Passion: a narrative journey to family and consumer sciences education

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Passion: A narrative journey to family and consumer sciences education

by

Darby Thompson Sewell

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Family and Consumer Sciences Education

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Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
2008

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to family and consumer sciences professionals who have demonstrated passion for the profession throughout their careers and to the emerging professionals who are embarking on a journey that will be fueled by passion for improving the human condition.
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ABSTRACT

The goal of this study was to examine the development of passion for the profession of family and consumer sciences (FCS) in three undergraduate students majoring in FCS education. To examine the development of passion, three purposes were stated in hierarchal order. The first purpose was to ascertain an understanding of undergraduate students’ identification with FCS education and their decisions to declare it as a major. The second purpose was to examine the participants’ knowledge of the content with an understanding of the integrative nature of the FCS profession. The third purpose was to identify the participants’ motivation and passion for being FCS educators.

Narrative inquiry was used to investigate the participants’ lived experiences of identifying the FCS education major and declaring it as their program of study, developing their knowledge base in FCS, defining passion and expressing their feelings, emotions, and commitment to FCS education. Multiple methods were used to collect data for the study including participant autobiographical writings, individual interviews, a written response to a scenario, and a group interview. Through the use of inductive analysis, themes emerged from the stories the young women shared of their identification of FCS education, their increasing knowledge base, and their developing passion. Themes included: pivotal moments in the journey to FCS education, first exposure to FCS, undergraduate advising and academic experiences in FCS, family background and influences, God’s plan for selecting FCS education, participants’ interpretations of the mission of the FCS profession, their development of personal missions, benefits of being FCS educators, passion for FCS, and commitment to FCS education.
A result of the research was the development of the process of developing passion for family and consumer sciences education model. The model depicts five steps in the process of developing passion for FCS education. The first step, *identify*, involved identifying FCS education as a program of study. The second step, *knowledge*, required that participants develop knowledge of the FCS content with an understanding of the integrative nature of the FCS profession. The third step, *personal and professional alignment*, involved participants interpreting the mission of the profession, internalizing those interpretations, and developing personal missions aligned with their interpretations. *Motivation* was the fourth step in the process of developing passion for FCS education. Alignment with the profession’s mission and personal interpretations of that mission provided the motivation for the participants to pursue FCS education. This motivation led to the development of *commitment*, the fifth step in the process of developing passion for FCS education. As the researcher, I am led to believe that passionate professionals are more likely to demonstrate their commitment to the profession and that passion will be the propelling force that motivates them to become advocates for anything that may challenge their personal and professional missions. Developing passion for FCS education is a process beginning with the first step of identifying the FCS education major. Passion continues to develop as one progresses through the aforementioned five steps.

This study reveals the importance of providing inspiring educational and advising experiences within programs of study at the undergraduate level and encouraging the development of commitment in future professionals who will become leaders in their chosen fields.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The FCS profession is currently faced with renewing and radicalizing itself so that it can effectively address the problems facing individuals, families, and communities in the twenty-first century. As society has changed, the FCS profession has evolved from a general field to more specific areas of specialization with the uniqueness of an integrative knowledge base. Although these changes have allowed the profession to remain relevant, the advent of specializations has impacted the profession dramatically. Two of the issues significant to the profession of FCS, specifically FCS education, include preserving the unique interdisciplinary focus and identity of the profession and addressing the severe nation-wide shortage of FCS teachers.

In addition to secondary teaching positions, graduates with FCS education degrees are recruited for professional positions in the Cooperative Extension Service, and community agencies (Eastman, Cummings, Peterson, & VanLeeuwen, 2006). FCS teachers and extension educators are often highly visible members of the FCS profession in most communities (Stout et al., 1998) where they are involved on a daily basis applying the knowledge and expertise of the profession to help individuals, families, and communities solve problems affecting everyday life. However, there is a nationwide shortage of FCS teachers and extension educators (Miller & Meszaros, 1996). According to Eastman et al. (2006), “The demand for FCS educators is estimated to be four times the supply” (p. 7). Simerly (1998) recognized the detrimental impact that the FCS teacher and extension educator shortage could have on the profession and society stating “The shortage is so severe that it threatens the future of the profession and the well being of countless young people,
Many FCS teachers and extension educators demonstrate tremendous passion for educating others about the concepts they deem vitally important in creating a strong and healthy society. Peterat (2001) stated, “For many professionals, home economics is a meaningful identity, actively constructed through study, practice, and participation in a variety of professional communities through their careers” (p. 30). In a white paper published by the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) focusing on the essence of FCS, Nickols and Anderson (2001) stated “For most family and consumer sciences professionals, their career is more than a job — it is a calling, an attitude, a perspective, and sense of dedication that enhances the content and continuing evolution of the field” (p. 7). For many FCS teachers, their professional identities are intertwined with their personal identities and being FCS educators allows them the opportunity to live out their life’s calling on a daily basis. As the researcher, I believe that passion and motivation are integral components to the work of committed FCS educators. Therefore, recruiting and retaining FCS educators who feel a sense of purpose in what they do is necessary if they are to be committed to the profession and sustained at an optimal level throughout their careers.

**Goal and Purposes of Study**

The goal of this study was to examine the development of passion for the profession of FCS in three undergraduate students majoring in FCS education. To examine the development of passion, three purposes were stated in a hierarchical order because I believed that the process of developing passion for FCS proceeded in a hierarchical manner. The first purpose was to ascertain an understanding of undergraduate students’ identification with FCS education and their decisions to declare it as a major. The second purpose was to examine the
participants’ knowledge of the content with an understanding of the integrative nature of the FCS profession. The third purpose was to identify the participants’ motivation and passion for being FCS educators. The purposes are stated in a hierarchal manner, believing that one must first identify with the major; secondly, have knowledge of its content with an understanding of the integrative nature of the profession; and third, identify her motivation and passion for desiring to be a FCS educator. The element of passion may be the motivating force that would propel her to carry out the mission of FCS as a committed FCS educator.

**Significance of the Study**

Much of the research addressing the issue of FCS teacher shortages has involved practicing teachers, state administrators, teacher educators, and administrators of FCS programs in higher education (Miller & Meszaros, 1996; Mimbs, 2002; Stout et al., 1998; Tripp, 2006; Werhan & Way, 2006). These studies have served multiple purposes including identifying the shortage, providing profiles of FCS educators and programs, examining the reasons for shortages including identifying underlying factors, and examining advice for marketing secondary and post-secondary programs, and recruiting potential educators. A lack of literature focusing on the current students majoring in FCS education at the undergraduate level has prompted this investigation with emphasis on the need to cultivate new professionals who understand the holistic, integrative focus and who have a passionate, intrinsically motivated commitment to the profession (Adams, 2001; Nickols, 2001; Ralston, 2001, Rasdell, 2005, Spanier, 2001), an examination of preprofessionals majoring in FCS education at an institution with an undergraduate program accredited by the AAFCS is warranted. This study is a narrative inquiry exploring the development of passion for the profession of FCS in three undergraduate students by examining their experiences of
identifying and declaring the major of FCS education, developing their knowledge base and understanding of the integrative nature of the profession, and identifying their motivation and passion for being FCS educators.

**Introduction of Study Participants**

To derive meaning and understanding from the young women’s experiences of their journey to FCS education, I conducted a qualitative research study using the components of narrative inquiry. It was through the telling of their stories that I explored the participants’ experiences of arriving at FCS education. These experiences included their frustrations and satisfactions encountered along the journey, their excitement over their increasing knowledge in FCS, and desire to teach others life skills. To protect the confidentiality of the study participants, I have used pseudonyms instead of the participants’ real names throughout the study and reporting of their narratives. All three participants were Caucasian, non-Hispanic women. At the time of the study, two of the participants were 22 and one was 23 years old. During the time I was conducting the study, all three participants were seniors pursuing their undergraduate degrees in FCS education. Participants had completed their practicum experiences and were preparing for their student teaching assignments. Purposive selection based on conversations with faculty and staff working within the institution the participants attended was used to identify participants. The participants had to meet the following criteria to be eligible for the study: a female senior majoring in FCS education, and have demonstrated academic ability and passion or enthusiasm for her chosen major. These characteristics had to be evident to faculty and staff advisors working within the FCS and education units at the research site.
Sara: My first respondent, Sara, is in her fifth year of college and will graduate at the end of the spring 2008 semester with a triple major in advertising, FCS education, and consumer journalism. As a college freshman, Sara declared advertising as a major. With only three semesters left to complete her advertising degree, she was struggling with her decision to pursue a career in advertising. As Sara was coping with internal struggles over her decision to major in advertising, a coworker mentioned the idea of becoming a FCS teacher. Sara immediately researched the idea and with three semesters left at the university she decided to become a FCS teacher. During a summer semester, Sara realized that the combination of courses required to complete her advertising degree and her degree in FCS education had positioned her to also earn a third degree in the area of consumer journalism, a major housed within the FCS unit at the land-grant university. At the time of collecting data, Sara was in her last two semesters of college completing her coursework for her degrees and preparing to student teach.

Sara is the only daughter from the union of her mother and father. When Sara was five years old, her parents divorced. Her mother remarried when she was seven years old. Sara’s stepfather had one daughter from a previous marriage, one year younger in age than Sara, who lived with her mother. Sara’s mother and stepfather had a daughter a few years after marrying and Sara and her younger sister by ten years are extremely close. Sara’s father remarried when she was 15 years old and he has two stepdaughters, one is a year older than Sara and the other is five years older than Sara.

Growing up, Sara was a high achiever in school and always achieved straight A’s. She grew up taking ballet and dance classes. However, she stopped her dancing when she was a junior in high school in an effort to make more friends at school and to expand her
activities beyond dancing. She became very active with the school yearbook and assumed the role of editor-in-chief during her senior year of high school. Throughout high school and college, Sara either volunteered or worked in educational settings. As a high school student, she performed over 120 hours of community service at a local elementary school. Sara has maintained a part-time job in a local After-School Program for the past three years. After graduation, Sara plans to begin her career as a FCS teacher.

Lisa: My second respondent, Lisa, knew she wanted to be a teacher from the time she was a young child. She spent many hours as a child role-playing the part of a teacher, often creating her own grade book, class roll, and pretend overheads. Although she knew she wanted to be a teacher, Lisa didn’t always know that her degree in education would be in the area of FCS. She began her collegiate career as an early childhood education major, but after three years at the university she was denied admission to the early childhood education program. However, it was at this moment another door opened for her and she was introduced to the major of FCS education by a fellow classmate. At the time of collecting data, Lisa was completing her final two semesters of college and preparing to begin her student teaching experience.

Lisa’s life has been positively impacted by her family of origin where she is the youngest of three children. Growing up, Lisa was an active participant in events at her church, particularly those that focused on working with children such as Vacation Bible School. As a high school student, Lisa was active in the music program and she helped tutor fellow classmates struggling to understand course material. During her senior year of high school, Lisa took a course that allowed her to work in an elementary school classroom for part of the day. Engagement in activities provided in this course proved to be instrumental in
influencing Lisa’s choice to become a teacher. While in college, Lisa has worked as a childcare coordinator at a local childcare center. Lisa plans to graduate at the end of the spring 2008 semester and begin her career as a FCS teacher.

Amy: My third respondent, Amy, knew since the second grade that she wanted to be a teacher. Growing up, she played school with her cousin and younger brother and her role was always that of teacher. Amy did not know what grade or subject matter she wanted to teach until she was in high school. When she was sophomore in high school, Amy took a FCS course. Amy’s high school FCS teacher made a lasting impression on her through the encouragement she gave to students and the positive impact she had on their lives. Amy was also impressed with the relativity of the subject matter of FCS on the everyday lives of individuals and families. As a sophomore in high school, Amy decided that she wanted to become a FCS teacher so that she could positively impact students and teach them necessary life skills.

Amy was raised in a strong Christian home where she was the second of three children. While in high school, Amy was involved in the National Honor Society and the Key Club. Amy plans to graduate at the end of the spring 2008 semester and begin her career as a FCS teacher.

**Organization of Study**

This study is organized into seven chapters. Chapter One provides an introduction to the study outlining the goal and the purposes of the study, the significance of the study, and introduces the participants. Chapter Two establishes the context for the statement of the overall goal and the three purposes of the study through a review of literature. Chapter Three presents the methodology used to guide the research process and describes procedures used
for collecting, analyzing, and reporting information. Chapter Four focuses on the first purpose of the study and the journey of the participants to FCS education. Chapter Five focuses on the second purpose of the study pertaining to participants’ knowledge base with an understanding of the integrative nature of the FCS profession. Chapter Six focuses on the third purpose of the study and is centered on exploring the motivation and passion of the participants for being FCS educators. In Chapter Seven, conclusions are developed based on interpretations and analysis of the narratives. Recommendations for practice and further study are presented as well as my reflections of the research process.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The goal of this study was to examine the development of passion for the profession of FCS in three undergraduate students majoring in FCS education. Three purposes were stated. The first purpose was to develop an understanding of undergraduate students’ identification with FCS education and their decisions to declare it as a major. The second purpose was to examine the participants’ knowledge of the content with an understanding of the integrative nature of the FCS profession. The third purpose was to identify the participants’ motivation and passion for being FCS educators. The purposes are stated in a hierarchal manner, believing that one must first identify with the major; secondly, have knowledge of its content; and third, understand her motivation and passion for desiring to be a FCS educator.

To examine the development of passion for the FCS profession in FCS education majors, a review of literature encompassing several bodies of literature was explored. The review is inclusive and represents literature significant to the three purposes of the study. The literature review consists of defining passion, examining its position in the workplace and within the profession of FCS, issues facing the FCS profession as a whole and specifically FCS education, literature focusing on career choice decisions of undergraduates as a whole and specifically students within FCS majors, and theories of motivation believed pertinent to identification with passion for one’s career choice.

Passion

Many people choose a career field from a list of what the job-market desires with many career choices being made impulsively (Bolles, 2001). Casual conversations with
friends, decisions to follow in a parent’s footsteps or an invitation to work for a friend can cause a deviation from one’s true vocational calling. Many individuals take the wrong approach to devising their career by looking at what’s available, and then trying to fit into a role (Cassidy, 2000). Instead, one should examine the activities toward which one exhibits passion and receives joy then consider where she can best put those passions to work (Veeck & Williams, 2005). Therefore, when choosing a career, one should reflect, inquire, and discover her passion and mission (Bolles, 2001, p. 61). A career field should then be chosen that honors and uses one’s interests and passions (Bolles, 2001).

**Passion Defined**

Passion is described as something that is intensely personal (Anderson, 1984) and as the motivation that drives people to be creative, productive, and efficient at work (Cassidy, 2000). Webster (2003) defined passion as “any emotion, as hate, love or fear; intense emotional excitement as rage, enthusiasm, or lust; the object of any strong desire” (p. 471). Anderson (1984) defined passion as an “intense emotional excitement” and as a feeling that comes to people who are “intense about some object, person, ideal, or belief” (p. 12). Passion is the force that pushes individuals to accomplish goals and overcome difficult challenges (Veeck & Williams, 2005). Building a career around one’s passion involves identifying what it is that one most loves and considering the jobs that may develop out of that passion (Bittner, 2003). Developing a career around passion allows people to be utilized more fully and in more capacities than if they just focused on developing a set of skills or academic competencies. “Your passions are the loves of your life. They are the things which are most deeply important to you” (Attwood & Attwood, 2006, p. xxii). Passions are also tied to one’s identity as Anderson (1984) stated “Who you are is defined by what you feel
Passion in the Workplace

Because of a constantly changing and evolving work place, if one is not passionate about her job, she is likely to suffer burn out (Bittner, 2003). It is estimated that an individual will have at least three to six careers throughout his lifetime (Bittner, 2003; Bolles, 2001) with the average 34-year-old male having had nine full or part-time jobs since he entered the work force (Bittner, 2003). Bolles (2001) stated “Indeed, most of us are engaged in a life-long search for, and journey toward, meaning – a process in which career-change plays an important part” (p. 64). Kouzes and Posner (2003) recognized that people were in a more intense search for meaning and wrote “In the last half-decade a counter-vailing force has arisen to combat what seemed to be an ever-expanding sense of cynicism” (p. xxii) with younger workers not giving into the idea that they don’t make a difference. According to Kouzes and Posner (2003), baby boomers are back to exploring their souls and more and more people are on a quest for greater meaning in their lives. However, meaning in a job is different for everyone and thus individuals change careers for a variety of reasons including having the desire to find one’s mission in life (Bolles, 2001). The job market shifted dramatically in the 1990’s and the concepts of job security and employer benevolence were replaced with the ideas that workers are responsible for their own careers and employees and employers do not owe each other (Bittner, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Bolles (2001) stated “a dream career has been dying a horrible, rattling death, in today’s culture. In many
places, both in this country and around the world, people consider themselves lucky if they have any job” (p. 159).

Literature focusing on career change, worker motivation, and self-fulfillment supports the need to have passion and love for one’s work (Anderson, 1984; Attwood & Attwood, 2006; Bellamy, 1999; Bittner, 2003; Bolles, 2001). It is this passion which is the difference between successful career-changers and unsuccessful ones (Bolles, 2001). People who enjoy what they do and find meaning in it will find it life-giving, enjoyable, and exhibit amazing sources of energy (Anderson, 1984; Hoeflin, Pence, Miller, & Weber, 1987). “Doing what you love to do each day will enable you to (1) wake up every morning excited about the day, (2) be happy doing what you are doing, and (3) have a real purpose in life” (Cassidy, 2000, p. 14).

**Passion and Spirituality in the Workplace**

There is a growing yearning for a sense of higher purpose in one’s job (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). The search for greater meaning in one’s life may be given multiple titles such as spirituality, religion, faith, or soul. Regardless of the name given to the search for meaning, there is more openness to the spiritual side of one’s job within business with values and virtues discussed more openly and people concerned about the legacy they are leaving (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Recent literature describes one’s passion for work as a spiritual endeavor and asserts that one’s vocation is a calling that may be tied to spirituality and belief in God (Attwood & Attwood, 2006; Bellamy, 1999; Bittner, 2003; Bolles, 2001). Bittner (2003) wrote

If you are a Christian, one of the things you are probably passionate about is your faith. In fact, you may feel that you have the job you have and do the work you do
specifically because God brought you to this place and gave you a specific calling (p. 87).

People desire to feel they were put on earth for a special purpose to do a particular task or work that only they can accomplish (Bolles, 2001). Bolles revealed that “We want to find that special joy … which comes from having a sense of Mission in our life” (p. 241). The term *mission* has been associated as a religious concept (Bolles, 2001) and is defined by Webster (2003) as “a special task to which one devotes one’s life” (p. 414). Mission has two major synonyms, *calling* and *vocation* and discovering one’s mission is a learning process consisting of stages (Bolles, 2001). The terms *calling* and *mission* have been used in the FCS literature to describe how some FCS professionals feel about their work. In a study focusing on recent graduates of FCS education programs, Mimbs (1997) reported that 30% of respondents indicated they felt teaching was a calling. In referring to the soul of the College of Human Sciences at Florida State University, Ralston (2001) wrote “… we have students, alumni, faculty, and staff who have seen the fundamental nature of what we do as essential to society. They have made their professional work their life’s mission or calling” (p. 28). Fairchild (2001) remarked about her passion for FCS and the outlet the profession provides for her to help others by stating “… family and consumer sciences is one of my passions. It provides my spirit the ability to communicate with all ages, a purpose for my being, and a way to extend myself and educate others” (p. 29).

**Passion and the Profession of Family and Consumer Sciences**

The concept of passion can be related to professionals in FCS and to the profession itself. References to the soul of the profession, passion of professionals, and its relationship to the body of knowledge can be found in the FCS literature (Adams, 2001; Anderson &
Nickols, 2001; Baugher, 2001; Bower, 2001; Fairchild, 2001; Nickols & Anderson, 2001; Ralston, 2001; Spanier, 2001). The term essence is defined as “the basic nature (of something)” (Webster, 2003, p. 223). Nickols and Anderson (2001) wrote about the essence of the FCS profession stating:

The essence of family and consumer sciences can be summarized using three words – head, heart, and soul. The profession’s body of knowledge is the intellectual foundation or the head. The heart is the mission to improve quality of life, which reflects our passion, caring, and compassion as professionals. Soul puts us in touch with the “whys” of our being, that which inspires, motivates us, and gives meaning to our work (p. 2).

