

## **Professionalism: Ethical Decision Making as a Foundation for Professional Practice**

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*Targeting the preservice teacher educator, the authors investigate components of Standard 8: Professionalism of the National Standards for Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences (National Association of Teacher Educators for Family and Consumer Sciences [NATEFACS], 2004). Standard 8 prescribes that the family and consumer sciences (FCS) teacher engage in ethical professional practice based on the history and philosophy of family and consumer sciences and career and technical education through civic engagement, advocacy, and ongoing professional development. An ethical perspectives model is presented as a means for FCS teachers to promote their realization of professional practice. The model encourages ethical deliberation, espouses the best interests of the student, upholds deliberative pluralistic decision-making, and is uniquely representative of the FCS philosophy. Additionally, rationale, strategies, and assessment are provided for teaching civic engagement, advocacy, and ongoing professional development.*

Standard 8: Professionalism of the *National Standards for Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences* prescribes that the beginning family and consumer sciences (FCS) teacher “engage in ethical professional practice based on the history and philosophy of family and consumer sciences and career and technical education through civic engagement, advocacy, and ongoing professional development” (NATEFACS, 2004). In this paper we investigate components of this standard and present an ethical perspectives model as a means to realize optimal levels of professionalism as a FCS teacher. Because beginning teachers will encounter new problems in which they lack prior experience, development of purposeful ethical deliberation skills is a critical component in preservice education. Implementation of this model fosters pluralistic ethical decision making that serves as a solid foundation for high standards of professionalism.

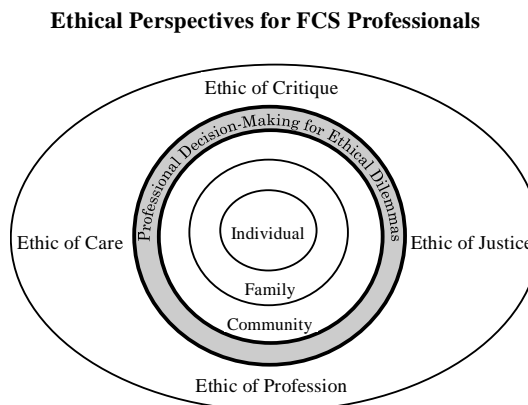
### **Defining Professionalism**

Concepts of professionalism are familiar to us all, yet they are often individualized and vocation specific. To embody the conception of professionalism, the individual interprets and translates the characteristics of the profession into patterns of action that are ethically defensible. Brown and Paolucci (1979) suggested that ethical decision-making and moral reasoning<sup>1</sup> are at the heart of the profession. The capacity to engage in purposeful deliberation forms the building blocks to the foundation of professionalism and is an essential antecedent to teaching FCS.

A model that employs an ecosystems approach and encourages pluralistic ethical decision making was proposed by Roubanis, Garner, and Purcell (2006). The individual, or the student, is at the center of this model, with concentric spheres expanding that focus to include family and community (see Figure 1). This model puts the well being of the individual, family, and community as the central motivation in making ethically defensible decisions. This centrality is uniquely representative of the missions of the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) and the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS), and shares intent with other recognized doctrines in education. The heart of the model encourages questions such as “What is best for the student?” or “How will this action affect the student?”

### Ethical Perspectives Model

Ethical decision making is the foundation to professional practice in family and consumer sciences (Craig, 1996), and is a necessary skill for a teacher to forge a path to professionalism. In this section we investigate an ethical perspectives model that encourages pluralistic deliberation in arriving at professional decisions about ethical dilemmas. The model shown in Figure 1 serves as a tool for the FCS teacher to actualize the philosophies of family and consumer sciences and career and technical education.



*Figure 1.* Ethical Perspectives for FCS Professionals. From “Ethical Perspectives Model for FCS” by J. L. Roubanis, S. G. Garner and R. S. Purcell, 2006, *Journal of Family & Consumer Sciences*. 98(4), p. 31. Copyright 2006 by American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. Reprinted with permission.

The multiple perspectives ethics model is especially targeted for the FCS teacher because it includes components for consideration that are unique to professional FCS pedagogy (Roubanis et al., 2006). The heart of the model encourages a focus on the individual, family, and community. For the FCS teacher this central focus is the student and her/his family and community.<sup>2</sup> According to the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, a cardinal precept for accomplished teaching is that teachers are committed to students and their learning (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2002). Success in teaching hinges on the teacher’s belief in the dignity and worth of all human beings and in the potential that exists within each student.

