motivated by the need to maintain their professional competence and to collect continuing education points in order to maintain their professional designation. As the main suppliers of continuing education for home economics teachers, MAHE and MHETA should work more closely to ensure that they are meeting the needs of their members and making the most of all resources. Continuous efforts are needed to recruit new members, to rotate leadership roles, and to determine why old members are not renewing. Stronger links between MAHE and MHETA will strengthen the profession.

### Study Weaknesses and Future Research

There were two problems or concerns with the survey. The first was the possibility that some teachers misinterpreted the questionnaire as dealing only with home economics and not addressing their role as teachers. Questions in the survey should consistently address the teachers profession development in both fields, education and home economics. This problem may also be a perceptual problem of the teachers themselves in seeing their two roles as distinct from one another. Research exploring teachers identities within the profession of teaching and as home economists needs to be undertaken to better understand the divisions they make between these two roles.

The second concern was the Professional Attitude Inventory which was administered in the third section of the questionnaire. This inventory was intended to reveal differences in attitudes between professional association membership groups. The mean score for respondents was 83.7 which was consistent with the research literature where a mean score of 84.96 was reported (Hall, 1990). However, this instrument did not reveal any differences in attitudes between the four membership groups.

The Professional Attitude Inventory was not well received by several respondents. This section of the questionnaire provoked a number of

comments from fourteen percent of the respondents. The most common complaint was that it was difficult to complete and the meaning or interpretation of some questions was unclear. Several respondents commented on the difficulty of saying how others felt in order to answer the questions. Items 6 and 23, for example, which involved reporting how well others do their work and their competence, drew several comments. Respondents reported that to answer these, they were resorting to "snooping" or "gossiping", and did not feel that they should pass judgement on other teachers. "We are too busy to worry about or judge others", one respondent reported.

Respondents felt that other items suffered from inappropriate or ambiguous wording which they found difficult to apply to their own situation. For example, on items 5 and 22, teachers felt that the use of the word "more" or "indispensable" had too strong a connotation and felt that there were other occupations which were more vital. The meaning of item 19, "my own decisions are subject to review", was also singled out by several respondents as being unclear as to who was doing the reviewing and what decisions were being reviewed. Several rural respondents commented that item 4, "I regularly attend professional meetings at the local level", was not applicable to them as there are no meetings in their area.

The attitude survey did draw out comments about professional development and the associations role in enhancing professional identity. For example, in response on item 15, "the professional organization does not do much for the average member", one respondent commented that "you get out of it what you put into it". Other respondents were not as positive. One respondent was very adamant about the job the professional organization are doing and her feelings about them when she wrote this footnote on her survey:

"No other professional organizations make such a big deal about "who" thinks they are worthy???. I think home economics people should just "do their job" and get on with life. The whole conference in Brandon in June was on the image. We whine too much!! The best way to do any thing about your image is to do the best you can at your career. I am wondering if this professional status is so wonderful. A lot of my colleagues are wondering too. I am not paying the yearly fees any more!"

Comments like this were not common (2%), however they should be of concern to professional organizations. A great deal of time and effort went into the professional status and registration act in hopes that this would strengthen the profession. Now that the legislation and continuing education have been in place for three years it is time for research into the impact they have had on the profession. If the continuing education component is seen as threatening or a burden, it is not doing what it was set

out to do. If it is instead turning away home economists, and in particular teachers, then it is in fact, weakening the profession. This is again an area where MAHE and MHETA must work together so that teachers feel they are a part of a positive movement rather than a "less than" professional home economist. Other provinces are looking to Manitoba and the path it followed to registration as a blueprint. It is important then, that MAHE and MHETA begin a self-examination in order to improve the system and provide leadership for others.

In conclusion, several questions emerged from this study which require further examination:

1. The use and misuse of professional development days across all subject area teachers requires more research. If nearly fifteen percent of home economics teachers are not attending their provincial inservice which is supported by the government, the amount of wasted resources across the province could be staggering. If this type of professional development day is not meeting the needs of these teachers, these resources should be put to better use.

2. One of the most common deterrents to participation is inconvenient scheduling of activities. MAHE and MHETA should

determine the best times and activities to offer so that more teachers have the chance and take the opportunity to be involved.

3. Research must be undertaken to identify more ways to make use of technology to link with teachers in the north and in rural communities. If no effort is made, these teachers will let their membership lapse and the profession will suffer for it. The vast expanse of the province of Manitoba can be overcome if the new developments in technology and telecommunications are put to work in meeting those teachers needs.