Anderson and Nickols (2001) summarized the essence of the profession by using three words: head, heart, and soul. They used this analogy to describe the body of knowledge for the profession of FCS as the head, the heart as the mission, and the soul as the inspiration and motivation for the work of FCS professionals. The term soul can be used to describe one’s being or essence, and in reference to the FCS profession Baugher (2001) wrote, “The soul of the profession speaks of the identity of our being, of who we are. It is about the spirit of who we are as a collective and as individuals, creating a profession as well as a community” (p. 17). Furthermore, the soul of the profession is connected to the values held by the profession and the practicing professionals (Nickols & Anderson, 2001). It is not the profession itself that possesses a soul but rather it is the persons engaged with the profession that possess the soul (Newell, 2001; Spanier, 2001). Spanier (2001) stated “I’m not sure that our profession per se has a soul at all. But I believe that those who are attracted to our profession do” (p. 18). Common values separating FCS professionals from those attracted to other professional
fields exist (Spanier, 2001). Spanier (2001) noted that FCS professionals exhibit a higher degree of loyalty to the profession compared to other fields and an unusually strong commitment to nurturing the next generation of professionals. A study completed by Nickols (2001) exploring the characteristics of FCS, its core values, and factors that motivate high achievers within the profession found that “Mentoring students and young professionals was the most often identified strategy for transmitting the essence of family and consumer sciences to future professionals” (p. 35). Recommendations from study participants for inspiring future professionals and transmitting the culture of the profession focused on mentoring college students, recruiting and mentoring young people prior to their choice of a major, and mentoring young professionals (Nickols, 2001). Participants made comments such as “Most people in the profession today are (here) because of a home economist that inspired them” (as cited in Nickols, 2001, p. 42).

Involvement of professionals with students and young professionals is an important activity with which to engage for the survival of the profession and its soul (Nickols, 2001). Leaders in the profession have referred to mentors that have had a particularly strong influence on their own professional commitment (Bower, 2001; Newell, 2001; Nickols-Richardson, 2001; Ralston, 2001). Ralston (2001) reflected on the influence of two of her mentors, Mildred Griggs and Ruth Deacon, and revealed that “Both helped to secure my lifelong commitment to the profession through their caring, mentoring, and friendship” (p. 30). A commitment to the profession’s mission may be better caught than taught (Bower, 2001). When writing about the soul of the profession, Bower (2001) explained “Whether you see your commitment as a passion, a mission, or even a fever, it is contagious and we are carriers” (p. 20). As evident by these examples, the influence of mentoring is a chain reaction
allowing for the perpetuation of the soul of the profession and a transmission of passion to others for carrying out the mission.

Many FCS professionals have a passion for the profession thus creating the commitment to nurture future professionals (Spanier, 2001). The viability of the FCS profession depends not only on the ability to define the profession’s soul but on the ability to transmit the unique passion held by current professionals into future professionals (Bower, 2001). FCS professionals committed to sustaining the profession and building capacity within it can do so by encouraging and mentoring future generations. This engagement between the professional and preprofessional can have a lasting impact on the student’s desire to further develop her leadership skills, commitment to the profession and desire to become agents of change. Anderson (1984) claimed “… every major change in history – social, economic, philosophical, and artistic – came about because of the participating of passionate individuals” (p. 12). Allowing students the opportunities to work with and learn from passionate professionals in FCS who are not only academically trained in the area but who also possess the soul of the profession may allow for the transmitting of professional passion and the sustaining of the profession.

According to Peterat and Smith (2000), “Periodically, all professions engage in processes and projects to clarify their purpose and self-understanding so they may present a contemporary definition to the public, employers, and clients” (p. 170). This process can involve conceptualizing and mapping theories and frameworks, articulating standards of practice, and writing personal definitions and philosophies (Peterat & Smith, 2000). Peterat and Smith (2000) used a dialogical process to attempt to conceptualize the professional practices of home economists in Canada. The satisfaction one receives from her work is very
important as evident by one participant in the Peterat and Smith (2000) study. The participant described her experiences as a home economist working with a pregnant teen:

I realized after I had concluded our instruction sessions, that I had touched [her] life, not only as a teacher of foods and nutrition, money management, housing and decorating, job preparation, and parenting, but also as a positive role model in her life. As a friend of mine often reminds me, I live my profession. It is my identity (p. 172).

The participant referenced in Peterat and Smith (2000) displays a commitment to the profession and testifies to the profession’s influence on her individual identity. Her example affirms the statement that “The heart of family and consumer sciences is demonstrated by the passion with which an individual practices” (Nickols & Anderson, 2001, p. 6). The passionate commitment of FCS educators has become evident in studies documenting the shortage of FCS teachers and its implications. Some teachers have reported delaying their own retirement to avoid program closure due to no available teachers (Stout et al., 1998). The intertwining of the profession and one’s identity is echoed by other FCS professionals. Newell (2001) stated, “We live our profession day in and day out, modeling the ideals of this profession on the world stage” (p. 27). A passionate commitment to the profession of FCS by new professionals entering the field is needed if the profession is to be sustained. Gentzler (1986) stated

The pre-professional period offers learners an array of experiences which expose them to the mission and goals of the profession. Through this process it is expected that the learners will begin formulating their own rationale congruent with the intended purposes of the profession (p. 49).
While commitment is not a requirement for entering any profession, it is a desired attitude (Gentzler, 1986). Committing themselves to the mission of the profession requires that new professionals are aware of the mission and believe the mission to be important enough to earn their support. Commitment to a purpose about which one feels strongly can provide the motivation and passion to be a leader and contributing member of the profession.

**The Family and Consumer Sciences Profession**

*The Mission and Body of Knowledge*

From the beginning of the FCS profession, practitioners and other interested parties have conversed and debated about what should constitute the profession’s body of knowledge (Baugher et al., 2000). The profession was developed by educated men and women who believed that “scientific knowledge and information could and should be used to improve the daily lives of people” (Simerly, Ralston, Harriman, & Taylor, 2000, p. 75). However, founders struggled to clearly define the field. Although application of scientific principles to the management of the household was the overall theme, some advocated that considerable attention to the arts and letters be included and others “believed that teaching life skills to young people should be the primary focus” (Baugher et al., 2000, p. 29). Some of those involved in these early discussions supported the inclusion of social and philosophical perspectives with attention given to the role of public policy (Baugher et al., 2000). As a result of these various perspectives, different views on what should comprise the body of knowledge for the FCS profession developed. However, the differing views had the ultimate purpose of families achieving the “highest quality of living and happiness in their homes and communities” (Baugher et al., 2000, p. 29). Social, political, and economic changes in society have impacted the FCS profession and accentuated the need for the
profession to continually adapt to remain capable of fulfilling its mission in an ever-changing, complex society (Simerly et al., 2000).

The FCS profession is anchored by key concepts, values, and characteristics. Some of these key concepts, values, and characteristics are shared with other helping professions although some are unique to FCS (Peterat & Smith, 2000). Brown (1980) explained the differences between a profession and a discipline clarifying that a profession seeks “to perform some mission of service” (p. 18). To perform this service

… some body of knowledge is drawn upon for use in the affairs of those who are served so that disciplined intellectual endeavor is involved; disciplining of that intellectual endeavor does not, however, follow the same interest or pattern as in the “pure” disciplines (Brown, 1980, p. 18).

Brown (1980) elaborated on the differences in the kinds of questions and problems with which disciplines and professions are concerned. The problems of concern to professions “arise from sources external to the profession in that such questions are problems which members of society have or which some segment of society has and with which help is needed for solution” (Brown, 1980, p. 19). Brown (1980) wrote “These problems are not generated in a single “pure” discipline and their solution is not found in a single discipline” (p. 19). The formulations of solutions to problems with which professions are concerned are interdisciplinary in nature because the problems cut across multiple disciplines (Brown, 1980). The FCS profession is a mission-oriented field and as a mission-oriented field “emphasis is on the organization of existing knowledge to solve those problems of society to which the profession is committed” (Brown, 1980, p. 19). Therefore, problems are viewed within their whole context instead of fragments.
In addition to being a mission-oriented profession, FCS is also a personal service profession (Brown, 1980). Brown (1980) described personal service professions as those whose task is to “bring about changes in the body or personality of the client” (p. 20). In personal service professions, solutions to the client’s problems are brought about by “communicative dialogue between professional and client in which each is expected to search and reflect critically” (Brown, 1980, p. 21). Therefore, a reciprocal relationship between the professional and the client is developed. Personal service professionals seek to understand humans as individuals and in social groups and as such “are not only concerned with their own action; they are concerned also with the action of those they serve” (Brown, 1980, p. 24).

Throughout its existence, the FCS profession has undergone several self-examinations to articulate the mission and outline the body of knowledge. In 1979, Brown and Paolucci developed an in-depth philosophical essay in which they referred to home economics as a critical science (Baugher et al., 2000). The mission of the profession was defined in *Home Economics: A Definition* as

Enabling families, both as individual units and generally as a social institution, to build and maintain systems of action which lead (1) to maturing in individual self-formation and (2) to enlightened, cooperative participation in the critique and formulation of social goals and means for accomplishing them (Brown & Paolucci, 1979, p. 23).

To carry out this mission, professionals must engage in the provision of both direct and indirect services to families (Brown & Paolucci, 1979). Services provided to families should be “to help families help themselves; it is not to provide prescribed ways of acting through
technical enterprise” (Brown, 1980, p. 82). Instead, “families need to develop confidence and competence in facing their own problems and self-directing in their own actions” (Brown, 1980, p. 82). However, families do not always fully comprehend the nature of their problems or possess the understanding needed to develop the solution need to address the problem (Brown, 1980). To become more confident, competent, and self-directing, families need help in recognizing and examining the basic beliefs of dominant groups (Brown, 1980). Brown (1980) gave direction to the role of FCS professionals when she wrote “professionals can help both by providing opportunities for families to engage cooperatively in public discourse for understanding and for collective action and by serving as leaders in public critique of ideology and of forces of exploitation” (p. 82).

The FCS profession is integrative in nature meaning that it draws knowledge from all disciplines to improve the human condition for the families and individuals FCS professionals serve. In doing so, professionals are not just examining an issue from one perspective; rather they are members of a profession pulling together information from other areas to address problems of society. This cannot be fully accomplished without the analysis and critique of social situations. According to Simerly et al. (2000), “The Brown and Paolucci mission statement was in concert with the evolution of the profession in focusing on the larger environment as well as the family unit” (p. 13). Because of its philosophical groundings, this mission of the profession developed by Brown and Paolucci was used for the purposes of this study.

Although not commissioned by the American Home Economics Association (AHEA) as the definition developed by Brown and Paolucci, Green (2001) stated “The mission of home economics as a field of study, and critical science is the empowerment of families to
function interdependently and the empowerment of individuals to perform family functions” (p. 1). According to Green (2001), “The substantive core of home economics is family functions” (p. 1). Because the family is viewed as the fundamental unit of society by members of the profession, the functions of the family and its members are central to the focus of the profession’s mission (Adams, 2001; Green, 2001; Peterat & Smith, 2000). FCS, specifically FCS education, is a profession that draws upon knowledge from all disciplines to improve the human condition both individually and collectively. Stage and Vincenti (1997) indicated that home economics is a holistic and integrative profession borrowing from and relying on a broad range of theoretical discourses from other disciplines. Since its inception, the interdisciplinary approach was imperative to the profession and Vincenti (2005) stated that “Family and consumer sciences developed as an interdisciplinary field to address the everyday problems of individuals and families” (p. 80). Horn (1981) explained, “By the very definition, a home economist must rely upon a breadth of knowledge drawn from many disciplines, because the problems of families do not fit conveniently into narrow categories” (p. 20). This interdisciplinary approach to the practice of FCS professionals was further advocated by Green (2001) as she wrote “An interdisciplinary approach is required to draw knowledge from the social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences to apply to the issues and aspirations of families” (p. 2). Agreement on an organizing framework that accurately describes the profession while allowing for growth, change, and integrity has been difficult and “only the family functions framework has withstood the test of time” (Green, 2001, p. 2). Green (2001) identified concepts pertinent to implementing the mission of FCS regardless of the specifics of those served or the context. These concepts included
Population decisions; management of family resources, specifically time, money, and space; dependent caregiving; role changes across the life span; family as a social system; family as an economic system; family ecosystems; use of community resources; contribution to the community; reciprocal influences, family and individual development; procurement and care of shelter; procurement and care of clothing; nutritious diet; sustainable society; design, creation, and distribution of commodities and services related to the functions of the family; managing interdependence; optimum health and well-being; crisis and problem prevention; equality of opportunity, access and protection (p. 2).

The concepts outlined by Green provide a view of the problems and contexts for the work of FCS professionals seeking to fulfill the mission of the profession. Because FCS possesses an integrative body of knowledge with a unique focus on the functions of the family, professionals in the field, particularly FCS educators, are in a unique position to take an active role in helping individuals, families, and communities improve the human condition. Leaders and professionals who are knowledgeable of the integrative body of knowledge and who can apply that knowledge base to practice are needed to sustain the identity of the profession and fulfill its mission.

According to Brown (1980), “home economics education is concerned with both the professions of home economics and of Education” (p. 89). Therefore, the intentions of FCS education must be consistent with the mission of each of these two professions (Brown, 1980). Brown clarified what home economics education seeks to do. She wrote “home economics education is concerned with service to society in which professional action is
based on commitment to some mission of value to society and on a depth and scope of understanding relevant to that mission” (Brown, 1980, p. 100). She explained like the larger profession of home economics and that of Education, home economics education is a personal service profession. What it seeks to do, therefore, is to bring about changes in the personality of those served since professionals in neither home economics nor Education act upon the bodies of clients but upon the latter’s mental or conceptual structure (Brown, 1980, p. 100).

Home economics education seeks to help each “client become a better educated person in his/her thought; language, feelings, or motivations, and action concerning the family, not merely his/her particular family (although the latter results also)” (Brown, 1980, p. 103). In Brown’s conceptualization of home economics education, the client is the student and home economics education “is concerned with developing understanding, values, and a breadth of perspective with which the student (as client) will perceive and act upon conditions and problems of the family (including his/her own family but not limited to it)” (Brown, 1980, pp. 103, 104). Home economics education is concerned with action and with the problems of the family (Brown, 1980).

Based on the discussion provided, critical analysis of what the FCS profession and FCS education seeks to do have occurred. Discussions of what should comprise the philosophical framework for the body of knowledge for the FCS profession have continued. In January 2000, leaders within the profession gathered at the AAFCS headquarters to discuss and develop a philosophical framework for the profession’s body of knowledge for the future. External influences identified as affecting professional practices included the aging of the population, the influence of technology and genetically modified products, the
changing American family, protecting the environment, the diversity of the country, variations in work life, a dualistic society, globalization, and the importance of focusing on communities (Baugher et al., 2000). Threads of continuity were identified and labeled as issues that “participants repeatedly identified as central to the work of Family and Consumer Sciences” (Baugher et al., 2000, p. 31). A basic assumption “that the focus of work was within a family and community system with ecological perspective” (Baugher et al., 2000, p. 31) was agreed upon and themes emerged in two categories including “those that were integrated across disciplines and those that identified specializations within the field” (Baugher et al., 2000, p. 31). The conceptual framework that resulted for the body of knowledge was designed to allow for “continual reflection, enhancement, and development of programs and specializations in the field” (Baugher et al., 2000, p. 31). The framework “provides a means to organize the rich array of knowledge necessary to function as a family and consumer sciences professional” (Baugher et al., 2000, p. 31). This framework is an important visual model of how the general knowledge of professionals in the field and the specializations within the field work together.

**Integration versus Specialization**

Throughout its history, the FCS profession has been impacted by the political and social environment surrounding it (Green, 2001). As society has changed, the field has experienced profound changes transitioning and evolving from a general discipline to more specific areas of specialization with the uniqueness of an integrative knowledge base. These changes have allowed the profession to remain relevant (Chadwick, 2001). Green (2001) articulated that the mission of FCS is constant and that, even amid societal change, “The mission does not change; the particular issues, problems, resources, and processes are what
change” (p. 2). FCS professionals believe the challenges of families and daily life are best addressed through holistic, interdisciplinary, and integrative perspectives (Peterat & Smith, 2000). However, the advent of specializations has impacted the field dramatically (Vincenti, 2005). These changes can be viewed both positively and negatively. The positive aspects include FCS professionals receiving specialized training and responding to issues related to nutrition, child care, and consumer education with current knowledge, skill, and research. Deacon (1987) advocated that the diversity among the groups served by FCS professionals and within the profession itself contributed to the profession’s vitality. Deacon (1987) wrote:

At the college level we have a responsibility to prepare our graduates to apply their knowledge in the educational, public, or business arenas. As practitioners, whether through retailing, food service, or nutrition education in the public schools, in child care centers or group meetings, or when parenting our parents, our common interest is to further the understandings or choices that make a difference in the daily lives of people. I see our broadened and yet specialized programs as no more than an extension of our professional development to address the increasing interaction of families with the growing economy and the accompanying segmentation or specialization of society as a whole. We certainly would have lost our effectiveness had we not also specialized. Society demands graduates with focused or specialized expertise. We also have needed to specialize to develop depth of content and programming (p. 499).

However, as specializations have grown and developed, so has the issue of sustaining the profession’s identity as an integrative, holistic field especially among new professionals.
Students entering FCS programs at the collegiate level often do not understand the integrative nature of the profession and the vast content the field encompasses. This was articulated by Hoeflin et al. (1987) when they wrote “Students entering college home economics programs sometimes have little objective understanding of themselves and the breadth of the field of home economics” (p. viii). With the issues of program identity in higher education and an often limited understanding of the depth of FCS held by students, research investigating the choice of careers in the field was conducted. Agyeman (1992) investigated college students’ choice of careers in home economics and non-home economics professions by using a sample drawn from three land-grant institutions, one predominantly black, one predominantly white, and one ethnically diverse, with programs accredited by the American Home Economics Association (AHEA). A sample of 479 junior and senior students comprising both home economics related majors and non-home economics majors was generated. In Agyeman’s (1992) sample of the 225 students in home economics programs, 103 responded that they had never considered home economics careers. Agyeman noted that this was a disturbing finding because these students were enrolled in home economics majors but they did not identify the major as home economics. She suggested two reasons for this finding including the fact that the home economics students did not have a clear understanding of the relationship between their majors and the field of home economics. The second reason she proposed related to program identity. The diversity among college, school, and program names of home economics in higher education had created confusion for students as to whether or not their selected majors and programs were home economics-related. According to Agyeman, administrators and faculty members could help
minimize the confusion among students by clarifying the relationship between the specialized programs within the units and the profession of home economics.

One of the most daunting challenges facing the profession is the increasing fragmentation of FCS units in higher education (Rasdell, 2005). This increasing fragmentation becomes even more problematic if FCS professionals are expected to be adequately prepared for the increasing emphasis on the holistic, integrated approach to FCS (Rasdell, 2005, p. 18). A continuing trend is the need for FCS professionals to effectively integrate the knowledge needed to be successful within the specializations with the general knowledge base of FCS (Baugher et al., 2000). Fragmentation reduces the ability of FCS professionals to address contemporary issues from a holistic, integrative perspective. Rasdell (2005) wrote “Fragmentation is the polar opposite of what research, professional, and business trends are pointing toward – multidisciplinary emphases” (p. 18). The challenge of fragmented programs and units is coupled with other issues in higher education such as faculty members in FCS units faced with the challenges of increased workloads, battles for funding, and the fight against college mergers and dismantling, and the responsibility to conduct and publish research.

Another challenge Rasdell (2005) explained is that of the increasing employment of FCS administrators and faculty who do not hold FCS degrees. The faculty teaching the courses in family and consumer sciences programs are often specialists, and they may not have received an integrated educational experience in FCS. The selection of such employees may have been because unit administrators or faculty who have internalized the values of the profession were not available or because other standards and criteria were more important than the basic beliefs and goals of the profession’s integrative body of knowledge (Rasdell, 2005).
The problem of selecting these specialists may perpetuate a lack of integrative understanding on the part of the new professionals completing undergraduate programs in FCS. Caples stated (as cited in Adams, 2001), “If the individuals responsible for the undergraduate curricula do not have an understanding of or believe in the body of knowledge, then it will not be incorporated throughout the curricula” (p. 19). The proposal to meet this challenge is to select candidates who understand or who are willing to embrace the mission. Acquiring and retaining faculty and graduate students who can apply the integrated ideas and concepts of FCS into their professional practice should be a goal in supporting the profession’s core values, beliefs, and body of knowledge (Adams, 2001).