The central focus dictates that, when arriving at an ethical decision, the primary consideration should be the best interest of the individual or student, with an understanding of the family and community, and their dynamic relationships to the student. On the periphery of the model, four ethical perspectives coexist in one fluid environment. While each of these perspectives is steeped in its own tradition of ethical philosophy and moral development, they are dynamically located in the professional decision making context to encourage the FCS educator to contemplate multiple perspectives when arriving at a professional decision about an ethical dilemma. The perspectives are discussed directly and include: ethic of justice, ethic of critique, ethic of care, and ethic of the profession.

### ***Ethic of Justice***

The ethic of justice is perhaps the easiest perspective to understand and serves as the basis of our legal and judicial systems. It takes the position that rules, laws, policies, and principles serve as the best guide to making moral decisions. This perspective upholds that moral principles have objectivism beyond cultural acceptance and that these rules or principles should be universal to maintain right living. Kidder (1995) described this approach to making decisions as “rules based thinking.” The perspective of justice endorses the notion that equal treatment of all individuals according to a standard which is uniformly applied is an appropriate means to achieving a just, equitable, and fair society (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). The ethic of justice has recognizably masculine traits and provides the corner stone of traditional western thought.

### ***Ethic of Critique***

Many philosophers are not convinced by the type of logic and rationale promoted in the ethic of justice (Freire, 1998; Giroux, 2003; Greene, 1988). They critique the laws and the social processes through which these laws are brought to fruition and how they are determined to be just. Rather than accept the words of those in power, these philosophers question and challenge the status quo seeking to redefine and reframe the important issues that revolve around social inequities. They pose several questions. What are the barriers to fairness? Who will benefit from this law or policy? Who will be oppressed or silenced? What ought to be? These questions are representative of the thinking underlying the ethic of critique philosophy. This ethic is based on critical theory and is concerned with issues of oppression, privilege, authority, voice, language, and empowerment. It questions who has the power and wealth, and who does not.

### ***Ethic of Care***

The ethic of care places high value on care-giving and nurturance, which are traditionally feminine roles that have been undervalued in Western thought. With its focus on care, concern, and connection, the ethic of care promotes nurturing and encouragement above achievement (Noddings, 2003). It emphasizes interpersonal relationships and collaboration over competition, and strives to facilitate a sense of belonging. It questions who will benefit from a decision and who will be hurt. This ethic upholds the values of loyalty and trust. Ethic of care is the fundamental basis for social justice, for civic engagement, and for improving quality of life for the individual, family, and community.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Ethic of the Profession***

Codes are articulated statements about the role of ethical behavior and best practices as perceived by members of a profession. Serving as professional guideposts, they embody the

highest moral ideals of the profession, and thus inspire the ideal image of ethical character of the profession and professional. The *ACTE Code of Ethics* (Association for Career and Technical Education [ACTE], 2006) and the *AAFCS Governing Principles* (American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences [AAFCS], 2004) are two prominent codes for the family and consumer sciences teacher, but there are many other codes<sup>4</sup> that may have relevance in a particular locality and/or pedagogical area of practice. Teachers by definition are in a position of power and responsibility over students in their classrooms and the exercise of this power and responsibility requires ethical and moral decision making (Fenstermacher, 1990). Hence, the ethic of the profession for the FCS teacher is necessarily an integration of the ethics of justice, critique, and care.

### **Application of Model**

The ethical model presented here encourages a pluralistic approach to decision making and places the individual/student at the center of those decisions. Because the model mirrors the professional ideologies of AAFCS and ACTE, it is an appropriate analytical strategy for use with preservice teachers in a quality family and consumer sciences program. The desired outcome from teaching the model is that preservice teachers habitually use this model as a tool to contemplate ethical dilemmas and arrive at judgments in their professional practice. To accomplish this outcome, the students, in this case preservice teachers in a family and consumer sciences teacher-education program, should have multiple opportunities to apply the model, to develop a better understanding of the model, and to continue to apply it beyond preservice teaching experiences.<sup>5</sup>