4. More research should examine the factors that influence a teacher's decision to belong to a particular professional organization. The reasons why some teachers belong to one, or to both, while others belong to neither will provide valuable information for all organizations in recruiting new members and meeting the changing needs of their membership as well as, the consequent effects on their professional behaviour and standard of work.

5. This study should be replicated with MHETA-only members with greater emphasis on their role and involvement in professional development, both as teachers and as home economists. Such research would provide insight into whether there was a bias in the present questionnaire, and to determine if in fact they are highly involved in other types of professional

development that are not home- economics related. Further research should examine what effect this distinction between their role as home economist and their role as teacher has on their delivery of the home economics program in the classroom.

6. After only three years in implementation, the comments made by some respondents raised serious concerns about the need for professional status which mandates continuing education for professionals and the professions. If the concerns expressed by the present respondents are common for all home economists, there may be a need to make changes before more teachers are turned away from their professional organization.

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APPENDIX 1

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R

December 15, 1992

Dear Colleague,

I am currently beginning work on a Masters in Education in the area of Home Economics education. My research project is examining the professional development activities and attitudes of home economics teachers in the province of Manitoba. In order to obtain information on this topic, I have developed the enclosed questionnaire.

As recent graduates and young professionals, I would like your assistance in the pilot test of this instrument. Please take some time to complete the questionnaire. I require your feedback on the amount of time it takes you to complete the survey. I would also like you to make any notes on the survey about the format and clarity of questions. I will not be using your answers to the questions in my data analysis, but will be using your feedback on the format of the instrument to improve it before it is distributed across the province.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about my research. Please write or call me at \_\_\_\_\_ in Winnipeg. Please return your survey and comments to me as soon as possible in the envelope provided.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this research project.

Sincerely,

Heidi Adair Forrester PHEc

Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R

January 25, 1993

Dear Colleague:

I am working on a Masters research project at the University of Manitoba in the area of Home Economics Education. I am writing to you to request your assistance in completing a survey being distributed to Home Economics teachers in the province of Manitoba. My research is looking specifically at the professional attitudes and activities of home economics teachers. With the data gathered from this survey, professional organizations will be better able to plan and execute professional development activities to suit your needs and interests.

Only a sample of Home Economics teachers are participating in this survey, so your responses and those of your colleagues are extremely important to my research. Please take 20 minutes to complete the survey and return it within the next two weeks, in the addressed return envelope provided. Your replies will be sent to me, where they will be analyzed, and with no name on the survey, confidentiality of responses is assured.

I would be happy to answer any questions you might have about my research. Please write or call me at \_\_\_\_\_ in Winnipeg. If you are interested in a summary of the results, please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope with your completed questionnaire.

Thank you in advance for your time, effort and assistance with this research project.

Sincerely,

Heidi Adair Forrester PHEC

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

*All of your answers are anonymous and will be kept strictly confidential*

## PART A Professional Development Activities

- I. Beside the professional activities below, write the number of times you have been involved in a home economics related activity since January 1, 1992. Eg. If you have attended two lectures since January 1, you would write the number 2 in the space provided beside 1) lecture or tape. Estimate the number of hours and personal money spent on each of these activities.

Professional Development Activity	Dollars Spent	Hours Spent
_____ 1) lecture or tape	_____	_____
_____ 2) teleconference	_____	_____
_____ 3) workshop or conference	_____	_____
_____ 4) exhibit	_____	_____
_____ 5) observation	_____	_____
_____ 6) university course	_____	_____
_____ 7) non-university course	_____	_____
_____ 8) presentation to professionals	_____	_____
_____ 9) individual study	_____	_____
_____ 10) journal club	_____	_____
_____ 11) written article for publication	_____	_____
_____ 12) written book for publication	_____	_____
_____ 13) written training manual for publication	_____	_____
_____ 14) written book review for publication	_____	_____
_____ 15) written position paper for publication	_____	_____
_____ 16) written thesis for publication	_____	_____
_____ 17) committee participation	_____	_____
_____ 18) other	_____	_____

- II. Which of the 4 activities listed in question 1 do you feel are MOST beneficial to your work in the classroom? Write their numbers below.

\_\_\_\_\_

- III. Which of the 4 activities listed in question 1 do you feel are LEAST beneficial to your work in the classroom? Write their numbers below.