If the profession is to survive and thrive as an integrative body, then goals to ensure sustainability must be set and achieved. According to Morgan (1997), “Survival is a process, whereas goals are often targets or end points to be achieved” (p. 67). Leaders in the FCS profession should seek to ensure future success of the profession by cultivating and mentoring new leaders and professionals who possess a passionate commitment to fulfilling the mission. According to Rasdell (2005), fragmentation of programs in higher education is inevitable if FCS administrators and faculty do not have FCS degrees and a strong commitment to prevention and the holistic development. Scholars in the field of FCS have written about the dynamic, integrative quality of the profession (Fairchild, 2001; Newell, 2001; Nickols-Richardson, 2001; Ralston, 2001) but as Nickols-Richardson (2001) stated “Our strength of being an integrated field is also our weakness” (p. 33). As the need for specializations has increased, we have welcomed specialized professionals into the field. However, as Nickols-Richardson (2001) indicated “… we have not always instilled the historical mission and purpose of our profession in these new relationships …” (p. 33).
Therefore cultivating future leaders and mentoring students and young professionals in the area of FCS becomes a challenge when those who work closely with students, the specialized faculty members, are not from a FCS background and have themselves not been mentored and educated with an understanding of the FCS body of knowledge. Proposals to combat this challenge include cultivating new faculty and administrators, and students carefully and on a regular basis (Rasdell, 2005). If administrators, faculty, and undergraduate and graduate students are not educated about the holistic approach of FCS and legacies of the profession, and also encouraged to participate in the AAFCS and FCS honor societies, then fragmentation of FCS units becomes the standard (Rasdell, 2005, p. 18). Green (2001) wrote about the creation of opportunities for mentoring relationships as one requirement for advancing the intellectual ecology of the profession. Rasdell (2005) advocated cultivating key players periodically with learning experiences delivered by AAFCS mentors. “… our destiny depends on engaging expertise, will, passion, foresight, and commitment to applying an integrative approach to improving the quality of life” (Rasdell, 2005, p. 19). Continuing to cultivate individuals who will embrace and continue the legacy of the FCS profession remains a challenge for the future (Adams, 2001).

**Developing Leaders**

Anderson and Nichols (2001) listed outcomes that are expected to come from dialogue among professionals regarding the FCS body of knowledge and practice of the profession. One of the five outcomes included “Affirming the commitment to provide appropriate instruction of persons entering the profession” (Anderson & Nichols, 2001, p. 18). The appropriate instruction of new professionals entering the profession includes providing them with a comprehensive education in FCS that will allow them to understand
the holistic focus of the profession and the relationship of one specialty area to another. This instruction is vitally important to sustaining the profession as an integrative field. Rasdell (2005) also discussed the challenge and need to cultivate preprofessional students in AAFCS to strengthen ownership of FCS careers.

To meet this challenge Rasdell (2005) proposed that students be directed to the professional association, AAFCS, instead of being directed away from the flagship organization by FCS specialists. Membership in AAFCS, often recognized as the umbrella organization of many FCS specialty areas and organizations, is an important forum responsible for bringing members from the different specialty areas together for dialogue about emergent issues affecting the areas that comprise the profession. Furthermore, recognition and understanding of the core values of AAFCS fosters understanding of the foundation of the profession and the umbrella association. The AAFCS core values include (1) belief in the family as a fundamental unit of society, (2) embrace diversity and value all people, (3) be dedicated to life-long learning and diverse scholarship, (4) prepare new professionals, (5) exemplify integrity and ethical behavior, (6) seek new ideas and be open to change, and (7) promote an integrative and holistic approach to the body of knowledge (American, 2004). All of the core values identified by AAFCS are of great importance to sustaining FCS as an integrative profession. The importance of the fourth core value, prepare new professionals, is especially important to sustaining a legacy of future FCS professionals with the ability to continue meeting the perennial problems faced by individuals, families, and communities as indicated by the remarks of Dean Emeritus Beverly Crabtree:

The health and strength of our profession depends on how well our students (our future professionals) understand and internalize the synergistic, integrative nature of
our profession with its focus on the reciprocal relationships among individuals, families, consumers and communities within the context of the human systems theory and across life course development (as cited in Adams, 2001, p. 19).

FCS students represent the future of the profession. Because students are the future, providing mentoring and coaching opportunities for these future professionals are wise investments (Rasdell, 2005). According to Nickols-Richardson (2001), “We must invest in our youth to identify future members and leaders who will add to our collective soul so that our profession can flourish” (p. 33). With the demands placed on faculty in higher education institutions and FCS units, mentoring may be a responsibility that receives little attention when other responsibilities of faculty members are more closely linked to tenure, promotion, and merit raises. However, the soul of the profession will only survive and thrive when members are replaced by committed and loyal professionals who understand the dynamic quality of the profession. As Spanier (2001) wrote in reference to the FCS profession, “We won’t thrive or even survive on soul alone. We need to be much more proactive …” (p. 19). To carry on the profession’s soul, preserve its identity, history and meanings, the mission of the profession must be instilled into students and young professionals. “To thrive in the future, it is critical that every professional continues to express the heart and soul of the profession …. Mentoring college students and young professionals is a key role for each member of the field” (Nickols & Anderson, 2001, p. 7).

**Capacity Building and Accreditation**

By engaging in the preparation of new professionals who have an integrative understanding of the dynamic focus of the profession, capacity can be built within the profession to sustain identity and the integrative focus of the profession. Capacity building is
a fundamental aspect of the profession (Buck, 2003) and is necessary for the profession to survive and thrive in the future. Capacity building is increasing internal and external leadership skills in order to move an individual, a group, or a project forward (Buck, 2003) and it is similar to developing a strategic plan that identifies a vision. For the vision to become a reality, realistic goals must be set, timelines must be defined, multiple actions must be taken, periodic assessments made and the vision must allow for flexibility (Anderson, 2003). Kagima, Mayers, and Wooldridge (2003) described capacity building as “acquiring and using knowledge and skills, building on assets and strengths, respecting diversity, and responding to change and creating future” (p. 73). Through these activities FCS professionals are able to address perennial family issues and build capacity among individuals and families through research, teaching and providing outreach services to communities (Kagima, Mayers, & Wooldridge, 2003).

The concept of capacity building in the FCS profession can be applied to higher education units with FCS programs. According to Miles and Ralston (2002), “The term capacity building is often used in higher education to define how human capital can be formed and enhanced” (p. 11). Ralston (2002) discussed key elements to foster capacity building. Actions that current professionals need to implement so that the profession will thrive in the future include developing a “culture of learning where new knowledge and innovation can thrive” and “identifying and nurturing future leaders who understand the importance of wisdom” (Ralston, 2002, p. 4). Providing enriching educational opportunities in FCS units of higher education is vital to building capacity among students. Accreditation of higher education units by the AAFCS is one way to ensure that enriching educational opportunities in FCS are available to students. The purpose of AAFCS accreditation is
designed to strengthen FCS education at the college and university level and assure the quality of the education offered in programs of professional study. Supporting accreditation in undergraduate FCS programs provides several functions including maintaining connections among specializations, achieving common purpose in the mission, and providing a rationale for existing as a FCS unit. Accreditation also provides the ability to serve as the voice for individuals, families and communities (Nickols-Richardson, 2001). AAFCS accreditation is granted to FCS units in higher education that meet or exceed the standards established by the AAFCS Council for Accreditation (American, 2006). Purcell and Crase (2004) stated that “capacity building is an important criterion to be considered as a unit pursues or maintains accreditation” (p. 89). The eight standards of AAFCS accreditation reinforce the importance of capacity building in numerous ways (Purcell & Crase, 2004). Standard three, as outlined by Purcell and Crase, focuses on the foundations of accredited programs. Accredited FCS programs should

Demonstrate that students understand the dynamics of capacity building of individuals within families, communities, work, environments, and other contexts. An understanding of human systems theory and life course development prepares students to appreciate the complexity of capacity building over time as family members, citizens, and professionals (Purcell & Crase, 2004, p. 89).

The knowledge of life span development and human systems theory is increasingly important as new professionals are expected to build capacity for themselves, those with whom they work, and the profession. Standard six as, outlined by Purcell and Crase (2004), is focused on students and states “Contribute to the capacity building of students through appropriate admissions policies, academic advising, career guidance, and opportunities to participate in
student and professional organizations” (p. 89). The future economy will require professionals who are able to adapt to any situation and be life-long learners. Therefore, professionals will need the ability to integrate information and collaborate across disciplines. Undergraduate and graduate programs in FCS with a focus on standard six should provide opportunities for these activities to occur. FCS in the past, present and future has allowed and should continue to allow students to develop the reflective thought processes they need as they learn to solve problems that are important in everyday life.

**Issues and Challenges for Family and Consumer Sciences Education**

The mission of FCS is carried out by many professionals including FCS teachers, functioning in a variety of settings. However, the demand for FCS educators at the secondary level is estimated to be four times the supply (Eastman et al., 2006). During the 2002-2003 academic year, the continuing shortage of FCS teachers was documented in a national survey of secondary FCS education programs with 33 of the 44 participating states reporting a shortage (Werhan & Way, 2006). Results indicated that FCS teacher positions in rural areas were difficult to fill and there was concern from respondents that FCS programs in the secondary schools would close if the supply of teachers did not improve (Werhan & Way, 2006). The closing of FCS secondary programs is particularly disturbing because without a FCS program many students are missing the opportunity to learn vital life skills which comprise the core of the FCS secondary curriculum. Program closures and the unavailability of FCS educators further increases the problem of cultivating new professionals as many future FCS professionals receive their first exposure to the profession in a FCS secondary or extension program (Stout et al., 1998).
Several reasons for the shortage of FCS teachers have been documented (Stout et al., 1998; Tripp, 2006). Retirement of current teachers along with a shortage of teacher educator programs with low enrollments at colleges and universities are primary reasons for the shortage. Tripp (2006) conducted a profile of California’s secondary FCS teachers and found that 62% of the teachers surveyed planned to leave their positions within 10 years, citing retirement as the primary reason for leaving. Vacancies due to retirement of FCS teachers are a trend that is evident in many parts of the country. Tripp (2006) wrote “There is no mistaking that there is a critical need for many new FCS teachers, primarily to replace those now considering leaving their position” (p. 63).

It is necessary to build capacity in the profession by cultivating new FCS educators so that they can continue to fulfill the mission of the FCS profession. However, many of the teachers in California responding to Tripp’s (2006) inquiry were uncertain if they would be replaced upon retirement and the primary reason for the uncertainty cited by the teachers was “not enough qualified FCS instructors available” (Tripp, 2006, p. 63). Declines in the number of FCS teacher preparation programs and graduates completing the programs has been documented (Miller & Meszaros, 1996), and many universities have been experiencing a dramatic decline in enrollment in FCS education programs for decades (Bartley & Sneed, 2004). From 1968 to 1991, there was a 94% decrease in baccalaureate degrees awarded in FCS education across the nation and another 22% decrease over the next decade (Eastman et al., 2006). During the 1999-2000 academic year, 70% of FCS education programs graduated fewer than five students (Scruggs, Leslie, Scott, & Weber, 2000). Identity issues that have plagued the profession for many years are particularly problematic for FCS education. Fragmentation within the profession and the reduced visibility resulting from name changes
and restructuring of FCS units in higher education have been identified as contributing to the FCS teacher supply and demand problem (Stout et al., 1998). The issue of sustaining identity and cultivating FCS educators is of growing concern as higher education units of FCS in the United States have been reorganized and/or merged with other colleges within institutions. A variety of approaches to address the shortage and recruit potential teachers have been proposed (Eastman et al., 2006; Jensen, Rowely, Skidmore, & Hymon-Parker, 2003; Mimbs, 2002; Werhan, 2002; Werhan & Way, 2006). Simerly (1998) discussed several pools of potential FCS educators including the traditional college population of middle, junior, and high school students, and nondeclared majors at the postsecondary level, individuals with degrees in FCS education who have been out of the field, college graduates in specialized areas of FCS as well as graduates from allied areas, and students in community and junior colleges who have not declared an upper division program of study. It is important to communicate the benefits of a viable career in FCS education to these potential pools of FCS educators. Respondents participating in studies profiling FCS teachers in California as well as different regions of the country indicated that they were very satisfied with their profession (Bartley & Sneed, 2004; Tripp, 2006). Career satisfaction along with the high placement rates of FCS education graduates makes this area of study an attractive career option for those interested in teaching life skills to youth and adults. According to Bartley and Sneed (2004),

High placement rates, the national shortage of FCS teachers, and a teaching force rapidly approaching retirement suggest career opportunities across the nation in both FCS education and FCS extension. All this plus the high satisfaction levels of current FCS professionals make the field a highly marketable career choice for those seeking
an opportunity to teach critical life skills that make a difference in the lives of individuals, families, and communities (p. 87).

The shortage of FCS teachers should be a concern for all members of the FCS profession as well as parents, public school administrators, university faculty, and legislators (Stout et al., 1998). FCS professionals have a role to play in assuring that the public continues to have “access to the empowering and emancipating life skills, knowledge, and processes that are critical to the future of youth and adults in a complex, ever-changing society” (Simerly, 1998, p. 9). Understanding how students identify with the major of FCS education can be a vital component in the recruitment and retention efforts of those charged with cultivating and encouraging these new professionals.

Career Choice

While pursuing a degree in an AAFCS accredited program, it is assumed that preprofessionals will receive a holistic foundation in the FCS profession. However, it is important to understand the path of students who choose to pursue degrees in the areas of FCS, specifically FCS education. Understanding the career choice of these students is an essential component to addressing the shortage of FCS education students enrolled in teacher preparation programs. The institutions that have the most powerful influence on the socialization of individuals are the family, school, and nation-state (Statt, 1994). More specifically, research and theories in the area of career development and occupational choice suggest the importance of environmental, familial, and personal factors on one’s decision to choose a particular career path (Agyeman, 1992). Different social groups may be affected in different ways by their family experiences where parents and other relatives act as role models for particular occupations or types of work and parental roles may influence personal
choice of occupations. Occupational choice is largely a middle-class phenomenon with working-class children adopting the norms and values of people who work in unskilled manual jobs and middle-class students anticipating life in the professional kinds of jobs they have seen modeled in their different family backgrounds (Statt, 1994).

There is extensive literature regarding the career choices of students in specific (Bradford, 2005; Connors, Schoenfeldt, Weller, & Smith, 2000; Hong, Rosenblum, Petrovay, & Erin, 2000; Luzius, 2005; Munro & Elsom, 2000; Small, 2005; Sowell, 2006; Virginia Tech, 2005) and non-specific areas of study (Germeijs, 2006) and among specific ethnic (Bradford, 2005; Castelino, 2004; Wu, 2000) and gender (Grant, Battle, & Heggoy, 2000; Peterson, 1980; Whitmarsh, Brown, Copper, Hawkins-Rodgers, & Wentworth, 2007; Williams, 2006) groups. Many of these studies were conducted in the areas of math, science, technology, and library science as a means to help sustain each of these professions and cultivate and encourage student interest for these areas.

Luzius (2005) sought to identify the motivating factors that influenced the career decisions of academic librarians. A researcher designed survey was used to identify the career choice motivation factors and to gather demographic information of the participants. The highest ranking scores from the career choice factors fell under the intrinsic motivation group (Luzius, 2005).

Small (2005) investigated college and career choices of alumni of two specialized schools of mathematics, science, and technology, a public magnet high school and an independent middle school, to see what the participants perceived as influencing their decisions to choose or not to choose a career in math and science. The results indicated that 76.8% of the alumni selected college majors in math, science, and technology fields and
23.2% selected non-math, science, and technology majors. For those respondents in the work force, 38.9% selected careers in math, science and technology and 61.1% selected non-math, science, and technology careers. Variables, including personal, family, academic experiences, and academic teachers, were found to reliably predict both choice of major and career for the participants (Small, 2005).

Sowell (2006) inquired into the relationship between parental influences and student career choices of both males and females majoring and not majoring in science areas. The results indicated that the major influencers on the students’ choice of career included the desire to help others, peers, and salary (Sowell, 2006). Munro and Elsom (2000) investigated the influence of science teachers and career advisors on students’ decisions about science subjects and science and technology careers in the United Kingdom. To collect data, a survey was completed by 155 career advisors and case studies of six diverse schools located throughout the United Kingdom were conducted. The results indicated that science teachers appeared to have a major influence on the students’ motivation toward and employment in the science field (Munro & Elsom, 2000). However, there were few examples of planned cooperation between career advisors and the science departments. Furthermore, the science teachers did not see themselves as a source of information and advice about careers in science and technology.

More specifically, studies have been conducted on the choice of careers and career development of home economics/FCS students at the post-secondary level (Aadland, Dunkelberger, Molnar, & Purcell, 1983: Agyeman, 1992; East, 1980; Lautigar, 2002; Mumme, 1997; Smith, 1990 & 1995a; Stout et al., 1981). Mumme (1997) applied Holland’s theory of vocational personalities and work environments to students majoring in FCS at a
southwestern university. Mumme found that two-thirds of the students had been enrolled in secondary home economics programs and 64% had previous volunteer and work experiences related to their choice of major. East (1980) described a profile of home economics students which indicated that home economics students would be females from lower middle class families with average income and whose parents are not likely to have attended college.

Smith (1995a) examined the responses to a questionnaire by 3, 791 students enrolled in a freshmen orientation course taken at the beginning of their study in home economics at a large Midwestern university over a ten-year period. Students were asked to indicate how well they could perform certain tasks related to the home economics core at that time, and they also responded to demographic questions including who influenced their choice of major. Thirty percent of respondents indicated a parent or guardian as the most influential person in their choice of a major. Home economics education majors were highly influenced by their high school home economics teachers and county 4-H agents in their choice of major (Smith, 1995a). Data from this large study over a 10-year period also involved responses from 2, 156 graduating seniors (Smith, 1995b). Upon graduation, respondents “believed themselves capable of working in the area of their majors, identifying social issues and keeping up to date” (Smith, 1995b, p. 547). However, respondents “did not feel as capable of disseminating knowledge of the history and status of the profession, being involved in the legislative process or helping others use design principles and components” (Smith, 1995b, p. 547). Students majoring in home economics education and home economics journalism scored higher on more scale scores than did more specialized majors. This finding could be attributed to the fact that students majoring in these two particular areas had taken a wider variety of course work required by their program of study than the more specialized majors.
therefore developing a more comprehensive understanding of the field. Smith (1995b) concluded that students knew more about things closely related to their major.

Agyeman (1992) examined variables that differentiate between college students who choose home economics careers and those who do not. Agyeman’s (1992) findings revealed that respondents who chose to pursue a career in the field of home economics more often attended high schools that were ethnically diverse, perceived themselves as having the ability to pursue home economics but little ability to pursue the social sciences, and preferred receiving career information prior to college. This latter finding is of significance to FCS administrators who are charged with marketing of FCS programs and recruitment of potential FCS students suggesting that earlier intervention of college faculty in the career decision making of high school students may be significant in attempts to increase program enrollments (Agyeman, 1992). Agyeman suggested that one must consider the interdisciplinary nature of home economics reporting that home economics students are considered to be either specialists or generalists. Due to this distinction between specialists and generalists, home economics students varied on their perceived ability to pursue certain subject matter areas. For example, students majoring in textile science perceived their ability to pursue the social sciences lower than the sciences (Agyeman, 1992).

Studies investigating racial differences in selection of home economics majors and institutions have also been conducted. Stout et al. (1981) reported the findings of a study to determine the relative importance of selected variables on choice of major which distinguished black women attending 1890 institutions from white women attending 1862 institutions. Data for Stout et al. was collected from college students in the spring of 1977 from home economics students in all 1862 (N = 1,005) and 1890 (N = 1198) land-grant
institutions in 13 southern states. In four states, schools other than land-grant institutions were sampled due to either low enrollment or lack of a home economics program in those states. Stout et al. analyzed social origin variables, the influence of significant others, and previous curricula-related educational and work experiences to focus on identifying a set of variables that distinguished white women attending predominantly white 1862 land-grant institutions from black women attending predominantly black 1890 institutions. White home economics students were shown to differ from their black counterparts primarily in terms of family income and father’s socioeconomic status with the black students coming from significantly lower socioeconomic origins than their white peers.