A preface for teaching this model is the discussion of what constitutes ethical dilemmas<sup>6</sup> and why ethical decision making is such an important foundation for professionalism and accomplished teaching. Presentation of the model commences with discussion of why the concentric spheres of individual, family, and community exist at the heart of the model, placing the ultimate decision-making focus on the best interests of the individual. The preservice teachers should recall that this focus mirrors the philosophies of AAFCS and ACTE. Next, the ethical perspectives of justice, critique, and care are compared and contrasted. The preservice teachers should recognize that all ethical philosophies fall into one or more of these paradigms. The ethic of the profession is offered as an amalgamation of the three paradigms. In the discussion of the ethic of the profession, the *ACTE Code of Ethics* and the *AAFCS Governing Principles* are reviewed and statements in the codes that reflect the different ethics of justice, critique, and care, are identified. It should be noted that professional codes are discipline specific.

After presentation of the model, the preservice teachers are ready for its application. Because the expectation is that they will be able to use the model, it is important that several opportunities for its application are provided. As with other professional studies of ethics, the case study approach provides a viable pathway for them to gain adeptness in ethical inquiry application. The first experiential application of the model should be a guided practice that occurs in the group context of the classroom. A relevant case study is introduced, and then a think, pair, and share strategy is employed for discussion of the case study. Discussion of the case study should be guided by a slate of questions that encourages the preservice teachers to focus in on the ethical dilemma(s) that the case study presents and to consider each of these from multiple perspectives. Meta-cognition is an important outcome of this process. Ideally the preservice teachers will recognize which of the three ethical paradigm(s) they are likely to

gravitate to first for reflective ethical inquiry. The effectiveness of the model hinges on the notion that there are multiple perspectives that need to be considered, and that the individual takes the important step of going beyond her/his first paradigm of ethical consideration and deliberates the ethical issue from other ethical paradigms. As a culminating activity each preservice teacher creates her/his own code of ethics that assimilates codes of the profession and her/his personal ethical ideology. From the learning experiences presented here, the preservice teachers will ideally glean the notion that the best professional decisions about ethical dilemmas are considered from multiple perspectives, and will become cognizant of their meta-cognition when making an ethical decision.

### **Civic Engagement and Advocacy**

Identified by Standard 8, civic engagement and advocacy are pathways through which FCS teachers enhance their professional practice. Civic engagement involves purposeful participation in the social and political life of a school and community and beyond (Ehrlich, 2000; The Saguaro Seminar, 2003). Advocacy takes that participation to higher levels of aptitude and commitment. Advocacy involves the pleading of valued causes and the needs of oneself and/or others (Carroll, 1996). Advocacy facilitates needed change by taking strategic action. Both civic engagement and advocacy are professional modes of practice that exist on a continuum,<sup>7</sup> moving from participation in civic engagement at one end to pleading one's cause in advocacy at the other end. Participation in this continuum is a necessary component to the preservice teacher's educational experience. Because of the commonalities in both civic engagement and advocacy, they are mutually discussed in this section in terms of history, rationale, strategies for teaching, and assessment.

### ***History***

Civic engagement and advocacy are at the roots of the home economics/family and consumer sciences profession. Impetus for the early inception of the profession at Lake Placid (1899 to 1909) was to reform social ills such as child labor, poor water quality, and lack of professional opportunities for women. The history of the profession is replete with leaders who were civic-minded and actively engaged, and who advocated improving the quality of living where they lived and worked. Early leaders worked to improve living conditions in the home, the institutional household, and the community (American Home Economics Association, 1909). In this context, the home clearly is not contained by four walls and a roof. The profession's founder, Ellen Swallow Richards, stretched the definition of home to encompass a larger household, the community (Stage, 1997). She is a prime example of one who recognized problems to be resolved and who set the example of a caring, reflective, action-oriented professional through civic engagement and advocacy.

Reminiscent of the original purpose of the profession, the current FCS platform for civic engagement and advocacy is to empower individuals, strengthen families, and enable communities (Fairchild, 2001; Swierk, 2003). The seeds to accomplishing this mission are germinated in the formation of partnerships and collaborations with individuals and organizations that share our mission (Andrews, 2003; Swierk). Out of these relationships grow expanded opportunities for FCS professionals to identify common ground with other stakeholders and to enlarge the impact of joint civic engagement and advocacy initiatives.