\_\_\_\_\_

- IV. Indicate the level of your involvement in professional development activities by drawing an 'X' in one of the boxes below.

low 

--	--	--	--	--

 high

## PART B Motivation to Participate

- I. Try to think of some professional development activity you attended in the last year. What factors MOST MOTIVATED you to participate in the activity? Check all responses that apply.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) to maintain my professional competence
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) for financial gain
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) to interact with colleagues
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) to better serve my students
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5) to increase work satisfaction
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6) to get away from teaching
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7) to affirm that I am still up-to-date
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8) to advance in my present work situation
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9) to enhance my professional image
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10) to renew friendships and social contacts
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11) to collect continuing education points
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12) to find out about new developments
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13) to update my knowledge and skill
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14) to meet a specific need in my classroom
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15) felt the need to support my profession

- II. Of the responses above, what 3 factors do you feel had the greatest influence on your participation?

\_\_\_\_\_

- III. Try to think of some professional development activity you chose NOT to attend in the last year. What factors MOST DETERRED you from participating in the activity? Check all responses that apply.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) lack of time
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) family commitments
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) do not like to be away from school
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) limited activities available in my community
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5) activities are not of interest
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6) high cost of participation
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7) activities are not in my subject area
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8) work commitments
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9) do not like to attend activities alone
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10) no encouragement from peers or school
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11) past experiences have been disappointing
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12) inconvenient scheduling of activities

- IV. Of the responses above, what 3 factors do you feel had the greatest impact on you NOT participating?

\_\_\_\_\_



## PART C Professional Attitude Inventory

The following 25 statements are to be viewed in reference to the Home Economics profession. To each statement below, respond how you feel and behave by placing an X in the appropriate space.

	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Dis- agree	Strongly disagree
1. I systematically read the professional journals.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Other professions are actually more vital than mine.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. I make my own decisions in regard to what is to be done in my work.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. I regularly attend professional meetings at the local level.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. I think that my profession, more than any other, is essential for society.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. My fellow professionals have a good idea about each other's competence.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. People in this profession have a real calling for their work.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. The importance of my profession is sometimes over stressed.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. The dedication of people in this field is most gratifying.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. I don't have much opportunity to exercise my own judgement.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. I believe that the professional organization(s) should be supported.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Some other occupations are actually more important to society than is mine.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. A problem in this profession is that no one really knows what their colleagues are doing.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. It is encouraging to see the high level of idealism which is maintained by people in this field.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. The professional organization doesn't do much for the average member.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. We really have no way of judging each other's competence.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. Although I would like to, I really don't read the journals too often.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
18. Most people would stay in the profession even if their income's were reduced.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
19. My own decisions are subject to review.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
20. There is not much opportunity to judge how another person does their work.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
21. I am my own boss in almost every work-related situation.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
22. If ever an occupation is indispensable, it is this one.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
23. My colleagues pretty well know how well we all do in our work.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
24. There are very few people who don't really believe in their work.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
25. Most of my decisions are reviewed by other people.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

## PART D General Information

Circle the number beside the most appropriate response for each of the following questions.

- I. Currently teaching (1) Both Jr. and Sr. High (2) Jr. High only  
(3) Sr. High only
- II. Total years you have taught (1) 0 - 5 years (2) 6 - 10 years  
(3) 11 - 15 years (4) 16 - 20 years  
(5) 21 - 25 years (6) 25 + years
- III. Highest home economics degree (1) Bachelor's (2) Master's  
(3) Post Bacc. (4) other degree
- IV. Age (1) 20-29 (2) 30-39 (3) 40-49 (4) 50-59 (5) 60+
- V. Number of dependents \_\_\_\_\_
- VI. Are you a member of: (1) Both the Manitoba Home Economics Teachers' Association and  
the Manitoba Association of Home Economists  
(2) Manitoba Home Economics Teachers' Association only  
(3) Manitoba Association of Home Economists only  
(4) Neither association

Have you held any executive or committee memberships in these associations?  
Please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

- VII. When would you be most likely to participate in the following activities?
- A) Workshop: (1) school hours (2) after school  
(3) evenings (4) weekends
- B) Course: (1) summer (2) fall  
(3) winter (4) inter-session
- VIII. How many more years do you see yourself teaching?  
(1) 0 - 5 (2) 6 - 10 (3) 10 - 15 (4) 16 +
- IX. What would best describe your location? (1) urban (Winnipeg & Brandon)  
(2) rural  
(3) northern (above the 53rd parallel)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.