Stout et al. (1981) found differentiation between 1862 and 1890 students in terms of who influenced their choice of career in home economics. Black students were more often influenced by significant others, mainly family relatives, than were the white students. Significant influences on students’ choices included family members, home economics teachers, and college teachers and advisors. For both the white and black students, the mother exerted the greatest influence from the significant other category. However, overall it appeared that family relations were more important sources of influence for black students than they were for white students. Blacks seemed to be more influenced by a larger pool of significant others than did whites. Blacks were more influenced by relatives and high school counselors and other teachers and principals. Membership in student organizations such as 4-H and Future Homemakers of America and the influence of high school or other successful experience in home economics was more important to black students than to white students. High school counselors also had more influence on black students in home economics than on the white students. Stout et al. advocated for additional studies regarding program
offerings, student aspirations and goals, and student attitudes in order to create a balance in drawing conclusions regarding the findings reported.

**Family and Consumer Sciences Education as a Career Choice**

Although the above mentioned studies document career choices of FCS majors as a whole, more specific studies examine the career choice decisions of FCS education recent graduates and practicing teachers (Abdulkarim, 1988; Mimbs, 1997) and recruiting efforts for this population (Eastman et al., 2006; Jensen et al., 2003) especially in light of the FCS teacher shortage. In an effort to address the FCS teacher shortage, publications have provided suggestions that various groups of educators can use to recruit new professionals. Abdulkarim (1988) conducted a survey study to develop a profile of students majoring in home economics education at Qatar University and to compare selected variables of home economics majors to those of other majors within the same university. High school friends exerted the most influence on choice of major among home economics education students. Combining work and family, high school teachers’ suggestions, other relatives, helping others and home economics teachers’ suggestions emerged as the most important discriminating variables. Home economics education students viewed themselves as having stronger professional commitment than students not majoring in home economics.

Mimbs (1997) used a survey instrument to investigate which of 35 career choice factors and personal values influenced participants’ decisions to become teachers and to choose FCS education as a field of study. The results indicated that interest in FCS subject matter, enjoyment of working with young people, interest in families, helping people, professional satisfaction, and creativity were the reasons most often cited by participants for influencing their career choice.
Eastman et al. (2006) reported a mentoring project undertaken as a joint effort between New Mexico State University and the Education Program at Dona Ana Branch Community College to recruit and retain students in FCS education. The mentees demonstrated significant increases in their cognitive and affective scores regarding teaching FCS from preassessments to postassessments of the program. Jensen et al. (2003) reported on a recruitment project in Utah, in which high school seniors were invited to attend a reception at Brigham Young University. The purpose of the reception was to recruit students to become FCS teachers. Secondary teachers were a critical component in the recruiting efforts and played a vital role in the program. Of the 143 students that responded to a survey instrument and indicated that they planned to attend college, 18 stated that they were planning to major in FCS education. Fifty of the respondents indicated that they were planning to major in related disciplines or FCS specialty areas. The results suggested that FCS teachers at the secondary level focus most of their time on FCS specialty areas or related disciplines when integrating career education into the curriculum (Jensen et al., 2003).

Mimbs (2002) used quantitative and qualitative methods to acquire practicing teachers’ advice for marketing and recruiting potential FCS educators while also inquiring into job satisfaction and reasons for choosing FCS education as a career. Job satisfaction was high for the group and the reasons most often cited by teachers for choosing this career field were “I like working with young people,” “I like helping people,” and “The example of my own teachers inspired me.” Over 40% of respondents indicated they did not expect there to be a replacement for them once they retired citing several reasons including that few choose FCS education as a career, low pay, and lack of available programs at universities (Mimbs, 2002).
Developing Personal and Professional Identities

When conducting a study using practicing FCS teachers as participants, Mimbs (2002) found that a total of 48% made the choice to teach FCS while they were in high school and 34% made the career choice while in college. These findings suggest the importance of career choice during the period of adolescence. In the United States, the period of adolescence is considered to begin between the ages of 12 and 14 and end between the ages of 19 and 21. During adolescence, many attitudes and interests are solidified as children transition into young adulthood (Anderson, 1984). Cognitive development is rapid and the thoughts, ideas, and concepts that are developed during this period greatly influence an individual’s future character and personality formation. During the teenage years, the kinds of abilities and intelligence people possess are evident as well as how these may register for the job market (Statt, 1994). According to Hoeflin et al. (1987),

By late adolescence, most young people come to terms with themselves. They are ready to find their place in society. At this time they face major decisions of whether to continue their education, to work immediately, settle down to marry, join the military service or combine several of these choices. To achieve identity adolescents have to become self-conscious, self-directing and self-assured with their own identity (p. 56).

Adolescents experience dramatic physical changes and changes in their social roles as adults and peers adopt new expectations for them. Erik Erikson labeled the psychosocial stage corresponding to the age of adolescence as identity versus identity confusion believing that adolescents are in a search for a unique social identity for themselves. The results of earlier years of experiences should lead to the successful integration of one’s basic drives
with her physical and intellectual ability and opportunities in life (Thomas, 2005). In addition, adolescents should gain an increasing sense of purpose and understanding of reality as they recognize their own way of dealing with life in socially acceptable ways. Adolescents that solve the problems of this period will develop a strong sense of individuality and recognition of their acceptability in society (Thomas, 2005). Traditional college students, in the latter period of adolescence, undergo many changes including changes in appearance, actions, beliefs, and goals (Hoeflin et al., 1987). According to Hoeflin et al.,

Some students seem to shift continually from one kind of personality to another trying to be accepted. Others choose to learn as much as possible to develop their expanding ideas and beliefs until they find that they can emerge as a new kind of person who can accept their chosen role and yet continue to grow mentally and spiritually (p. 3).

The process of identity formation through adulthood has been a topic of growing interest to identity researchers (Kroger, 2002). According to Levine (2003), “Identity formation can be conceptualized as an ongoing psychosocial process during which various characteristics of the self are internalized, labeled, valued, and organized” (p. 191). Waterman (2004) defines identity as the “goals, values, and beliefs to which an individual is unequivocally committed, and that give a sense of direction, meaning, and purpose to life” (p. 209). Identity formation involves the processes by which some range of goals, values, and beliefs are identified and evaluated. It also involves commitments to particular identity elements as they are formed and the activities for their implementation are begun (Waterman, 2004). Hoeflin et al. (1987) defined the sense of identity as the subjective experiment of being one’s real self and asserted that it is derived from self-observation and judgment.
Hoeflin et al. explained “You observe your own actions as you go through life and compare them with a standard provided by your memory of how you have been through the recent and immediate past” (p. 3). One’s sense of her individual identity is related to her own observations of her life and how she internalizes these observations.

Integration in the form of ego identity takes place as individuals look toward their future and toward a career. During adolescence, one’s sense of identity can be a critical element in the choice of a career. Mimbs (2002) stated “When considering personal identity as key to career development, conceptualization of a professional identity becomes important. Personal identity is directly related to professional identity” (pp. 48, 49).

According to Anderson (1984), “You must have a genuine appreciation of your individuality if you’re going to make an impact on your life and on those around you” (p. 60). Identifying one’s uniqueness is pivotal if one is to pursue a career which brings meaning and self-fulfillment (Bolles, 2001).

**Personality and Theories of Motivation**

**Defining Personality**

The search for a career that one can be passionate about can be related to one’s personality, identity, and motivation for a particular type of work and career field. The term personality is used by psychologists and laypersons to make sense of an individual’s behavior (Statt, 1994). Several definitions have been given for the term personality. Statt (1998) defined personality as

The sum total of all the factors that make an individual human being both individual and human; the thinking, feeling and behaving that all human beings have in
common, and the particular characteristic pattern of these elements that makes every human being unique (p. 100).

Kahn (1965) provided two definitions of personality, using the *Oxford English Dictionary* to define the term as “an assemblage of qualities which makes each individual unique” (p. 12). Kahn’s second definition of personality refers to when the term is used to describe the effect that one individual has on another person and defines it as “a dynamic interaction between an individual and his environment” (Kahn, 1965, p. 13). However, personality is difficult to precisely define and one possibility for this difficulty is that the term is used to refer to the study of all aspects of individuals and their functioning (Staub, 1980). The concern with individual differences is the basis of personality psychology (Staub, 1980). However, personality psychology does not focus on human capacities such as physical abilities and intelligence, “but wherever personal capacities gain expression – in sports, at school, in work – motivation, attitudes, and other personal characteristics modify the influence of capacities” (Staub, 1980, p. 6). It is the expression of personality in work and motivation for particular types of work, specifically FCS education that is of interest in this study. A further examination of theories of motivation will provide a lens for considering the motivation of undergraduate students choosing to become FCS educators.

**Motivation**

Motivation is a primary area of research in psychology and the concept is intended to explain why people engage in certain behaviors while avoiding others (Ferrer-Caja & Weiss, 2002). Thus, it is the examination of the question why do we do what we do, that is the basis of motivational psychological inquiry (Ferrer-Caja & Weiss, 2002; Ginsberg, 2005). Furthermore, the study of human motivation is the “study of peoples’ needs and the way they
behave to satisfy them” (Deci, 1980, p. 36). However, motivation is a difficult concept to define because it is related to many partly overlapping theoretical constructs (Martens & Kirschner, 2004). Statt (1998) defined motivation as “A general term for any part of the hypothetical psychological process which involves the experiencing of needs and drives and the behavior that leads to the goal which satisfies them” (p. 88). Corsini (1999) defined motivation as “The process of initiating, sustaining, and directing psychological or physical activities, including internal forces such as the impulses, drives, and desires involved in this process” (p. 611). Defining motivation as the natural human capacity to direct energy in pursuit of a goal holds the assumption that human beings are purposeful (Ginsberg, 2005). Corsini (1999) described motivation as the intrinsic forces that drive an individual to act. Anderson (1984) connected motivation and passion by stating “Finding out what motivates you is related to discovering your natural interests – your passions. You will gravitate toward your interests because they are connected with desire, want, longing” (p. 92). According to Statt (1994), “The factors that motivate people to behave in particular ways are numerous, ever-changing, often unconscious and sometimes contradictory” (p. 278). Deci (1980) described motives as the awareness of one’s needs which will cause her to act in order to achieve the desired satisfaction. Satisfying needs whether it is for food, love, or status is a central concept in theories of motivation as people direct their behaviors to satisfy their needs. There are multiple theories of motivation and each is based on a particular view of human nature. Considering the definitions and concepts of motivation, it is necessary for a theory of motivation to describe how behavior is “initiated, energized, directed, and terminated” (Deci, 1980, p. 47).
Theory X, Classical View, and Expectancy Theory

Theory X, the expectancy theory, and the classical view are theories of motivation that share common characteristics as they provide a particular view of human nature as it relates to work. These three particular theories tend to focus on the external rewards provided by work such as money, promotion, status. These perspectives support that it is these external rewards that motivate people to work. Specifically, theory X asserts that external incentives and controls are necessary to motivate and control workers because people are inherently lazy and have the tendency to pursue their own goals, which are against those of the organization (Deci, 1975; Statt, 1994). Theory X also asserts that people are irrational and incapable of self-discipline or self-control (Statt, 1994) and people are thought to have no intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1975). Therefore, the few individuals that are controlled and self-motivated will need to manage all of the other workers (Statt, 1994). This approach is consistent with the behavioristic orientation where to motivate people control mechanisms are established and rewards are provided by the environment when the person performs effectively (Deci, 1975).

Expectancy theory focuses on the question of how people decide on what behavior to engage in with the hope or promise of extrinsic outcomes such as promotion, money, and status aiding one in the decision-making process (Statt, 1994). Thus, the basic assumption of expectancy theories of motivation is that human behavior is goal directed and people engage in behaviors that will lead to a desired end state (Deci, 1975). The classical view (Hoeflin et al., 1987) is similar to theory X and the expectancy theory supporting the idea that people work for monetary rewards and thus to motivate workers, employers should increase workers’ salaries. Although these systems and approaches have substantial support from the
psychological literature, there are limitations (Deci, 1975). These theories provide a limited view of the potential for workers to express leadership, self-motivation, self-fulfillment, and self-control in the workplace. Instead workers are viewed as individualistic, lazy, and irrational and therefore require external motivation to be productive. This presents a further problem because a system based on external controls can easily break down if the controls are not continuously operative (Deci, 1975).

**Theory Y, Needs Theory, Ecologist View**

In opposition to theory X, the expectancy theory, and the classical view are theory Y, the needs theory, and the ecologist view. Theory Y proposes that people seek meaning and a sense of accomplishment in their work while also desiring to exercise autonomy and independence (Statt, 1994). In contrast to theory X, theory Y asserts that people are controlled and self-motivated believing that they will find external incentives and controls demeaning and if people are given the chance, they will come to regard the organization’s goals as their own (Statt, 1994). Theory Y is a participative approach to management which focuses on an intrinsic rather than extrinsic approach to motivating employees (Deci, 1975). Deci (1975) explained

… a system for motivating employees such as participative management which – through participating and job enlargement – attempts to arouse intrinsic motivation, appears to motivate effective performance at the same time that it satisfies intrinsic needs (p. 227)

The basis of needs theory supports that people must meet their basic biological needs such as hunger and thirst prior to meeting the advanced need of self-realization. Thus, satisfying these basic needs is the content of motivation. Maslow and Herzberg have made
major contributions to the study of needs theory (Statt, 1994; Staub, 1980). According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, all humans have specific needs and once the primary level needs are satisfied, one can begin to fulfill higher level needs (Hoeflin et al., 1987). The primary level needs comprise the base and needs are fulfilled in the ascending order of physiological, safety, love/belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization (Deci, 1975; Hoeflin et al., 1987). The emphasis on self-actualization and self-realization, growth, achievement, and autonomy are key concepts of needs theory.

Herzberg’s two-factor theory is focused on people having two sets of needs referred to as hygiene and motivation needs. Hygiene needs are satisfied by regular care and maintenance in an organization such as pay, working conditions, job security and relations with colleagues and supervisors. If these needs are not met, people will become discontented with their jobs (Statt, 1994). However, these hygiene needs do not produce job satisfaction. For job satisfaction to occur motivators are necessary and these are intrinsic to the work itself (Statt, 1994). Examples of motivators are “achievement, independence, recognition, responsibility, challenge” (Statt, 1994, p. 318).

Needs theory is of particular interest in the study of worker motivation and needs theorists agree that work satisfies certain needs, however what needs for what people, why, when, and how are complex investigations. The fundamental question ‘why do people work?’ should be approached before examining what motivates people to work. The basic physiological needs of food, drink, and shelter along with existence and hygiene needs are definitely part of the decision to work and tend to be responsible for the “because we have to work” mentality. However, if the basic needs were met, the question that remains is ‘would individuals still pursue work for its meaning?’ Hoeflin et al. (1987) stated “Through work we
are offered rewards which fulfill many of our needs addressed by Maslow’s hierarchy of needs” (p. 146). In addition to meeting basic needs, “A career can contribute to our gaining respect from others, having a sense of self-accomplishment and of actualizing our desire to reach our fullest potential” (Hoeflin et al., 1987, p. 146). Work is one of the most important parts of one’s social identity as people are often defined by what they do as paid employment (Hoeflin et al., 1987). According to Anderson (1984), “the right ‘fit’ in a job comes when the work satisfies your inner needs” (p. 7). Anderson (1984) described a need as a “force, a wanting, a passion that may or may not be conscious” (p. 7) and explained that needs vary as one grows older.

The ecologist view is similar to theory Y and the needs theory because it also focuses on finding meaning in one’s work. In the ecologist view, the factors influencing an individual’s labor force satisfaction is viewed as a complicated interplay between social needs and economic self-interest. An individual’s interaction with the social, economical, technological, and natural environments influence her work satisfaction. “As our society becomes more complex with advances in computer technology, communication satellites and technological industrialization, we begin to ask ourselves about the importance and meaning of work” (Hoeflin et al., 1987, p. 146). Job satisfaction is described as a pleasurable positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences (Statt, 1994). In the ecologist view, a person’s job is viewed as an extension of an individual’s self-realization (Hoeflin et al., 1987).

**Social Assumption & Human Relations**

Other theories that have been conceptualized to explain motivation include the social assumption view, human relations view, the equity theory, and the goal-setting theory. The
theory of social assumption asserts that much of the intrinsic meaning of work is lost through industrialization; therefore meaning is sought in social relationships at work through the forming of peer groups. In this view, human behavior is primarily motivated by social needs and a sense of individual identity comes from interpersonal relationships. In addition, people are viewed to be more responsive to peer group forces than external financial incentives or other attempts used by management to control behavior (Statt, 1994). The human relations perspective is similar to the social assumption view and supports the idea that attitudes, values, and interpersonal relationships affect an individual’s productivity in the labor market thus the individual and her social surroundings become the main focus of study (Hoeflin et al., 1987).

**Equity Theory & Goal-Setting Theory**

The equity theory is concerned with “our sense of fairness and justice about the way we and others are treated at work in terms of ratio of inputs (like experience, qualifications and effort) to outcomes (like pay, promotion and status)” (Statt, 1994, p. 287). The theory suggests that individuals are pushed psychologically to equalize inputs and outcomes and that they compare themselves to reference groups. Another theory to explain motivation is the goal-setting theory which supports having a specific goal or purpose that one is trying to accomplish. Studies of the goal-setting theory have dealt with quantifiable aspects of work performance such as percentages achieved or money saved (Statt, 1994). However, quantifying what one does might be inappropriate or misleading when considering the essence of jobs such as teachers and doctors which deal with quality of life.
Intrinsic Motivation

Organismic view leading to intrinsic motivation theory.

There are two major categories for viewing motivation, mechanistic and organismic, and within each of these categories there are theories and approaches to the study of human motivation. Behaviorism and the early psychoanalytic approach are traditional views of motivation theory that have regarded people in a mechanistic fashion, assuming they are passive agents to the internal and external forces in their environment (Deci, 1975). “Environmental forces were said to attain their potency because of their relationship to people’s internal drives – hunger, sex, the avoidance of pain,” (Deci, 1980, p. 36). However, these approaches, often known as drive theories, to the study of human motivation have proven to be inadequate as people are now viewed as active rather than passive agents operating in their environment to achieve desired outcomes (Deci, 1980). An organismic approach to motivation appears to have more potential than a mechanistic approach for providing a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of human behavior because an organismic approach views people as active beings and focuses on internal processes in the explanation of human behavior (Deci, 1980). Thus, this approach also recognizes cognitive and affective processes such as thoughts and feelings as related to motivation.

Two central elements are necessary when viewing motivation in terms of an organismic theory. The first is that the theory assumes that people have the ability and capacity to decide what to do. In deciding what to do, people are seeking to satisfy their needs. The second element assumes that people engage in particular behaviors to “feel competent and self-determining: to feel like causal agents who are effective in their
interactions with the environment” (Deci, 1980, p. 37). Because traditional theories of motivation have recognized the physiological drives such as hunger and sex as the prime motivators of behavior, this second element is of great importance. It asserts that in addition to being motivated by physiological drives, people are intrinsically motivated to participate in what engages them.

**The development and definition of intrinsic motivation.**

The field of intrinsic motivation developed from several strands of research and theory and various conceptualizations of intrinsic motivation exist (Deci, 1975; Remedios & Boreham, 2004). A primary conceptualization of intrinsic motivation involves the concepts of competence and self-determination. For example, White (as cited in Deci, 1980; as cited in Remedios & Boreham, 2004) proposed the theoretical notion of effectance motivation which suggested that individuals were motivated when they felt they were having an effect on the environment. Effectance motivation, now generally referred to as intrinsic motivation, is that which “energizes exploration, manipulation, and other activities which are intended to produce an effect on the environment” (Deci, 1980, p. 44) and appears to be a continuing source of energy to motivate behaviors when one of the homeostatic drives is not requiring one’s attention (Deci, 1980). deCharms (as cited in Deci, 1980; Remedios & Boreham, 2004) holding a similar view to White’s (as cited in Deci, 1980; Remedios & Boreham, 2004), developed his theory of personal causation which suggested that individuals were likely to be the most motivated when they felt they were the causal agent in their environment or stated differently, the authors of their own actions.

Creating the origin-pawn variable, deCharms believed these individuals strived to be the origins of behavior rather than pawns susceptible to the influence of outside forces.
Deci’s (1975) theory of intrinsic motivation suggested that intrinsically motivated behaviors are based in people’s need to be competent and self-determining and he stated “Intrinsically motivated behavior is behavior which is motivated by a person’s need for feeling competent and self-determining in dealing with his environment” (p. 100). While his position was in agreement with White and deCharms, Deci emphasized two important components to intrinsic motivation. The first is that people strive to be competent and effective in dealing with their environments and secondly, that individuals be personally causative in that they are willful or self-determining (Deci, 1980). A sense of competence and self-determination is the basis of intrinsic motivation.