### ***Rationale***

Empowering the powerless through civic engagement and advocacy is a primary mechanism for meeting needs and for improving quality of living (Braun & Williams, 2002; Montgomery, Brozovsky, & Lichty, 1999). Civic engagement and advocacy are critical competencies for the FCS teacher. Through engaging themselves and their students in the political and social life of a campus and community, teachers nurture the development of social ties, networking, and leadership skills (Greenberg, 2000). These behaviors build social capital, a major advantage for any individual, school, and community.

### ***Strategies for Teaching***

Being informed about relevant social issues is a mandatory precursor to intentional participation in civic engagement and advocacy. The ethics model presented in this paper provides a philosophical platform<sup>8</sup> for preparing teachers to practice civic engagement and advocacy as professionals. Each of the ethical perspectives in the model provides a necessary consideration for deliberated moral action: ethic of justice (What are the truths and facts?), ethic of care (Who is being helped or hurt?), ethic of critique (What needs to be changed?), and ethic of the profession (Are the standards of the profession upheld?). As explained below, the “Modified IRAC” strategy (Stewart, Purcell, & Lovingwood, 2003) prepares professionals for civic engagement and advocacy that relies upon consideration of all four ethical perspectives.

Commonly used to resolve judicial matters<sup>9</sup>, the steps of the traditional IRAC method are spelled out in its acronym: issue, rules, application, and conclusion. The modified version includes an additional step that encourages the user to articulate the meta-cognitions used in the application and conclusion portions of the process. A description of each step of the Modified IRAC inquiry process (Stewart, Purcell, & Lovingwood, 2003) follows.

1. An *issue* is identified as a statement or question. Much care should be taken to clearly and specifically define the issue. How the issue is defined will mitigate the rest of the process.
2. The *rules* and facts that pertain to the issue are listed. Another way to generate this section is to consider what is known to be true about this issue, and pertinent to its resolution. This section includes, but is not limited to, evidenced-based research, principles of human behavior, laws, and social context. Information literacy<sup>10</sup> is a necessary component for satisfactory completion of this section.
3. The rules are *applied* to the issue. The scope of this section is based on the information identified in the previous sections.
4. A *conclusion* is formed that is buttressed by the previous rules and application sections. If the issue being resolved is an ethical dilemma, it will have more than one morally defensible choice for conclusion. The ethics model presented in this paper may serve as a tool to encourage deliberation from multiple perspectives.
5. The *meta-cognition*<sup>11</sup> used in the previous section is identified and explained. Linked to the previous sections, one or more of the following ethics are identified: critique, care, justice, and/or profession.

Adding a sixth step to the process serves as a transition to civic engagement and advocacy, and requires the formation of a plan of action. The foundation of this plan is based on the thinking delineated through the Modified IRAC steps. The plan may be reflective of an individual’s action or of a group’s concerted action. The Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCCLA)<sup>12</sup> espouses a planning process strategy that can provide the conduit from conclusions

generated in the Modified IRAC process to intentional participation in community service and advocacy. To secure more information about the FCCLA Planning Process and examples of how it has been successfully used, see the FCCLA webpage at <http://www.fcclainc.org/>.

The strategies suggested above can be used in a variety of venues. After preservice teachers understand the mechanics of the Modified IRAC inquiry method, the teacher educator provides a series of ethical dilemmas on which students construct their own morally defensible conclusions using the method. The teacher educator provides student feedback<sup>13</sup> on the soundness of the process they used, before moving to the FCCLA Planning Process.

The domain of family and consumer sciences provides a plethora of opportunities for civic engagement and advocacy that may take many forms including community service, volunteering, and service learning (Furco, 1996; McGregor, 2002). The ability to formulate morally defensible conclusions is an important skill to be developed in the preservice teaching experience that will later serve as the bases for moral action in civic engagement and/or advocacy.

### ***Assessment***

After the Modified IRAC has been conducted as a written activity for an ethical dilemma, the teacher educator provides the student feedback on the soundness of the use of the process, and its moral defensibility. The initial steps of the process are founded on the ethic of justice, hence students will identify this ethic in their meta-cognitive process. For the later steps, the teacher educator should challenge students to go beyond the ethic of justice<sup>14</sup> to consider and resolve the issue. See the Appendix for a template that can be adjusted to serve as a scorecard to assess this process.