With intrinsic motivation, the reward for a behavior is internal to the individual. In contrast to intrinsic motivation, is the concept of extrinsic motivation. For extrinsically motivated, drive-based behaviors, rewards are external (Deci, 1980; Martens & Kirschner, 2004). Extrinsic motivation refers to the performance or engagement in an activity to attain a certain outcome, obtain some separable goal, or as a means to an end (Baldwin & Caldwell, 2003; Ferrer-Caja & Weiss, 2002). When considering an extrinsic motivation perspective to education and student learning, motivators consist of prizes, grades and test scores, entrance into college, and ability to increase income (Delialioglu 2004; Ginsberg, 2005). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are conceptualized as opposites (Ginsberg, 2005).

In general, intrinsically motivated behaviors are based on people’s need to be competent and self-determining (Deci, 1980). The rewards for intrinsically motivated behaviors consist of feelings of efficacy, which result from one’s dealing competently with one’s surroundings, and feelings of personal causation (Deci, 1980). Intrinsic motivation is found in achieving something because it is enjoyable to do (Statt, 1994). Intrinsic motivation
also refers to the natural and inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenge, pursue interests and engage in an activity for the inherent satisfaction of doing an activity for its own sake (Baldwin & Caldwell, 2003; Ferrar-Caja & Weiss, 2002; Martens & Kirschner, 2004). Thus, engagement in an activity is an end in itself (Baldwin & Caldwell, 2003).

In relation to education and student learning, an intrinsic motivation perspective is based on internal values such as the will to learn and understand course content and the desire to solve a problem thus leading to higher levels of learning and critical thinking abilities (Delialioglu, 2004). When considering a definition of intrinsic motivation as it relates to learning, it can be defined as “participation in learning experiences that, even in the absence of extrinsic rewards or sanctions, are of interest and value to students” (Ginsberg, 2005, p. 220). An individual is intrinsically motivated when the cause of the behavior is one’s desire for self-efficacy (Deci, 1980). People’s need to be competent and self-determining directs them to an active engagement with the environment in which they “seek out and attempt to conquer challenges which are optimal for their abilities” (Deci, 1980, p. 45). There is likely to be a deeper involvement and fascination with an activity when people are intrinsically motivated (Deci, 1980). The concept of intrinsic motivation can be related to work as Statt (1994) stated “If people feel the job provides them with the right amount of stimulation, reward and challenge they will respond with their best efforts and creativity” (p. 101). Intrinsic motivation promotes engagement with relevant and challenging experiences and when one is challenged by and engaged with an activity whether in a work environment or a learning environment, she is more likely to respond with full attention.

In addition to recognizing the importance of needs, a theory of motivation must also recognize human emotions as they are integrally related to motivational processes. Emotions
such as anger, love, excitement, and aesthetic pleasure can motivate individuals to behave in certain ways (Deci, 1980). Anderson (1984) stated “Internal motivation is connected to how intense your feelings are about achieving an objective” (p. 92). These descriptions of internal motivation are closely related to the definitions and descriptions of passion. Deci (1980) stated “The two, drives and emotions, must both be included in a theory of motivation, along with intrinsic motivation, if we are to achieve a fuller understanding of human motivation” (p. 49). It is the identification of motivation and passion for FCS education that is of interest in this present study.

**TOTE Model.**

In outlining a theoretical framework for the study of intrinsic motivation, Deci (1980) described the use of a feedback loop which is a “process in which information about one’s current state is continually compared with one’s desired state as a way of keeping one on track” (p. 49). A feedback loop begins with an internal standard of comparison which could be physiological, cognitive or affective. Individuals aim to achieve the standard, so they continue to compare where they are to where they want to be. If there is incongruence between the desired standard and the current state, then individuals continue to strive toward the desired standard. However, if there is congruence, then the behaviors used to reach the standard are terminated. This process was conceptualized as the TOTE unit by Miller and his associates in 1960 (as cited in Deci, 1980). TOTE stands for “Testing one’s state against the standard, Operating if there is a discrepancy, again Testing, and finally Exiting when there is a match between the standard and one’s state of being” (Deci, 1980, p. 49). Deci (1980) explained

In the organismic model of motivation, the motive becomes a standard for the
operation of a TOTE feedback loop. Once a person becomes aware of some potential satisfaction, he or she will engage in behaviors aimed at achieving the satisfaction. Upon reaching the satisfaction, the state of the organism will match the standard (i.e., the motive) and the sequence will end (p. 49).

Intrinsic motivation involves the pursuit toward feeling competent and self-determined. Deci (1980) clarified by stating

The aim of an intrinsic motive is the feeling of competence and self-determination. Thus, intrinsically motivated behaviors begin when stimulus inputs lead to the awareness of potential satisfaction from undertaking some optimal challenge, and they terminate either when the person achieves the feelings of competence and self-determination or when for some reason the sequence is interrupted (p. 48).

People may choose to engage in certain behaviors because of the extrinsic rewards such as money, praise, status, or promotions that are expected as an outcome. Other behaviors may be chosen because “they leave the people feeling competent and self-determining” (Deci, 1980, p. 52). Deci articulated the importance of the competence and self-determination processes stating that it “suggests that the information which people gain about their efficacy can either strengthen or weaken their intrinsic motivation” (Deci, 1980, p. 58). Negative feedback has been shown to diminish one’s sense of competence and self-determination which thereby decreases her intrinsic motivation for a particular activity (Deci, 1980).

For the purposes of this investigation, inquiring into the events that have influenced the participants to choose FCS education as a major might reveal feedback encounters that would have encouraged their competence and determination to pursue the major. My interpretation of the feedback loop is that an individual wants to feel competent or to feel that
she has demonstrated her ability successfully for the activity chosen. Being good at a particular activity becomes part of her identity; being looked upon as competent within her profession or her chosen major provides her with positive feedback that encourages further participation in professional activities. I believe some FCS professionals are intrinsically motivated by their professional practice. Moreover, I believe that individuals desire to feel competent in their professional practice and to feel good about what they do.

Intrinsic motivation: Innateness and the environment.

The concept of intrinsic motivation and the development of an individual are connected. Deci (1980) explained “The very idea of intrinsic motivation implies innateness” and he further assumed that all individuals are born with the intrinsic need for feeling competent and self-determining. Intrinsic motivation is helpful in facilitating the process of human development as infants learn through engagement with stimuli within their environment. However, even though intrinsic motivation is viewed as an integral part of being human, it continues to evolve and change over time and with experiences. For example, one’s intrinsic motivation is strengthened and weakened by experiences of efficacy and inefficacy and by experiences with extrinsic rewards. The strength of one’s intrinsic motivation changes over time and with experiences but the form of her intrinsic motivation also changes. The form of intrinsic motivation is one’s inclination to perform a specific task and considers that some people are intrinsically motivated to perform music while others are intrinsically motivated to succeed in business (Deci, 1980). As children grow, the basic intrinsic need becomes channeled into specific intrinsic needs such as the needs for mastery and achievement and these needs may be connected with specific types of interests such as music or business (Deci, 1980).
The process of the differentiation of intrinsic motivation into specific needs is primarily influenced by one’s innate capacities and environmental experiences (Deci, 1980). The influence of the environment in determining a career refers to the context in which the desire and decision to study a specific field develops (Dupras, Lafond, & Dionne, 2001). Corsini (1999) defined environment as

The sum total of all external phenomena that impinge on organisms. For humans, the environment includes the family and all other people, books and other objects made by other humans, physical geographical elements, natural conditions such as storms, invisible items as germs and viruses, and social, cultural, legal conditions (p. 333).

The environment has a profound impact on one’s skills and abilities as well as on one’s motivation to engage in particular behaviors. The exposure to specific activities provided by parents and the availability of these activities along with the awareness that the significant people in one’s life are involved with them will influence the child’s desires for expressing her capacities for such activities (Deci, 1980). However, Deci (1980) discussed the importance of recognizing that while the environment influences a child’s behaviors, the process through which this occurs is not just a matter of conditioning as suggested by the reinforcement theorists. Instead, a child’s intrinsic motivation, her curiosity, creativity, and novel interest become focused toward specific kinds of activities as a “result of a complex interplay of environment and genes” (Deci, 1980, p. 60). In the investigation of the participants’ motivation for declaring FCS education as a major, family along with environmental influences should be explored because of their suspected influence on the motivation and choice for specific activities by individuals.
In addition to innate capacities and environment, people’s strength and form for their intrinsic needs and motivations have also been affected because they have had different patterns for being rewarded, different histories for successes and failures, different innate capacities, and different childhood experiences. Deci (1980) explained

Children’s interactions with the environment – particularly their record of successes and failures at various types of activities, and the nature of their interactions with their parents – determine the form and level of their intrinsic motivation, through a process in which the general need for being competent and self-determining differentiates into specific needs (p. 61).

Because of these differences, it can be inferred that there are differences among people in their intrinsic motivation, and that there is a meaningful theoretical account of these differences (Deci, 1980).

**Measuring intrinsic motivation.**

Motivation is very broad and therefore a difficult concept to operationalize (Remedios & Boreham, 2004). Usually, the study of individual differences involves using a psychometric device which intends to measure the extent to which people possess some trait of interest (Deci, 1980). Utilizing the measurement perspective as the foundation for studying individual differences, there have been several programs of research which have investigated these different aspects of intrinsic motivation. The need for achievement has received the most attention and is defined as “the tendency to strive for success against some standard of excellence” (Deci, 1980, p. 61). The sensation-seeking approach (as cited in Deci, 1980) to the study of motivation focuses on the concept of optimal stimulation. This approach supports that people seek information that is discrepant from what they already know so that
they can then begin to learn it. However, if the information is too discrepant from what they already know, they will not be interested in learning it because they may lack the competence to learn it. The reverse is also assumed meaning that if the information is too similar to what it is that they already know, and then it will be boring. People are drawn to situations which allow for this optimal discrepancy because of their intrinsic need to maintain psychological incongruity (Deci, 1980). While he never directly wrote about a theory of intrinsic motivation, the ideas of assimilation and accommodation espoused by Piaget’s theory of cognitive development supports this idea of individuals seeking congruency with their environment (Deci, 1975). People are drawn toward situations because of the need to be challenged; but the need to be competent as well as challenged are two vital parts of finding something intrinsically motivating. The Sensation-Seeking Scale (as cited in Deci, 1980) assesses an individual’s need for seeking stimulation. However, the majority of research conducted using this scale has attempted to determine if the scale is useful as a means of predicting whether people will like or dislike and do or not do various behaviors (Deci, 1980).

The origin-pawn variable as discussed by deCharms (as cited in Deci, 1980) is the closest of any of the measured concepts to the general notion of intrinsic motivation.

An origin is a person who is internally motivated, who is not pushed around by others, who seeks his or her own goals and originates his or her own behavior. An origin is active; an origin feels commitment and seeks to be competent … a pawn is a person who is pushed around by external forces, who is used by others to further their ends. If motivated at all, a pawn is motivated primarily by extrinsic controls. An origin … is highly intrinsically motivated and will seek to feel competent and self-
determining by seeking out and attempting to conquer challenges which are optimal for his or her capacities … these encounters will provide the origin with a level of stimulation which is optimal for effective functioning (p. 65).

These different concepts related to intrinsic motivation have been reliably measured using content analyses of thought samples (Deci, 1980). The origin-pawn concept is not a specific need like the need for achievement because there is not a specific class of goals which are the focus of the behaviors, instead “it is a general motivational propensity” (Deci, 1980, p. 66).

In measuring this concept, investigators rate stories on the following points:

- whether there is (1) internal goal setting, (2) behavior which the person himself or herself decided to do, (3) realistic consideration of aspects in the person and the environment which are relevant to the behavior, (4) assumption of personal responsibility as evidenced by determination to carry through the behavior and concern for the effects of the behavior on others, (5) self-confidence and an expectation of succeeding, and (6) internal control of behavior (Deci, 1980, p. 66).

In an effort to incorporate the concept of intrinsic motivation into a broader theory of motivation, Deci (1975) used a cognitive perspective to present a basic outline of a general theory of motivation which incorporates intrinsic motivation. The importance of cognitive processes in motivation assumes that people make choices about what to do by processing information received from the environment or memory. Thus, Deci (1975) further assumed that individuals use information he refers to as “personal knowledge” which includes people’s attitudes, feelings and other internal states that they use to make decisions. Deci (1975) provides a model to explain a cognitive approach to behavior. The model consists of
stimulus inputs, awareness of potential satisfaction, goals or plans, goal directed behavior, and rewards and satisfaction.

The first element, stimulus inputs, can come from the environment, memory, or internal sources. External stimuli are conditions that exist in the environment. An external stimulus can lead a person to recall an event which then serves as a stimulus. A person may remember past situations which serve as stimulus inputs to the current situation. Internal factors include physical responses as well as affective responses. The second element of the model, awareness of potential satisfaction, asserts that the organism’s awareness of how it could be satisfied will provide the energy for setting goals and engaging in behavior (Deci, 1975). The motives provide the energy for the behavior. The motive is the cognitive representation or awareness of the desired end state or potential satisfaction. Deci asserted that drives, which are external, intrinsic motives, and affect, which is concerned with emotions, underlie the awareness of potential satisfaction. Intrinsic motives are the focus of this investigation. Deci (1975) wrote

A person’s intrinsic need for feelings of competence and self-determination makes him aware of potential satisfaction, which, in turn, provides the energy for him to set goals (i.e., to decide what to do) and to behave in such a way as to try to achieve those goals (p. 100).

With intrinsically motivated behavior, the goal will be attained and the behavior will be rewarded but the need will not be reduced. Instead, the need is always present and other goals will be set. The third element in the cognitive model, goal selection, involves the person’s evaluation of the alternatives available to her on the basis of what she is expecting as the desired end state. The fourth element of the model, goal-directed behavior, asserts that people
behave in ways which they expect will lead them to desired goals. Individuals will behave in ways that lead to rewards and the most worthy goals (Deci, 1975). The fifth element in the model is rewards and satisfaction. When a person is rewarded for achieving a goal he will feel satisfied. When considering intrinsic motivation, the rewards relate to the need for feelings of competence and self-determination and the reward is the feeling of satisfaction. According to Deci (1975), “only an achievement of expected satisfaction will dismiss the awareness that energized the sequence” (p. 122). In the case of intrinsic motivation, a person is in continual interaction with the environment and has a continual need for feelings of competence and self-determination (Deci, 1975).

In summary, the model provides an outline for considering the intrinsic motivation of behavior. The stimulus inputs instigate and energize a goal-directed sequence which could be one’s need to satisfy a drive, satisfy the intrinsic need for feelings of competence and self-determination, or increase her positive affect. This awareness causes an individual to establish a goal which she expects to lead to rewards and satisfaction. The goals lead to goal-directed behavior and behaviors lead to the pursuit of extrinsic, intrinsic, or affective rewards which lead to satisfaction. According to Deci (1975), “A sequence may be interrupted at any time that the person’s awareness of potential satisfaction changes” however, he asserted that intrinsically motivated behavior is ongoing and continuous unless interrupted (p. 123). Deci (1980) used the theory of intrinsic motivation to propose that people act in the service of their needs and that it is done in accord with their interpretation of the information available to them. Personal experience is central to interpreting information and it is this personal experience that leads people to perceive stimuli differently. Personal experience attaches meaning to one’s perceptions in terms of what satisfaction is obtainable. Furthermore,
personal experience “influences the selection of behavior since different people have learned different ways of achieving desired outcomes” (Deci, 1980, p. 47).

**Research studies using intrinsic motivation.**

One’s personal experience and interpretation of experience is critical to the discussion of motivation (Deci, 1980). Lewin brought attention to personal experience and interpretation by claiming that a person’s “life space” or internal representational space is the proper reference point for the analysis of behavior (Deci, 1980). However, psychologists have failed to give the concept of “personal experience and interpretation” appropriate consideration (Deci, 1980). Recent research studies, utilizing concepts from the intrinsic motivation theory, have used either quantitative or qualitative measures, and in some instances both, to examine topics such as choice of major (Dupras et al., 2001), motivations for activity engagement among adolescents (Baldwin & Caldwell, 2003), sources of motivation for learning in a hybrid course (Delialioglu, 2004), assessment of teacher candidates’ dispositions (Mullin, 2003), undergraduate college students’ intrinsic motivation to learn and study (Martens & Kirschner, 2004), predictors of intrinsic motivation among students in elective courses (Ferrer-Caja & Weiss, 2002) and the effects of organizational learning initiatives on employee motivation (Remedios & Boreham, 2004).

In addition to required documentation, Mullin (2003) developed a behavioral assessment to administer to all applicants for a university teacher education program. The assessment is in the form of an interview and is designed to provide a formal introduction of applicants to their student teaching program director or department chair. Among the dispositions identified as relevant to becoming a successful teacher candidate were intrinsic motivation and passion for learning. During the interview, the interviewer asks questions that
invite the students to reflect upon and discuss life experiences which dispose them toward practices of effective teaching. The use of this assessment method has been effective in focusing candidates on the dispositions that will help them acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for becoming effective teachers and also recognizing the need for dispositional change (Mullins, 2003).

Delialioglu (2004) investigated the sources of motivation for learning in a hybrid course focusing on computer network topics. Twenty-five students participated in the course and attended face-to-face instruction for one hour per week and participated in web-based activities for at least one hour per week. An interview form was developed and used in the study to reveal the source of the students’ motivation. One-on-one interviews with the students were conducted with responses being recorded and transcribed. The responses of students were categorized into the categories of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Content analysis indicated that intrinsic motivation and internally rewarded learning was the key element of web-based instruction and hybrid courses. Students that were internally motivated were more aware of objectives of the course and had the ability to plan and evaluate their own learning. In contrast, students that were externally motivated were more prone to losing motivation and will to learn easily by external factors. Overall, it was determined that intrinsic motivation plays a more prominent role than extrinsic motivation in the sources of motivation for students participating in a hybrid course.

Marten and Kirschner (2004) examined identified predictors of intrinsic motivation which include perceived control, relatedness, and competence, in different types of education to determine their ability to predict the intrinsic motivation of 251 full-time undergraduate students studying Physiotherapy or Hotel Management at a Dutch polytechnic institute to
learn and study. Four scales were developed and adapted to measure perceived control, perceived competence, perceived relatedness and intrinsic motivation. The predictors were highly correlated and revealed that when students rated one of the constructs negatively, they also rated the others more negatively. A second focus of the investigation was to determine the impact of intrinsic motivation on self-rated study behavior. Students with high intrinsic motivation exhibited a higher degree of effort, perceived the learning materials as being more useful and were inclined to learn more for understanding, tried to apply what they learned to their practice, and discussed the content more with other students. This group also reported feeling less distracted when studying.

The concept of intrinsic motivation has also been used to frame educational strategies. Ginsberg (2005) suggested using a motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching that is built on principles and structures that tend to be meaningful within and across cultures. Learning experiences tend to become intrinsically motivating when the experiences are interesting and of value to students. Ginsberg (2005) stated “These primary sources of motivation reside in all people, across all ethnic and cultural groups. When people can see what they are learning makes sense and is important according to their values and perspectives, their motivation emerges” (pp. 220, 221).

**Career motivation.**

One’s personality is linked to her choice of a vocation as Statt (1994) suggested “Clearly there is a self-selection factor involved in the way people wind up in certain occupations, and this is related to the kind of people they are” (p. 99). There are many theoretical models available to explain how personal dynamics and environmental determinants influence the selection and development of a career (Brown, 2002). Career
motivation can be viewed as a combination of internal and external forces that initiate, direct, and regulate the intensity and persistence of behavior (Dupras et al., 2001).

The concept of intrinsic motivation has been related to one’s choice of a career (Dupras et al., 2001) and employee motivation (Remedios & Boreham, 2004). Dupras et al. used a standardized questionnaire comprised of six sections to ask 120 undergraduate students about their motivations to choose the field of sexology as a profession. The instrument assessed socio-demographic information, students’ intrinsic and extrinsic motives for choosing the program of study, the perceived role of external forces such as parents, professors, and the media, the students’ professional aspirations and their perceptions of sexology’s place in the job market, students’ self-perceptions and values, and personal difficulties experienced by the students. The researchers found that a career choice in sexology is influenced more by intrinsic motives such as helping others, knowledge, autonomy, creativity, and personal growth, rather than the extrinsic motives of power, prestige, or status of the field (Dupras et al., 2001). According to Dupras et al., “The motives most frequently evoked concerned a desire to practice a profession that they feel passionately about and an opportunity to actualize themselves …” (p. 107). However, the feeling of passion towards one’s profession is difficult to articulate through survey rating scales (Dupras et al., 2001).

Nickols (2001) inquired into the motivations of professionals for their continued work in the field of FCS. The results of the investigation revealed that “When asked, “What keeps your Betty Lamp burning?” respondents said making a difference, helping others, experiencing personal fulfillment and being a mentor and role model” (as cited in Nickols & Anderson, 2001, p. 7). Students who are drawn to the field of FCS education may be
influenced by personal and professional motivations that have emotional and cognitive aspects. An intrinsic motive may be the desire to help others while extrinsic motives such as working conditions and anticipated salary may influence the choice of a career (Dupras, et al., 2001). The altruistic motives of practicing FCS professionals have been documented (Mimbs, 2002). One purpose of this study is to identify the motivation and passion for being a FCS educator in undergraduate students majoring in FCS education.

Summary

A synthesis of the literature reveals the issues pertinent to the profession of FCS and the challenges facing FCS education. The previous investigations reviewed pertaining to career choice in FCS have primarily involved quantitative measures. The present study seeks to use the information gleaned from the review of literature to inform this narrative inquiry focusing on the development of passion for the profession of FCS in three undergraduate students majoring in FCS education. Although this literature review was extensive, encompassing many areas, this study seeks to synthesize this literature in the framing of the three purposes. The first purpose of this study is to understand how students identify the FCS education major. In relation to this purpose, literature focusing on the topic of career choice both generally and specifically within FCS was reviewed. Secondly, it is important for FCS professionals to develop a knowledge base in FCS and possess an understanding of its integrative nature if they are to fulfill the mission of the profession. The literature reviewed focusing on the mission and body of knowledge of the profession and the issues and challenges of the profession are related to this second purpose. Examining the theories of motivation and the literature on passion allowed for connections to be drawn between motivation and career choice. Literature on the topic of passion was found within the FCS
profession’s literature base as well as outside of the profession. I believe that passion and motivation are connected and thus lead to the stating of the third purpose to identify the participants’ motivation and passion for being a FCS educator.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The central focus of this investigation was to examine the development of passion for the profession of FCS in three undergraduate students majoring in FCS education. To examine the development of passion, three purposes were stated in hierarchical order. The first purpose was to ascertain an understanding of undergraduate students’ identification with FCS education and their decisions to declare it as a major. The second purpose was to examine the participants’ knowledge of the content with an understanding of the integrative nature of the FCS profession. The third purpose was to identify the participants’ motivation and passion for being a FCS educator.

Research inquiring into the choice of major of home economics students has primarily involved the use of quantitative measures (Abdulkarim, 1988; Agyeman, 1992; Smith, 1995b; Stout et al., 1981). More specifically, research focusing on the shortage of FCS educators, its issues and implications, and the profiles of this population have involved primarily quantitative methods and involved secondary teachers and other FCS professionals as participants (Bartley & Sneed, 2004; Mimbs, 1997; Tripp, 2006; Werhan & Way, 2006). Mimbs (2002) employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to acquire a descriptive account from practicing FCS teachers regarding their views on the teacher shortage and their suggestions for recruitment and retention of this population. At the conclusion of her study, Mimbs (2002) recommended that “More qualitative studies should be conducted as they can provide more authentic understanding and insight as evidenced by this study” (p. 55).

Stout et al. (1998) reported information obtained from a focus group panel consisting of FCS education professionals focusing on the FCS teacher shortage. The group dialogue
occurred at a national meeting of the AAFCS; however, a student’s perspective was missing from the discussion. Stout et al. stated “the qualitative questions that examine the philosophical and ideological factors associated with the supply and demand have received much less attention” (p. 8). The findings revealed by Mimbs (2002) and Stout et al. focused on the input of practicing professionals. As the researcher, I believe that insight provided by students majoring in FCS education will add to the professional body of knowledge in FCS education by providing an understanding of students’ identification with FCS education as a major, their understanding of the knowledge base and integrative nature of the profession, and their passion for being FCS educators.

Because this study sought to discover meaning and promote understanding of a certain phenomenon, a qualitative approach was more appropriate to guide the research investigation than a quantitative approach. Unlike quantitative researchers, qualitative researchers are not interested in predication and control but in understanding (Clandinin, 2007). Qualitative researchers search for answers to inquiries that emphasize how social experience is constructed and given meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Through the use of qualitative methods, investigators strive to “make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 5). The term qualitative suggests a concentration be placed on the processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in the traditional quantitative terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency. Instead, qualitative inquirers “stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 13).
Because passion is a difficult concept to measure and analyze using traditional research methods which often omit the experience of participants, the tenets of the qualitative method of narrative inquiry provided an appropriate framework upon which to conduct this investigation. Because narrative inquiry permits methods for analyzing and understanding stories lived and told it was suitable for this investigation seeking to understand the experience of participants on their journey to developing passion for FCS education. This study comprises the data analysis gleaned from participants’ autobiographical writings, individual interviews, responses to a scenario, a group interview, and field notes. Throughout the research process, I have followed the guidelines for collecting, analyzing, and data management espoused by researchers in the field of qualitative research including Denzin and Lincoln (2003) and Huberman & Miles (2002), and specifically the guidelines for narrative inquiry encouraged by Clandinin (2007) and Clandinin and Connelly (2000). In adhering to the work of these specialists in qualitative research, I have developed useful and practical truths for the field of FCS education.

Theoretical Framework: Narrative Inquiry

As suggested by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), my guiding principle throughout this investigation was to focus on the experiences of the participants and follow where it led. There were multiple reasons for selecting narrative inquiry as the method of inquiry. First, narrative inquiry is the study of experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), and as such it provides a framework for investigating the components of lived experience to reveal new meaning relevant to the topic under investigation. A methodological principle advocated by quantitative tradition is to specify the hypotheses that are to be tested in research. However,
the approach to hypothesizing and planning a study differs with narrative inquiry. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000),

The purposes and what one is exploring and finds puzzling, change as the research progresses. This happens from day to day and week to week, and it happens over the long haul as narratives are retold, puzzles shift, and purposes change (p. 73).

Thus, the research process involved in conducting a narrative inquiry is a continually evolving process as the investigator searches for the meaning of lived experience and allows the process to serve as a guide for informing the next steps in the research process.

A narrative by definition is a story or an account (Webster, 2003). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) conceptualized narrative research, stating:

It is a collaboration between the researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in this same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people’s lives, both individual and social. Simply stated … narrative inquiry is stories lived and told (p. 20).

Based on this conceptualization, the stories shared by participants are central components of narrative inquiry. Narrative inquirers accept the idea that the “story is one of if not the fundamental unit that accounts for human experience” (Clandinin, 2007, p. 4). The stories lived and told by participants are the result of a joining of “social influences on a person’s inner life, on their environment, and their unique personal history” (Clandinin, 2007, p. 41). Because story is central to narrative inquiry, the narrative is embraced as both the method
used for investigation and the phenomena under investigation. When discussing how narrative stories can be used in research, Ellis and Bochner (2003) declared

Evocative stories activate subjectivity and compel emotional response. They long to be used rather than analyzed; to be told and retold rather than theorized and settled; to offer lessons for further conversation rather than undebatable conclusions; and to substitute the companionship of intimate detail for the loneliness of abstracted facts (pp. 217, 218).

The manner in which these evocative stories shared by participants are developed into research text differs from traditional formalistic methods that accompany traditional quantitative methods. Ellis and Bochner (2003) explained the purpose of an evocative narrative text stating that “… the narrative text refuses the impulse to abstract and explain, stressing the journey over the destination, and thus eclipses the scientific illusion of control and mastery” (p. 217).

Through the use of narrative, the journey of constructing meaning through the research process is stressed rather than the outcome. Narrative inquiry provides a research tool for examining hidden components that traditional research methods such as statistical analysis often leave untouched. Unlike statistical research, narrative inquiry offers a situation where a mutual relationship develops between the researcher and the participant. Through the narrative investigation, the researcher learns that people are not a set of isolated theoretical notions, categories or terms. Instead, individuals are complicated, living storied lives on storied landscapes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Conveying the storied lives of the participants is a writing challenge for the researcher. Narrative inquirers need to write about “people, places, and things as becoming rather than being” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.
The task for the writer is not to say that people, places, and things are a particular way but rather they have a narrative history and are moving forward (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). As writers search for ways to convey these stories, attention should be given to voice, signature, form, and the intended audience. Statistical research may be interpreted best by experts trained in reading charts, graphs, and the meanings of numbers. However, narrative inquiry provides a user-friendly format for any audience and the text created from the investigation and analysis can offer substantial information on the research topic.

**The Tensions of Narrative Inquiry and the Grand Narrative**

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative methodology that seeks to understand lived experience. However, narrative does not fit neatly within the boundaries of any single scholarly field (Riessman, 2002). Educational research, often set within the context of other social science research, usually involves a respect for numbers. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and Clandinin (2007) refer to this as the grand narrative. The grand narrative is the most common way to conceive educational research, and it primarily involves theories that could be applied universally, regardless of particular circumstances. Clandinin (2007) stated “The basis of the grand narrative is the careful study and accumulation of facts from which laws are determined” (p. 22). Thorndike, a measurement-oriented psychologist, popularized the idea of a science of education based on the observation and numerical representation of behavior. When this method became the popular and supposedly correct way to view educational studies, it became known as the grand narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The grand narrative is an “unquestioned way of looking at things” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 22).
There are tensions between thinking according to the principles of narrative inquiry and thinking according to the principles supported by the grand narrative. Communicating between those involved in narrative inquiry and researchers trained in and practicing the grand narrative can create confusion and misunderstanding. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), five main tensions between thinking narratively and thinking based on the grand narrative exist including temporality, people, action, certainty, and context. A central characteristic of narrative thinking is temporality which refers to a state of being. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) stated

> When we see an event, we think of it not as a thing happening at that moment but as an expression of something happening over time. Any event, or thing, has a past, a present as it appears to us, and an implied future (p. 29).

The notion of temporality influences seeing things in time versus the grand narrative approach of seeing things as they exist thus removing the idea of time. The second tension at the boundaries of thinking narratively and thinking in terms of the grand narrative involves people. The tension involving the view of people is similar to that of temporality.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) stated “We take for granted that people, at any point in time, are in a process of personal change and that from an educational point of view, it is important to be able to narrate the person in terms of the process” (p. 30). In contrast to this view lies the view of the grand narrative which leads to the construction of people-free notions. In the narrative view, the narrative history of respondents is important to informing the past, present, and future.

The third tension described by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) is centered on how action is understood. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) stated “In narrative thinking, an action
is seen as a narrative sign” (p. 30). The narrative sign must be interpreted before meaning can be attached to it. Without understanding the narrative history of the respondent, the meaning of the sign remains unknown. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) emphasized the importance of narrative histories: “In narrative thinking ... there is an interpretative pathway between action and meaning mapped out in terms of narrative histories” (p. 31).

The fourth tension is centered on certainty; when thinking narratively, certainty means that “interpretations of events can always be otherwise” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 31). In the narrative perspective, one is doing her best to interpret an event’s meaning, knowing that other interpretations and ways of explaining things are possible. This differs from the grand narrative in which causality and its accompanying certainty are distinguishing characteristics.

Context is the fifth tension at the boundaries of narrative thinking and the grand narrative. Context, always present in narrative thinking, includes temporal context, spatial context, and the context of other people (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Context is necessary for making sense of any person, event, or thing. In the grand narrative, context is acknowledged but often studies are viewed and interpreted in a context-free manner. In narrative thinking, the person in context is of prime interest whereas in the grand narrative approach the universal case is of most interest (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). A reflection of these five tensions between the boundaries of narrative inquiry and the grand narrative was necessary before beginning the investigation. This reflection allowed me to position myself in the research process understanding my goal as an inquirer using the narrative approach rather than a formalistic approach supported by the grand narrative.
As a researcher with more experience using quantitative methods than qualitative methods, I felt it was necessary for me to reflect on the differences between the grand narrative and narrative inquiry to develop a deeper understanding of the methodology that I was going to use to study the lived experience of three participants majoring in FCS education. Considering the tension of temporality, I began to visualize the participants and the events they were sharing as occurring throughout time, their lived histories that brought them to this major and the future events that would continue to impact their development of passion for the profession of FCS in the future. Considering the concepts of temporality and people allowed me to view the development of passion as a process occurring within the participants prior to, during, and continuing after this investigation.

Before I could attach meaning to what the participants shared, I needed to contemplate the third tension and understand the narrative history of the respondents. This prompted me to inquire into the lived experience of the participants by first asking them to share their life history in a written autobiography. Understanding her past to value where the participant was in the process of developing passion, was a necessary step as part of the procedure to construct meaning in this narrative inquiry which differed from the quantitative, formalistic approaches of which I was more familiar. Being aware that other interpretations to explain events were possible, was a significant point for me as a narrative inquirer to comprehend. This allowed me to understand and distinguish between conducting research to construct meaning and conducting research to make generalizable claims. By considering how context differed between thinking narratively and thinking according to the grand narrative, I was allowed to reflect upon how the context in which significant events occurred had affected the development of passion for the FCS profession within the participants.
Specifically, I was able to consider how events within the contexts of family, school, and community had impacted each participant’s specific journey to FCS education. Although each approach has its strengths, a reflection of the differences between the tensions of thinking narratively and the grand narrative allowed me to realize that the tenets of narrative inquiry were more suitable for use in the present investigation because my goal was to construct meaning of the participants’ lived experience of developing passion for the FCS profession. This goal necessitated that I consider the participants’ lived histories, visualize them in the process of developing passion, and consider them within contexts significant to their development of passion.

The Place of Theory in Narrative Inquiry

Considering the tensions between narrative research and research grounded in the principles of the grand narrative, led to realizing the differences required in the cognitive approach to conducting a narrative inquiry versus a formalistic inquiry. When conducting qualitative research, the investigator should approach the field with an open mind. In investigations using traditional quantitative methods, “formalists begin their inquiry in theory whereas narrative inquirers tend to begin with experience as expressed in lived and told stories” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 40). Theory has a confusing and ambiguous role in the place of practice where inquiry occurs. Things that are often seen clearly prior to fieldwork as being researchable or interpretable using theoretical terms become less clear and precise during the field experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

As the researcher, I found this to hold truth as I conducted this narrative investigation. I began conducting the review of literature prior to crystallizing the topic of investigation. As I conducted an inclusive review of the literature, the goal of the research investigation
continually developed. In developing this research inquiry, theory was used to guide my thought processes. However, I realized that during the initial stages of the research process I was searching for a theory that would allow me to frame the overall goal, statement of the three purposes, and that would provide direction regarding procedures and instruments to use for the collection of data. In doing so, I discovered that I was keeping with the formalist tradition. Once I became clear on the goal of the investigation, I considered a methodology that would be suitable for this research inquiry. Using narrative inquiry as the method of investigation required a reconsideration of the place of theory in this study.

As supported by the aforementioned statement by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), I needed to begin the research investigation with the experiences shared by participants at the research site. Through the process of this investigation, the themes that emerged did lend themselves to similarities between the literature reviewed on the topic of passion and with the theory of intrinsic motivation. However, I was not forced to view the findings through any particular lens. Instead, narrative inquiry allowed a format which fostered the emergence of themes through the process of inductive reasoning and permitted the consideration of these themes in relation to theories reviewed.

In addition to the ambiguous role of theory in narrative inquiry, there is also tension about the place and use of the literature review. One method for the use of the literature review in a narrative inquiry advocated by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) is to “weave the literature through the dissertation from beginning to end in an attempt to create a seamless link between the theory and the practice embodied in the inquiry” (p. 41). For the purposes of this investigation, the theory along with the literature reviewed served not as a structuring framework, as in formalistic approaches, but rather a “kind of conversation between theory
and life or, at least between theory and the stories of life contained in the inquiry” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 41). Although the review of literature was inclusive, I did not frame the study using a particular theory. Instead, the method of narrative inquiry was used to structure the study allowing me to compare what participants said to theories and information reviewed in the literature. The theories that have been reviewed, particularly the theory of intrinsic motivation, along with the experiences of the participants and researcher, provided a guide for research (Postholm, 2005). The method of narrative inquiry allowed for attention to be focused on the personal experience of participants majoring in FCS education.

**Generalizability**

The ability to make generalizations based on research findings has long been viewed as a strength of quantitative research methods. Clandinin (2007) described some of the differences between quantitative methods and practices and narrative inquiry as four turns toward narrative. The first turn toward narrative involves the relationship of the researcher to the researched. In this movement, the researcher moves away from the objectivity defined by the positivistic, realist perspective and moves toward research focused on interpretation and the understanding of meaning. During a narrative inquiry, investigators recognize that the researcher and the researched are in relationship with each other and both will learn and transform in the encounter.

The second turn toward narrative described by Clandinin (2007) involves transitioning from the use of numbers as data to the use of words as data. This turn toward narrative does not mean that there is a rejection of numbers but recognition that in translating experience to numeric codes researchers lose the ability to express the subtle variations of experience and relationships in a particular setting.
When researchers make the third turn toward narrative, of focusing on the particular rather than the general, it signals their understanding the value of a distinctive experience in a particular setting involving particular people (Clandinin, 2007). The narrative inquiry method allows for focus on the personal experience of participants and is one of the reasons this particular method was selected for this investigation. However, there is increasing interest in the ability to generalize in the qualitative tradition. Maxwell (2002) referred to generalizability as “the extent to which one can extend the account of a particular situation or population to other persons, times, or settings than those directly studied” (p. 52). There are two aspects of generalizability in the qualitative research tradition. Maxwell described the two aspects as “Generalizing within the community, group or institution studied to persons, events, and settings that were not directly observed or interviewed; and generalizing to other communities, groups, or other institutions” (p. 53). Guba and Lincoln, two leading researchers in qualitative methodology, have reconceptualized the concept of generalizability and replaced it with that of “fittingness” (Schofield, 2002). Guba and Lincoln argue:

that the concept of “fittingness” with its emphasis on analyzing the degree to which the situation studied matches other situations in which one is interested, provides a more realistic and workable way of thinking about the generalizability of research results than do more classical approaches (Schofield, 2002, p. 178).

Goetz and LeCompte place similar emphasis on the importance of providing clear and detailed descriptions as a means of allowing decisions about the extent to which findings from one study are applicable to other situations (Schofield, 2002). Goetz and LeCompte asserted that qualitative studies gain their potential for applicability to other situations by providing what they call “comparability” and “translatability” (Schofield, 2002).
Comparability refers to the degree to which the elements of the study including the units of analysis, concepts produced, population characteristics, and settings are well depicted and defined so that other inquirers may use the results of the study as a basis for comparison. Translatability refers to a clear description of one’s theoretical stance and research techniques (Schofield, 2002). However, thick descriptions of the site where studies are conducted and of the site where one wishes to generalize are vital in allowing one to search for similarities and differences between research situations (Schofield, 2002).

There is consensus in the qualitative research community that “generalizability in the sense of producing laws that apply universally is not a useful standard or goal for any kind of qualitative research” (Schofield, 2002, p. 179). Instead, the contribution of a narrative inquiry is intended to be the construction of a new sense of meaning and importance regarding the research topic. This differs from the formalistic tradition where the contribution is to bring about a set of knowledge claims that might add new information to the field (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Readers test the generalizability of a story as they determine if it speaks to them about their own experience or the experience of those they know. Readers also judge if a story informs them about unfamiliar people or lives (Ellis & Bochner, 2003). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) asserted that texts are judged to be important “when they become literary texts to be read by others not so much for the knowledge they contain but for the vicarious testing of life possibilities by readers of the research that they permit” (p. 42). It is not the goal of the narrative inquirer to prescribe general applications and uses. Instead, the narrative inquirer should create texts that, “when well done, offer readers a place to imagine their own uses and applications” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 42).
The fourth turn toward narrative described by Clandinin (2007) is the blurring of knowing, which means that inquirers turn from one way of knowing the world to understanding that there are multiple ways of knowing and understanding human experiences. The blurring of knowing can lead to establishing findings through authenticity, resonance, or trustworthiness. For this investigation, narrative inquiry provides a research tool for investigating the lived experience and hidden components that traditional quantitative research methods may have left untouched. As participants shared their stories, a new sense of meaning and significance was added to the field of FCS education. In addition, I made the four turns toward narrative by creating a relationship with the participants focused on understanding meaning, using words as data instead of numbers, focusing on the particular rather than the general, and understanding that there are multiple ways to comprehend and appreciate human experiences.