With successful completion of the Modified IRAC inquiry method and the formulation of an action plan, the preservice teacher is ready to participate in meaningful civic engagement and/or advocacy. Portfolios are an effective assessment tool that can capture the essence of these experiences, and are discussed in greater detail later in this paper.

## **Ongoing Professional Development**

Professionalism in teaching entails ongoing professional development. Standard 8 identifies ongoing professional development as a third pathway through which FCS teachers engage to expand their professional competence. Lifelong learning is a necessary commitment for any discipline of teaching, but especially for areas of practice in career and technical education (Wright, 2002). This section addresses the promotion of professional development in the preservice education of the FCS teacher. It includes the following sections: rationale, strategies for teaching, and assessment.

### ***Rationale***

Accomplished teaching is a status that is continually evolving. It is not a static end point, but one meant to inspire continual development. To achieve accomplished teaching, ongoing professional development is a necessity to form the foundation and frame the rich mosaic of knowledge, skills, disposition, and beliefs.

### ***Strategies***

The best strategy to encourage ongoing professional development is to ensure that the preservice teacher accepts the rationale underlying its requirement. Teacher participation in

ongoing professional development models the disposition they hope to nurture in their students: enthusiasm for and commitment to learning. Three aspects of ongoing professional development investigated here are the expanding FCS research base, pedagogical content knowledge, and self reflection.

The research base for family and consumer sciences is continually growing. This trend is evidenced in the growing number of areas of specialization in FCS programs, increasing from one program in the early 1900's to as many as 16 programs of FCS specialization today (AAFCS, 2000; National Association of State Administrators for Family and Consumer Sciences 2008)<sup>15</sup>. The ethic of justice and the ethic of the profession dictate that teachers acquire the content knowledge of their teaching areas throughout their career, and designates that they be responsible for maintaining a grasp of that knowledge. Mastery of the content knowledge is an ongoing process that can be secured through reading content-specific literature, participating in subject-related professional organizations, and conducting research (Rodriguez & Toews, 2006). In addition to mastering content, excellent teachers know how to convey the content to their students and have developed pedagogical content knowledge (Banks, Leach, & Moon, 2005; Deng, 2007). Sources for this development include education research, scholarship, and professional networking. Professional organizations such as AAFCS, ACTE, and Kappa Omicron Nu provide excellent opportunities for networking.

Reflective inquiry is an additional pathway for continued professional growth (Bolton, 2006). Through reflective inquiry teachers critically examine their practice on a systematic basis to target areas of knowledge expansion, broaden their repertoire of skills, and integrate new findings into their teaching. It is also important to reflect on philosophy and question how new ideologies and pedagogies are shaping personal philosophy and rationale of good practice (McGregor, 2005). Reflection on practice can be targeted through a variety of strategies. Boyd and Boyd (2005) recommend that teachers maintain a teaching journal as a means to reflect, keep course in what is going well, and improve on areas not going well.

### ***Assessment***

While acceptance of the rationale for ongoing professional development should occur in the preservice experience, practice of ongoing professional development begins after the preservice teacher graduates from the teacher education program. A challenge in assessing ongoing professional development is that the teacher educator is measuring for potential or likelihood of the preservice teacher engaging in ongoing professional development after graduation from the program. When assessing for ongoing professional development, the target measures are acceptance of its rationale and the knowledge and skills to facilitate its occurrence.

Because portfolios often involve collecting information from real-life situations, they are an ideal means to assess potential for ongoing professional development (Klenowski, Askew, & Carnell, 2006). Portfolios are performance-based, authentic assessments to measure quality (Bergen, 1994). Xu (2004) recommended that the organization of portfolio material be related to professional development. She suggested that the portfolio is a composite of workshops, seminars, professional conferences, and university classes that have been completed, and a description of how those contributed to knowledge gained and potential use in teaching. Additional assignments to be included in the professional development portfolio are a five-year professional development plan, and a philosophy statement on the importance and ethical considerations of ongoing professional development. Reflection on teaching-journal entries



provides direction for areas of professional development, to be included in the professional development plan.

### Conclusion

Ethical decision-making provides the foundation for professional practice and philosophy in FCS pedagogy. To reflect the history, philosophy, and current best practices of family and consumer sciences and of career and technical education, the FCS teacher must make professional decisions about ethical dilemmas that place the best interests of the student at the heart, with considerations for family and community. In addition, these decisions must be morally deliberated from multiple perspectives that include standards of the profession. The ethical perspectives model presented here accomplishes these aspirations of focus and pluralism.

Standard 8 of the *National Standards for Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences* recognizes civic engagement, advocacy, and ongoing professional development as pathways for FCS teachers to follow to expand their professional competence. The ethical paradigms of justice, critique, care, and profession presented here have implications for these pathways of professional development. The ethic of care and the ethic of critique are primary perspectives used in the ethical deliberation and decision-making related to civic engagement and advocacy. Many ethics-oriented questions surface as beginning teachers enter their first year of teaching. Because of the cumulative effect of decisions made by individuals, families, and communities to shape their living environment, questions are raised. In what kind of environment do we want to live and to work? What kind of environmental system ensures the most effective educational context for students, their teachers, and society? The analysis of barriers may indicate inequities with social and ethical implications. The ethic of the profession is a primary perspective used for ongoing professional development.

Because of the expanding FCS research base, the need to acquire new teaching strategies, and the need for reflective professional growth, the beginning FCS teacher must engage in continual professional development as prescribed in the AAFCS *Governing Principles* and the *ACTE Code of Ethics* and consider ongoing professional questions. What knowledge and/or skills do I need to best meet the needs of my students? What areas of pedagogy do I need to further develop? How can I better collaborate in professional organizations to improve my practice?

The ethic of the profession encompasses all aspects of Standard 8 of the *National Standards for Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences*. The ethic of the profession is an integration of the ethics of justice, critique, and care, and reflects the higher moral standards of the profession such as those implied in Standard 8. As knowledge continues to expand at an ever increasing rate, and our teaching and living environments continue to undergo rapid change presenting an ever greater richness of diversity, the ability of the FCS teacher to make professional decisions about ethical dilemmas will remain a paramount standard of excellence in the FCS preservice teacher education program.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>The scope of this paper does not warrant differentiation between the terms moral and ethical, and will be used somewhat interchangeably throughout this paper. McGregor (2006) presents an appropriate clarification for the beginning FCS teacher.

<sup>2</sup>For the FCS teacher, the student is the central focus but additional professional considerations warrant an expanded view of the student. The student and her/his family are

interacting subsystems nested in the ecosystem of their community. When a FCS teacher uses the Multiple Ethical Perspectives Model, the individual is the student.

<sup>3</sup>Because concern for the well-being of others is at the center of the ethic of care, Noddings (1997) identified the ethic of care as a fundamental premise for the ethical reasoning of FCS professionals. Other scholars (e.g., Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Noddings, 2003; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005) have linked the ethic of care to moral actions premised on the concern of others.

<sup>4</sup>Several professional organizations relevant for the beginning FCS teacher are listed in the reference section along with reference information to secure copies of their professional codes of ethics.

<sup>5</sup>Ideally the FCS preservice teacher will continue to apply the ethical perspectives model beyond his/her preservice teaching experiences. Ethical reasoning is a component of ongoing professional development, and should matriculate through reflection on and evaluation of subsequent teaching experiences.

<sup>6</sup>An ethical dilemma has as a solution of two or more positive alternatives, or more likely two or more negative alternatives. To be a dilemma, the perceived selection of one or more of the considered alternatives poses a negative consequence.

<sup>7</sup>The continuum from civic engagement to advocacy is reflective of the transition from the ethic of care to the ethic of critique. Arcus (1999) contends that it is not enough to care about something, but that action must be taken. This action is seated in the ethic of critique.

<sup>8</sup>The Multiple Perspectives Model for Ethical Decision-Making (Roubanis, Garner, & Purcell, 2006) identifies four ethical perspectives: justice, care, critique, and profession. Each of the ethics is addressed in the Modified IRAC inquiry method, and relevant for participation in civic engagement and advocacy. The IRAC portion of the method addressed the ethic of justice, which prescribes that individuals secure the relevant facts before they come to a morally defensible conclusion. Being informed on social issues is a precursor to civic engagement and advocacy. The ethic of care encourages civic engagement that benefits other people. The ethic of critique advances advocacy to make changes. And finally the ethic of the profession upholds the standards of the profession.

<sup>9</sup>Legal resources provide a plethora of examples of how the IRAC process is implemented.