**Validity and Triangulation**

Qualitative research is multi-method in focus and forms around assumptions about interpretation and human action (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). It does not have a distinguishable set of methods or practices completely its own as Denzin and Lincoln (2003) point out “Qualitative researchers use semiotics, narrative, content, discourse, archival and phonemic analysis, even statistics, tables, graphs, and numbers” (p. 10). The use of numbers is not the only difference between quantitative and qualitative researchers because both might use numbers to report and explain findings. When considering differences between quantitative and qualitative methods, the above discussion of the reconceptualization of generalizability was necessary as is a discussion of validity and triangulation of data. The terms generalizability, reliability, and validity are not the language of narrative inquiry but rather
the language of other forms of research. The traditional view of external validity is of little help to qualitative researchers. Riessman (2002) further supported this idea by stating “traditional notions of reliability simply do not apply to narrative studies, and validity must be radically reconceptualized” (p. 258). Validation is the process through which researchers make claims for the trustworthiness of their interpretations. Maxwell (2002) asserted that “understanding is a more fundamental concept for qualitative research than validity” (p. 39).

When conducting qualitative analysis, the use of triangulation is one way to ensure a thorough understanding of the research topic. Triangulation is the use of multiple methods in an endeavor to secure a thorough understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The most significant advantage offered by using many sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry through a procedure of triangulation. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) stated “Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation” (p. 8). The concept and process of triangulation provides a rationale for using multiple sources of evidence when conducting a narrative inquiry. The incorporation of multiple sources into an investigation substantially increases the quality of a qualitative study (Yin, 2003). The multiple sources of evidence used in this narrative inquiry included participant autobiographies, individual interviews, participant responses to a scenario, and a group interview. Triangulation of these methods added “rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 8) to the inquiry.

**The Research Process**

**Participant Selection**

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for this investigation. Purposive sampling is based on informational considerations and is designed to maximize the
acquisition of information. Representative sampling is not a requirement for this type of study (Maxwell, 2002). Three undergraduate students majoring in FCS education, a joint degree program between the FCS unit and education unit at a large university located in the southeastern United States, comprised the participant pool. The FCS unit at the university is accredited by the AAFCS. I was most interested in the views of seniors as they would be near the completion of their programs of study and would have completed the common core of classes required by the AAFCS accreditation program.

To be selected for participation, the respondent had to be a female, a senior majoring in FCS education and have demonstrated characteristics that reflected leadership, academic ability, and a passion or enthusiasm for her chosen major. These characteristics had to be evident to faculty and staff advisors working within the units. The assistant director of student services for the FCS unit was the primary individual asked to identify others whom she believed met the criteria and who would be willing and able to express their identification with FCS education, their knowledge of FCS, and their motivation and passion for selecting a major in FCS education.

The Office of Student Services is the administrative area that manages degree and graduation information for each student within the FCS unit. Because the assistant director of student services serves as the advisor to all students at their initial declaration of a major within the unit, she is familiar with the student body. In addition to providing academic advising, she also serves as an assistant in the orientation course required of all majors within the unit and as the advisor to the student organization of the AAFCS. The assistant director of student services verified the names of possible participants with the FCS teacher educator within the education unit. I received approval from the Institutional Review Board at Iowa
State University (Appendix A) to conduct the study. I followed the correct protocol to obtain approval to conduct the study at the selected research site. After receiving approval from both institutions, initial contact with potential participants was made by telephone. I briefly described the study, procedures, and amount of time required of all participants. Individuals who agreed to participate were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix B) permitting use of her autobiographical writings, information gleaned in the individual interview, written response to the scenario, and information from the group interview in the research findings.

**Data Collection**

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) encouraged multiple collection methods to uncover and reveal true meaning. To reveal the experiences leading to participants’ identification with FCS education, their understanding of the knowledge base and the integrative focus of the profession, and their passion for FCS education, several strategies for collecting participants’ stories were used. These strategies included participant autobiographical writings, individual interviews, a response to a scenario, and a group conversation. Once participants were selected for this research inquiry, detailed autobiographies were obtained first and were used to inform the structure of the individual interviews. At the end of the individual interviews, participants were given a scenario describing the personal trials of a young celebrity presently permeating the media. The trials focused on the celebrity’s reported poor parenting practices, abuse of drugs and alcohol, mismanagement of financial resources, and self-esteem issues. Participants were encouraged to consider how the trials encountered by this young celebrity could affect the public, particularly middle and high school students who are exposed to this coverage. Participants were instructed to respond to five questions related to
the situation presented in the scenario using FCS knowledge and skills. The last phase of data collection involved a face-to-face group conversation with all participants.

**Participants’ autobiographical writings.**

Learning about the participants as individuals is an important first step in the inquiry process; thus participant autobiographical writings were the foundation upon which further inquiry was built. The purpose of collecting autobiographical writings as the initial data collection step was to facilitate an understanding of when participants identified with FCS education as a major. Understanding the participants’ identification with the major was the first purpose of this research inquiry. Therefore, for the first phase of data collection, the participants were asked to write an autobiographical account of their lives and include information relevant to their childhood and family life, how they selected FCS education as a major, and their career and personal aspirations.

Riessman (2002) stated that “Events become meaningful because of their placement in a narrative” (p. 231). Heeding this advice, I analyzed how the participant had chosen to organize her life events and which events she chose to convey in her writing. The autobiographical writings revealed important influences that shaped participants’ lives and influenced their journey to FCS education. Obtaining the autobiographical writings and analyzing them prior to the individual interview, allowed me to approach the interview with more clarity and understanding of each participant. Through careful analysis of each participant’s autobiographical writings, questions were formulated that guided the next step of my research inquiry, the individual interview.
Participant individual interviews.

After reading and analyzing each autobiography, I conducted an individual interview with each participant. The guidance offered by qualitative researchers provided practical instruction for preparing and conducting an interview that would yield useful data for this inquiry. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) described the interview as “a conversation, the art of asking questions and listening. It is not a neutral tool, for at least two people create the reality of the interview situation” (p. 48). Maxwell (2002) claimed that the interview is a social situation and involves a relationship between the researcher and respondent. During an interview, the actions of the interviewer including the questions posed and responses of the interviewer can shape the relationship between the researcher and respondent. This interaction can influence the ways participants respond and give accounts of their experiences.

The interview serves as a research tool for the inquirer and it can take different forms. Three primary interview forms exist: structured, unstructured, and open-ended. For a narrative inquiry, the open-ended interview serves as an appropriate structure. In reference to conducting qualitative research, Silverman (2003) stated, “the open-ended interview apparently offers the opportunity for an authentic gaze into the soul of another, or even for a politically correct dialogue in which researcher and researched offer mutual understanding and support” (p. 343). The individual interviews conducted during this investigation were open-ended and consisted of questions formulated based on the information shared in participants’ autobiographies.

Riessman (2002) encouraged the development of an interview guide with five to seven broad questions about the topic of inquiry, with the broad questions supplemented by
probe questions in case the respondent has difficulty getting started. Although the interview itself was open-ended, I followed the advice of Riessman (2002) and created an interview guide for each participant containing broad questions geared toward uncovering her journey to FCS education. The questions on the guide probed for more in-depth information regarding the experiences shared in her autobiography such as her family background, desire to be a teacher, declaration of the major, experiences as a major in FCS education, and her goals as an FCS educator. A less structured interview format was beneficial as I engaged in developing meaning with the respondents. Reissman (2002) supported this view, stating that “Interviews are conversations in which both participants—teller and listener/questioner—develop meaning together, a stance requiring interview practices that give considerable freedom to both” (p. 248). With the approach to interviewing focused on the co-construction of meaning, listeners have the ability to clarify uncertainties by asking follow-up questions. Therefore, the answers that are given are able to continually inform the evolving conversation (Riessman, 2002). During the interview, the answers provided by respondents did serve to continually inform the conversation thus providing an opportunity for the construction of meaningful data that could be used in this inquiry.

In addition to the relationship of the researcher to the researched, the condition in which the interview occurs also shapes the interview. Interview conditions that can affect the interview include the place, the time of day, and the degree of formality established by the researcher and respondent (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The individual interviews were conducted in a conference room within the FCS unit on the university campus where the participants attended. Participants corresponded with me to determine an agreeable time for their interviews. Each individual interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. I was given
permission by each of the respondents to audiotape-record the interview. The group interview was held within the education unit on the university campus at a mutually agreeable time for all participants. It also lasted approximately 90 minutes. Besides the interview conditions, the personal characteristics of the interviewer such as race, class, ethnicity, and gender, can also influence the dynamics of the interview (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). I found this to be true as I began this research. I did not enter this study knowing these young women. However, we shared the culture of having attended the same university for our undergraduate education pursuing a major in FCS education. All of the participants had been raised in the South as I had. Another similarity was our common racial, gender, and class backgrounds. Our shared experiences helped to increase my understanding of their lived experiences as I listened to their stories.

**Response to a scenario.**

The second purpose of this investigation was to examine the participants’ knowledge of the content with an understanding of the integrative nature of the FCS profession. Careful planning was needed to find a method for collecting data that did not elicit a textbook definition from participants when providing evidence of their knowledge and their explanation of the integrative nature of the FCS profession. There are a variety of methods to collect data in a written format when using narrative inquiry. For example, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) described the use of stories, autobiographical writings, journal writings, field notes, documents, and letters. Because narrative inquiry allows for the analysis of a variety of types of written documentation, I developed a scenario in which participants were instructed to provide a written response using the knowledge of FCS to respond in a constructive manner to the situation presented in the scenario. Headlines focusing on the
struggles of a young celebrity that had permeated the media within the past year were used to develop the scenario. The headlines brought attention to the celebrity’s personal struggles involving her family, personal finances, lifestyle, and self-esteem.

Participants identified the major elements of the situation presented in the scenario, examined the possible effects and consequences on the audience, and reflected on what could be done about the problem presented in the scenario. Participants explained how middle school and high school students may encounter a similar situation, and articulated how FCS classes could be utilized to help students facing similar situations. Finally, participants discussed how FCS education and educators could be utilized to aid in the prevention of similar situations. How participants responded revealed their understanding of how the different content areas comprising FCS could be used together to assist in solving practical problems encountered by individuals and families in society. While the use of a scenario was not listed as a specific method by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), a scenario is a writing exercise providing documentation to be analyzed to ascertain the cognitive understanding of participants in relation to purpose two of this research inquiry. While the scenario was the designated method to use to collect data pertaining to the second purpose of the study, participants’ understanding of the knowledge base of FCS and their understanding of the integrative nature of the profession were also revealed by their responses given in the individual interviews and group interview.

*Group interview.*

The overall goal of this study was to examine the development of passion in three undergraduate students majoring in FCS education. Three purposes of the study were stated in hierarchal order. The third purpose of this inquiry was to identify each participant’s
motivation and passion for becoming a FCS educator. The purpose of the final data collection method, the group interview, was to focus specifically on the topic of passion. A guide was developed by the researcher for the group interview (Appendix C). By the time the group interview occurred, the respondents and researcher had discussed the participants’ identification with FCS education and the events surrounding their decision to declare it as a major. The participants had also constructed their responses to the contemporary scenario. The group interview provided a forum for further inquiry into the participants’ understanding of passion and an examination of the passion they held for FCS education.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) referred to the group interview as a conversation describing group conversations as “… marked by equality among participants and by flexibility to allow participants to establish forms and topics appropriate to their group inquiry” (p. 109). To initiate the conversation on the topic of passion, each participant was asked to provide her definition of passion. I provided definitions of passion found within the literature. After passion was defined, I presented quotes about passion found in the FCS literature and literature on passion and allowed the respondents to dialogue about the meaning of the quote. During the group interview, participants were also presented with a hypothetical situation in which they were told to think of themselves as practicing teachers. They were informed that FCS courses were being eliminated from middle schools and high schools all over the United States. They were asked to respond to this situation considering three questions: (1) what do you think?, (2) how do you feel?, and (3) what would you do?
Data Analysis

Managing participants’ stories.

The goal of narrative analysis is to “try to interpret the possible meanings of the narrative” (Esterberg, 2002, p. 195). The different data collection methods used in this investigation provided a wealth of information pertaining to the research topic. However, careful management of the data was important to the goal of developing a useful narrative inquiry examining the development of passion for the FCS profession in three undergraduate students majoring in FCS education. I realized the importance of an organized system of gathering, storing, and retrieving documents significant to this inquiry. All documents applying to this study are organized in file folders containing research articles, Institutional Review Board documents, participant autobiographies, transcriptions of the group and individual interviews, and written responses to the scenario.

The analysis of all data is also organized into file folders. The folders containing these documents are stored in file cabinets at my home office and also electronically on my home computer. As I began the individual interviews and conducted the group interview, cassette tapes were labeled, transcribed, and stored in my home office. To ensure confidentiality, each participant was assigned a pseudonym that was used consistently in data analysis and report findings. To protect the identities of participants, I changed or deleted any identifying information recorded in the transcriptions and later used in the research findings.

Moving from field texts to research texts.

The process of moving from data collected in field texts to research texts is complex. Prior to focusing on what to do with the field texts, I had to know what information was available. A narrative inquirer spends a vast amount of time reading field texts to provide a
chronicled and summarized account of the information contained in the texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Accurate and complete documentation in the field was critical to yielding thorough field texts that could be transformed into a research text. As I analyzed the participant autobiographies, I made notes to aid in my analysis that would help frame broad questions to be used in the individual interview. The individual interviews were documented with a cassette recorder. Immediately following each interview, I composed field notes to cue my memory of the interview situation including the environment, the image of the respondent, and the emotions displayed.

I transcribed the group and individual interviews. Riessman (2002) advised beginning qualitative researchers to start with a first draft of the entire interview including words and other features of the conversation such as crying and long pauses and then retranscribe selected portions for a more detailed analysis. I followed this advice, recording pauses, emphasis on words and phrases, and displays of emotions by participants such as laughing and crying that occurred during the interview. I inserted notes in the transcriptions to inform me of the pauses and the types of emotions exhibited by respondents such as crying or laughing. Initial themes began to emerge during the transcription and as I listened to the recorded interview a second time. Immediately after I completed each transcription, I developed a list of the emerging themes and topics that appeared to be prominent as I transcribed each interview. I later used this initial list to assist me in developing more categories that ultimately led to the generation of the research themes presented.

Once transcriptions were completed and I had made an initial list of prominent topics and themes that had emerged for each participant, a more thorough coding for themes, concepts, beliefs, and behaviors was necessary. I recorded field notes in the margins as I
conducted an initial analysis of the transcriptions of the group and individual interviews and the written responses to the scenario. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), “names of characters that appear in field texts, places where actions and events occurred, story lines that interweave and interconnect, gaps or silences that become apparent, tensions that emerge, and continuities and discontinuities that appear are all possible codes” (p. 131). A more thorough coding of the documents involved rereading all of the field texts and sorting them in an organized manner with notes of characters involved and topics discussed. According to Silverman (2003),

Coding is the heart and soul of whole-text analysis. Coding forces the researcher to make judgments about the meanings of contiguous blocks of text. The fundamental tasks associated with coding are sampling, identifying themes, building codebooks, marking texts, constructing models (relationships among codes), and testing these models against empirical data (p. 274).

The act of coding is an inductive process allowing the researcher to organize data into themes. Themes can be influenced by a variety of sources including the review of literature containing professional themes and definitions, the researcher’s values and experiences, general theoretical orientations, and the characteristics of the phenomenon under investigation (Silverman, 2003). Usually, researchers induce themes from the text using multiple methods for the induction process. These methods can include line-by-line reading of the text searching for processes, actions, assumptions, and consequences or looking for metaphors, word repetition, and shifts in content (Silverman, 2003). Once themes, concepts, beliefs or behaviors have been identified, the next step is to identify how they are connected to each other.
When conducting analysis of field text, Riessman (2002) explained that “The challenge is to identify similarities across the moments into an aggregate, a summation” (p. 226). After the initial reading of the autobiographies, I reread them and used “open coding” to identify themes and relationships (Esterberg, 2002, p. 158). I followed the instructions of Esterberg (2002), writing codes in red ink in the margins of the documents. While completing this step, I allowed themes to emerge and documented anything that came to mind as I read. I followed the same procedure in analyzing the individual interview transcriptions. After writing in the margins, I used the track changes feature in Microsoft Word to insert the open codes and interpretative comments into the autobiographies and interview transcriptions. This procedure, referred to by Esterberg (2002) as creating analytic memos, permitted me to later make connections between the narratives provided by participants from their autobiographies, individual interviews, responses to the scenario, and the group interview. Although software is available to aid in analyzing qualitative data, I adhered to the advice administered by Esterberg (2002) for beginning researchers and chose to use a word processing program for my analysis. When using a software program for qualitative data analysis, the researcher must enter the data in a form the program can use. Therefore, the researcher must know what she wants to do with data before using a qualitative data analysis program (Esterberg, 2002). Qualitative researchers work with words and rely on their own judgment which cannot be completely mechanized (Esterberg, 2002). According to Esterberg (2002) “Many qualitative researchers find that a basic word processing program works fine” (p. 156).

In developing the analytic memos, I focused on what was important in the data and included my ideas and guesses as to what I should be thinking. I was able to draw on these
memos when writing the findings of the inquiry. After coding and interpreting the data in this manner, I sent each participant a copy of her autobiography and individual interview transcription which included my coding and interpretations as a member check to verify the data, analyses, and interpretations (Riessman, 2002). I asked participants to make any corrections, clarify responses, and determine if my comments and interpretations were consistent with their own meaning-making.

After the initial coding of the autobiographies and interview transcriptions had been verified by the participants, I began to more thoroughly develop overall themes. During this process, I used the initial list of themes and topics I developed after completing the interview transcriptions and the additional categories that emerged during the open coding process to sort sections of the transcriptions into seemingly appropriate categories by using the cut and paste feature in Microsoft Word. I saved these categories with the corresponding sections of the analyzed interview transcriptions and autobiographies in a new document for each participant. To gain more clarity about emerging themes, I printed each document, cut it, and sorted it into piles based on similarities and commonalities appearing in the data for each participant (Esterberg, 2002). This process allowed me to see which categories had the most data and which pieces of the transcriptions had I used repeatedly in multiple categories.

The next step involved the process of focused coding (Esterberg, 2002). In this process, I reduced the number of categories identified during the previous analysis processes by grouping the slips of the documents containing similarities into more focused categories. For example, for Sara, I reduced the categories from 35 to 13; for Lisa, I reduced from 42 to 15; and for Amy, I reduced the categories from 18 to 11. I saved the newly reduced categories for each participant in a file and typed analytic memos for the rationale of the
organization. I kept procedural memos, a practice suggested by Esterberg (2002), to help me remember how I completed the coding. The number of categories that emerged varied for each participant. This was contributed to the nature of each individual interview, the personality of the participant, the experiences she chose to share in her autobiography and interview, and the manner in which she communicated her lived experiences.

After receiving the responses to the written scenarios and transcribing the group interview, I followed the same procedure for the process of open coding. I began by writing codes in the margins of the documents. As before when completing this step on the autobiographies and individual interviews, I allowed themes to emerge and documented anything that came to mind as I read. After writing in the margins, I used the track changes feature in Microsoft Word to insert the open codes and interpretative comments into the typed scenario responses and the transcription of the group interview. The process of focused coding allowed for the emergence of repeating categories.

Using the analyzed and coded data from the autobiographies, individual interviews, responses to the scenario, and group interview, I developed a list of overall themes that emerged from repeating categories across all forms of data from all respondents during the research process. The responses to the questions I was asking throughout the research and data analysis process pertaining to meaning and social significance shaped the field texts into research texts. The research text that was developed with interpretations and analysis was sent to the participants for a final member check.

**Summary**

By using narrative as the mode of inquiry, I was able to ground this research in a methodology that allowed for exploration into the lived experience of three undergraduate
students majoring in FCS education. This exploration permitted the construction of meaning and understanding for both me and the participants. Narrative inquiry provided a framework for use in developing data collection methods and analysis procedures that yielded useful data and findings relevant to the research topic.
CHAPTER 4

THE JOURNEY TO FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES EDUCATION

The goal of this study was to examine the development of passion for the FCS profession in three undergraduate students majoring in FCS education. To examine the development of passion, three purposes have been stated in a hierarchal order with the assumption that the process of developing passion for FCS proceeds in a hierarchal manner. The first purpose was to ascertain an understanding of undergraduate students’ identification with FCS education and their decisions to declare it as a major. The second purpose was to examine the participants’ knowledge of the content with an understanding of the integrative nature of the FCS profession. The third purpose was to identify the participants’ motivation and passion for being a FCS educator. If one has identified with the major, become knowledgeable of the content and knowledge base of FCS, then an intense passion for FCS education may develop. This passion may be the motivating force which will propel her to carry out the mission of FCS as a committed FCS educator.