<sup>10</sup>See Stewart, Purcell, and Lovingood (2003) for a discussion of what constitutes valid and reliable information to be used with the Modified IRAC inquiry method.

<sup>11</sup>Meta-cognition is a critical step in the Modified IRAC inquiry method. Being cognizant about one's own thinking, or the metacognitive process, is one of four knowledge dimensions in the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. Other knowledge dimensions include: factual, conceptual, and procedural. Each of these dimensions has a range of process dimensions including the ability to: remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create. The pedagogical implementation of the Modified IRAC followed by the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) Planning Process provides learners the opportunity to exercise all of the process abilities in the meta-cognitive dimension. For a more complete description of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, specifically how it relates to FCS education, see Pickard (2007). For more information about the effectiveness of using the Multiple Ethical Perspectives Model as it relates to process dimension in the meta-cognitive dimension see Roubanis, Garner, and Purcell (2007).

<sup>12</sup>Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) is a career and technical education student organization specifically aligned with the educational goals and philosophies of most family and consumer sciences secondary education programs. FCCLA inspires students to develop the leadership skills to be actively involved in civic engagement and advocacy. The

opportunities provided through FCCLA are worthy of consideration in the higher education classroom, congruent with Standard 10: Student Organization Integration, of the *National Standards for Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences* (NATEFACS, 2004).

<sup>13</sup>An important aspect of providing students feedback on their use of the Modified IRAC is to ensure that the student provides all the facts and truths (cited in a scholarly manner) that serve as the basis for their morally defensible application and conclusion. It is important to note that the student may not come to the same morally defensible conclusion as the teacher educator.

<sup>14</sup>The ethic of justice provides a research base to investigate an ethical dilemma. This premise is historically representative of the work process of FCS predecessors, yet it is important to note that the ethics of care and critique have inspired the most notable societal changes advocated by these early predecessors.

<sup>15</sup>For a more complete list of FCS related professional organizations go to <http://www.aafcs.org/fcs/pages/hou.html>.

### **Suggested Resources**

Stewart, B. L., Purcell, R. S., & Lovingood, R. P. (Eds.). (2003). *Research applications in family and consumer sciences*. Washington, DC: American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences.

When teaching the Modified IRAC method, this text serves as a resource to students in constructing/writing the first two steps of the process: issue and rules. The text provides examples of relevant issues in FCS today, and can aid in helping students frame an ethical issue or question. The text also provides multiple examples of research based inquiry, all of which can be used in the constructing/writing of the rules portion of the Modified IRAC method.

Shapiro, J. P., & Stefkovich, J. A. (2005). *Ethical leadership and decision making in education: Applying theoretical perspectives to complex dilemmas* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

This text offers greater depth of discussion for each of the ethical perspectives (ethic of justice, ethic of care, ethic of critique, and ethic of profession) than is provided here. The coherent discussion can be a valuable resource for the teacher educator or student seeking to understand and apply the ethical perspectives model. Additionally, several case studies are presented in the text that could be used for class discussion and/or individual reflection.

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**Appendix**  
**Assessment Scorecard for Modified IRAC Inquiry Method**  
 Issue #\_\_\_\_\_

	Actual	Possible	Comments
<b>ISSUE</b>			
Clearly defined		5	
<b>RULES</b>			
All relevant rules identified		5	
Citations convey source of rules		5	
Critical thinking evident		5	
Additional research is evident		5	
Scholarship is evident		5	
Rules are evidenced based		5	
<b>APPLICATION</b>			
Logic evident		5	
Focused on issue		5	
Developed from rules presented		5	
Well considered		5	
Context is appropriate		5	
<b>CONCLUSION</b>			
Justification is morally defended		5	
Critical thinking evident		5	
Conclusion aligns with application and rules		5	
Depth of consideration reflected		5	
<b>META-COGNITION</b>			
An ethic* is identified that relates to IRAC		5	
Rationale for ethic is evident, beyond justice?		5	
<b>WRITING SKILL DEMONSTRATED</b>			
Intended meaning conveyed		5	
grammar and spelling		5	
<b>TOTAL</b>		100	

\* For a list and descriptions of the multiple ethics see Roubanis, J. L., Garner, S. G., & Purcell, R. S. (2006). An ethical perspectives model for FCS. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, 98(4), 30-31.

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