Each of the three participants met the criteria identified for involvement in the study. This chapter focuses on the first purpose of the study which was to ascertain an understanding of the participants’ identification with and decision to choose FCS education as a major. A profile of each participant was included in chapter one. This chapter begins with a more in-depth examination into the lives and personalities of the researcher and participants by using their own autobiographical writings to tell their stories. A major portion of this chapter contains the words that the respondents used as they reveal their journey toward identifying FCS education as a field of study and their decisions to declare it as a major.
Autobiographical Roots of My Inquiry: The Developing of a Passionate Professional

Narrative inquirers are in the midst of a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space and within this space they are always located along the “dimensions of time, place, the personal, and the social” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 144). Because it allows one to position herself in the midst of this three-dimensional inquiry space, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) encourage researchers and authors of narrative inquiry texts to write an autobiography so that they are informed of their place within the research. They explained “Narrative inquiry characteristically begins with the researcher’s autobiographically oriented narrative associated with the research puzzle” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 41). As the researcher seeking to study the development of passion, I reflected on my journey toward FCS education, including the development of my own passion, and wrote my autobiography. I did this activity prior to going to the field and obtaining data from the participants so that I might be informed of my place in the research process and my own feelings and identifications with my respondents’ experiences.

Because my mother was a home economics teacher, my journey to FCS education began early in my childhood. Although her job was very demanding requiring her to serve the multiple roles of teacher, advisor to the Future Homemakers of America (FHA), and chair of the home economics department, I remember it being very active and engaging. She included my older brother and me in as many FHA activities as she could. Some of the most vivid memories I have are those of attending the State FFA/FHA Camp beginning at the age of three. I remember the club members taking me to the swimming pool, braiding my hair, taking me to the dances, and helping my make crafts at the craft hut. I remember “Mama Jane,” the legendary home economics teacher at the county high school, being extremely
competitive waking everyone early each morning and insisting that they clean the cabin from floor to ceiling so that they could win the coveted “cabin check” award. For as long as I can remember, Mama Jane has exuded passion for FCS. She lives her commitment to the profession on a daily basis and I believe that few have more passion for the field than she. My mother and Mama Jane served as my first role models of FCS professionals and they continue in that role today.

It was in middle school that I began to really develop my own personality and move into directions that interested me the most. For me, middle school was a time when I was expanding my circle of friends as I moved from the elementary school to the larger middle school. The FHA organization did not have a chapter at the middle school level, so I became active in the Y Club and served as president during my seventh grade year. In 8th grade, I moved to the junior high where I became a cheerleader and remained active in the Y Club. I joined FHA and attended club meetings but I did not assume leadership within the organization or become extremely involved in club projects. While in junior high, I did not take home economics courses, instead I took choir and an agriculture course which thrilled my father, a farmer and agriculture teacher. During the spring of my 10th grade year, I was encouraged by the District Y Club Coordinator to run for the position of District President. This was a coveted position and one that was often thought unattainable because another area high school had dominated the position for several years. I was somewhat intimidated realizing the competition but because I had been encouraged to run, I thought I would go for it. My mom, my best friend, and my neighbor, who was my Y Club Advisor at the junior high and high school, helped me write my speech and get ready for the election. I delivered an excellent speech and campaigned whole-heartedly. However, I lost the election. I was
devastated, but I had tried my best. When looking back on this experience, I realize had I
won that election, I probably would have remained very devoted to and involved with the Y
Club pursuing more involvement at the state and national level. As a result of losing the
election, I lost some interest in the Y Club. I don’t know if decreasing my involvement was
the reaction of a sore loser, but I now realize it was necessary in paving a path for my future
career. It also taught me what it feels like to lose. Instead of pursuing involvement in the Y
Club, I chose to get more involved with FHA.

As a sophomore in high school, I participated in many club events and I began taking
FCS classes with Mama Jane being my first official FCS teacher. I thoroughly enjoyed my
coursework but I still didn’t consider the possibility of a career in FCS. During my senior
year, I remember sitting on the floor during one of my FCS classes listening to a college
ambassador from the state land-grant university. The student was an alumnus of my high
school where she had been extremely involved in FHA and served as a state officer. She was
now a senior in college majoring in FCS education. I listened to her describe the many career
opportunities in FCS. I don’t know that I had ever listened that intently to a guest speaker.
Something just clicked that day and I decided I was majoring in FCS. I remember
enthusiastically telling my mother about all the career opportunities in FCS that this student
had just shared with my class, as if she didn’t know and had probably tried to tell me before,
but somehow this speech from this student was different. It was a defining moment in my
personal and professional life. My mother was very excited about my decision! She had
never tried to influence my decision regarding what type of career I should choose.

The next decision I had before me was deciding which college to attend the following
year. I had originally considered attending a regional university about an hour away, before
transferring to the land-grant university to major in journalism. With my new desire to major in an area of FCS, a smaller two-year junior college located about 40 minutes from my hometown was the more appropriate choice for me because it had a FCS program. I was already aware of this particular college as both of my parents attended the college and had fond memories of their experiences there. It was the influence of my FCS teacher during my senior year which helped to solidify my decision to attend the junior college because she took my FCS class to the college’s Open Campus Day.

I embraced experiences at the junior college assuming many leadership roles and making many connections and life-long friends. During my freshmen year, I became a college ambassador and assumed a leadership role within the FCS Club. I enjoyed the courses and activities in FCS. After taking a foods and nutrition course and being inspired by the instructor, I decided that I would major in dietetics. I graduated from the junior college in June of 1998 and transferred to the land-grant university the following August. It was at orientation that I met the Assistant Director of Student Services in the FCS unit at the land-grant university. She served as the initial academic advisor for all incoming students majoring in FCS. She explained the list of courses I would need to take as a dietetics major.

While at the junior college, I had a horrible experience in a chemistry course. When I saw how many more chemistry courses I would need to complete a degree in dietetics, I started to rethink that career choice. I remember looking at my mom and saying “I think I am more of a people person and I think education will be a better fit for me.” She laughed and said “I think education would be good for you.” The assistant director advised me on the courses I needed as a major in FCS education. As I was leaving, I asked her if she needed a student worker in her office, she said “yes” and gave me the number to call in order to begin working in the
Office of Student Services in the fall. Little did I know how pivotal this job would be to my future career and the formation of life-long friendships.

I thoroughly enjoyed working in the Office of Student Services. I assisted students and professors, learned about managing student records, and became knowledgeable about transfer issues students encountered when moving from one institution to another. I loved the content of the FCS courses and I enjoyed sharing my new information with family and friends. I wanted everyone to be as excited about FCS as me. After thinking about what I wanted to do and where I wanted to be, I informed the assistant director that I was going to go back to the junior college and become the FCS instructor, club advisor, and academic advisor. When I began college, I knew that just getting my bachelor’s degree was not going to be enough; I was going to have to go straight through and get my master’s degree. With the goal of becoming an instructor at the junior college, a master’s degree in FCS education would not be enough; I would need 18 graduate content hours in FCS courses to meet the requirements set forth by the accrediting agency. Therefore, I would need to take additional courses as part of my master’s program. I viewed the additional work as just part of the process necessary to getting where I wanted to be and I enjoyed the content.

My collegiate experience was full of honors and accomplishments and I was named Outstanding Student of the Year for the FCS unit during my senior year. I graduated in May of 2000 and returned in August to begin working on my master’s degree. I worked as a Graduate Assistant for two professors in the department of Occupational Studies at the land-grant university. I took the required courses for the MEd program and the additional content courses in FCS. During the fall of 2001, my major professor and mentor helped me to complete the project required for my master’s degree and publish an article. It was also
during this time that I had applied for the position of Instructor of FCS at the junior college I
had attended. In December, I attended the Association for Career and Technical Education in
New Orleans and presented my research in a poster session. At this conference, Iowa State
University was promoting the FCS Education Leadership Academy which was to begin in
July 2002. My major professor picked up a brochure and said that I should work for two
years and then begin this doctoral program. At that moment a seed was planted and the
thought of obtaining a PhD remained with me. It was at this conference that I received the
phone call from an administrator at the junior college offering me the position as the
Instructor of FCS. That spring was filled with excitement, challenge, and changes. I began
the job in January 2002 and married my husband in May 2002.

Although I was excited to have the job I had desired for several years, I had no idea
of what I was getting into. As a student at the college, I didn’t realize that the FCS instructor
was responsible for teaching 17 courses over a two-year rotating schedule. I worked day and
night trying to prepare for the 5 different course preparations that I was responsible for my
first semester. The FCS club increased its activity as I encouraged the students to be more
active on the campus, state, and national levels. As I was learning my responsibilities, the
thoughts of pursuing higher education were still with me. My husband was supportive and
encouraged me to investigate opportunities to pursue an advanced degree. At the AAFCS
Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. in 2003, I spoke with Dr. Beverly Kruempel about
pursuing a PhD in the FCS Education Leadership Academy at Iowa State University. It had
been almost two years since I had first learned about the program and I decided to begin the
program in July 2004.
As I have pursued my doctoral degree, I have been pondering how a student comes to choose a major in FCS, specifically FCS education. My interest in this area developed into three questions beginning with how she comes to identify the major, the development of her knowledge and understanding of the content and integrative nature of the profession, and then finally her motivation and passion for being a FCS educator. The answers to these questions are embedded in the stories of the research participants. The next part of the chapter contains the autobiographical writings of the participants and is written in first person to help the reader place himself or herself inside the lives of each participant.

**Participant Autobiographies**

**Sara**

My mom and dad met at a [University] football game many years ago. My dad graduated from [University] and had season tickets to the football games. One particular game, he had an extra ticket and was looking for someone else to tag along. My parents were both from the same town in [state] and a mutual acquaintance introduced them knowing my mom was a huge [University] football fan. They attended the game together and the rest is history … not really.

My parents were at very different stages of their lives. My mom was 17 when they married and my dad was 29. I was their only daughter and they divorced when I was five. It was a friendly divorce, and they continued to be friends and work together at raising me. Many of my teachers were shocked to discover that my parents were divorced since I did not follow the typical stereotype of children of divorced parents. They both always attended PTA programs and conferences, and there was never any evidence of a broken home. My mom remarried when I was seven. My stepdad has one daughter—a year younger than me—who
lived with her mother at the time. A few years later after my stepdad and mom married, my sister was born. She was everything I had ever wanted. Being the only child, I wanted a little sister or brother so badly. I have pretty much raised her over the years and especially during the summers. She is probably my best friend even though she is ten years younger than me.

My dad remarried when I was 15. His wife has two daughters—one is a year older than me and the other is five years older than me. We are not very close because we only see each other every one or two months. They are both teachers now in elementary and middle school.

I lived with my mother all through my school years. I grew up in [county] and always made straight A’s and was a high achiever. I loved arts and crafts and throwing parties. My mom and grandmother taught me to cook. My grandmother has a catering business that she runs in her spare time. During high school, I was responsible for cooking dinner one night out of the week. I also had to maintain the house and was expected to have the common areas clean whenever my mom returned home from work. My mom and I have a really strange relationship. We are really close, but in some ways we are not close at all. She has had a hard life and is very depressed at times. Sometimes I feel like I have to walk on egg shells around her, and many times I do the things I do solely to make her happy. I know her ultimate goal in life is for me to be happy, and I try to keep that in mind. It’s difficult to make my own decisions when I am more concerned with making decisions that she will be pleased with instead of me. I always wanted her to be a stay-at-home mom like my friends’ moms, but we were stretched financially and she had to work.

I grew up taking ballet and other dance classes, but stopped when I reached my junior year in high school. At that point I realized I had very few friends at school and no one really
knew me because I spent very little time doing anything besides dancing. I quit and began athletic training for our football team and also joined yearbook. Senior year I was really into yearbook, and I took on the role as editor-n-chief. I loved layout and design, and I really wanted to go into graphic design in college. After finding out that I got into [college name], my parents practically made my college decision for me. I declared advertising as my major as freshman and was eager to get involved in the [journalism unit]. After that school changed the entrance requirements for admission, I was set back a semester from entering into the program. I had to take other courses and electives to fill up my empty block. I took a few education classes, food and nutrition, as well as child and family development. I finally got into [journalism unit] my fall semester of my junior year.

How did I get where I am now? That is the interesting part of my adventure. I never had the desire to become a teacher. I am not one of those students that knew he/she were going to be a teacher all their lives. I have however, surrounded myself throughout high school and college helping out in the school atmosphere. I performed over 120 community service hours at a local elementary school when I was a senior in high school, and I have been working in the After-School Program at [local elementary school] for the past three years. You can imagine the surprise on people’s faces when they found out my major was advertising. After just one year as a journalism student, I began to feel like my personality was not like that of my fellow classmates. They were much more competitive and cut-throat than I turned out to be. While they were building their resumes with internships and other experiences, I was baking cookies and sewing Roman shades for my mom’s dining room. I tried getting involved in Ad Club and the on-campus agency, but it became more and more
apparent that this was not the lifestyle for me. As my fondness for family, cooking, sewing, and decorating developed, I began questioning my future in advertising.

While at work last fall, I spoke to a fellow teacher on the playground about my major. She asked me what I wanted to do with it and similar questions that I was asking myself the last couple of months. I explained to her my confusion. When she found out I could sew, she offered to pay me to make some school uniform jumpers for her daughter. Then out of nowhere, she said, “Have you ever thought about becoming a Home Economics teacher?” Why didn’t I think of that? Finally, something that made sense and I would enjoy. I went straight home and began researching the idea and weighing the possibilities. The next morning, I gave the idea the “mom test.” Curious of how she would react, I told her my new idea. She cried happily. I always could tell that she was weary about advertising and I, but she said the idea of me becoming a FACS teacher made more sense to her than anything in the world. To be honest, that was all I needed to hear to set my mind to it.

I made an appointment with the FACS Education advisor and told her my situation. I basically said, I have four semesters to squeeze in this major, is it possible? She plugged in a few things and replaced a few things and said, “I will make it possible.” Everything fit like a puzzle; I held my breath that each class would work out and that none of them would overlap any of my advertising requirements, and somehow it worked! I had to take two independent study courses and go to school all summer long, but it worked!

How did I get my third major? Well, during summer school, a friend realized that my advertising and FACS Ed major had to come close to meeting the requirements for consumer journalism. I researched it later that night, and my friend was right. I was one class short. I spoke to [advisor] and she agreed and told me to talk to [professor]. The one class was an
equal to another course I had already taken in [journalism unit] so I needed them to override
the course. [Professor] agreed to do so and here I am three majors later. I would still have
only one major if it were not for my advisors. They are amazing and I love all of them!
Honestly, ever since my first [FCS] class, I have done nothing but fall more and more in love
with the FACS College. If I could stay, I would add another major in housing, but my daddy
says I have to graduate.

Lisa

My name is [name], and I am a senior at the [University]. I was raised in an amazing
family, which was headed by my mother and father. Also, I am the youngest of my siblings,
my sister is 30 and my brother is 28. Both of my siblings are married and have children, so I
am not just enjoying being a sibling and a daughter, but I also am enjoying being an aunt.

When I was little, I always knew that I wanted to be teacher. When I would come
home from school, I used to play school in my room or in the basement at my house. All
little kids probably played school, but I took it to another level. I had a grade book, a class
roll, and even a pretend overhead. I would sit in my classroom and play for hours and hours,
and if you were to ask my mom, she would tell you that she always knew that I would be a
teacher when I grew up.

As I started getting older and growing out of the playing stages, I began actually
working with children. I would help out with VBS at my church and go on mission trips in an
effort to teach children the word of God. Another way that I would prepare for my calling
was that when I was in high school I would help my fellow classmates understand material
that they were shaky on and tutor some classmates also. My senior year of high school I took
a class that was titled Teacher Cadet, which taught me about some of the great education
philosophers and theories. This class also gave me a chance for my first real internship in a classroom. I was placed in a first grade classroom, in which I was the teacher’s helper. This class was the defining point of my career decision, after just a few days in the class, I knew that my calling in life was to be teacher, and at this point in my life I thought it was to be an elementary school teacher.

After I graduated high school, I continued working with kids and just trying to help people that were in need. The summer after I graduated I worked at a summer camp and was the head counselor over the middle school aged kids. This was the first time that I had ever been in charge of this age of children, and it began my thought process about their being other educational careers, such as middle and high school education.

Once I came to [college], I began the process of becoming an early childhood education teacher. As a student I would say that I was ill advised in terms of the classes to take. As a freshman I was taking classes that were a little too hard for a freshman to take, but I did not know any better. Needless to say, I made a few C’s in some of my core classes and when it came time for me to consider applying for the early childhood education program I knew that I would more than likely be rejected even though my GPA was still good. I applied anyways, and fall of my junior year I got a letter of rejection for the [education unit] based on my GPA. At this point I was crushed, and had no idea what to do or what my options were. I was taking a graduate level course concerning childhood literature and expressed my frustration with the [education unit] with a fellow student who was in graduate school. It was definitely meant for me to take this class and meet her because she is the reason why I am a FACS major today. She explained that she was in the same place as me a few years before and stumbled across the FACS program. She told me all about the program and who to talk
to and who to not talk to. That day was one of the best days that I had had at the University in regard to classes and my education, and I went home and started looking into FACS. The more I learned about the program through the Internet, the more I was drawn to it, and once I had met with [teacher educator] I knew that this was the major for me.

I never knew that there was such an amazing major that encompassed so many of the important life skills that all people need to know. After declaring this my major, I have only grown more passionate about our purpose as FACS educators; however, this has been influenced by some of my amazing professors and [practicum teacher’s name], my practicum teacher. I just hope that as an educator that I can be as inspiring and encouraging as all of these ladies have been to me.

Amy

My name is [name]. I was born on Sept. 11, 1985. I was raised in [City, State] and attended [name] Elementary, Middle, and High School. I am 22 years old and have two siblings; an older sister and a younger brother. This summer my sister was married so I have a new brother-in-law. My parents are still married and raised me in a strong Christian home. I plan to graduate from the [University] with a degree in Family and Consumer Sciences Education in May of 2008.

Since I was in about second grade I have always wanted to be a teacher. I grew up playing with a cousin who is three weeks younger than me, and a younger brother. We always played school and I always had to be the teacher. Although this has always been a dream of mine I was never sure what age group or subject I wanted to teach until high school.
My family and consumer sciences teacher in high school was [teacher’s name]. [She] has come to be one of my favorite teachers throughout my educational experience. She is incredibly nice, fun-loving, but also knows how to control a classroom. Her class taught me so many life skills that I would have never learned otherwise. When talking to her one day I told her that I was interested in teaching but I was not sure what subject. She then explained to me how she loves her job because she teaches elective classes that students ask to be in. Students are in her class because they want to be there. She has fun with them and it makes her experience as a teacher that much more enjoyable. After I had this conversation with her the idea of teaching family and consumer sciences has stuck.

Not only did [she] have a huge impact on my decision to be a family and consumer sciences educator but the relativity of the subject on our lives had an impact as well. I feel that the area of family and consumer sciences is something that can be beneficial to every student no matter what they chose to do with their future. Family and consumer sciences introduces life skills that every student needs to know no matter what profession they choose. This subject will always have an impact on students’ lives and their futures and as an educator impacting my students will be my main goal.

This next spring semester I plan to student teach at [school] in [county]. I am very excited about this and can’t wait to begin my career as a family and consumer sciences educator. I hope to eventually get a masters degree in either workforce education or special education. I have even considered eventually going on to get my doctorate and possibly teaching at the college level in the future.
Journey to Family and Consumer Sciences Education

The information obtained from the participants’ autobiographical writings informed the questions asked of each participant during her individual interview. The first purpose of the study was to develop an understanding of undergraduate students’ identification with FCS education and their decisions to declare it as a major. Information pertaining to this purpose was revealed most thoroughly from the participants’ autobiographical writings and comments shared during the individual interviews. The culmination of information disclosed by the participants regarding this purpose focused on their journey to FCS education. Categories that emerged from examining the participants’ journey included pivotal moments in the journey to declaring a major in FCS education, their first exposure to FCS, their experiences with academic advising and instruction during college, family background and influences, and their feelings regarding God’s plan for their life.

Pivotal Moments in the Journey

This researcher believes that identifying a student’s point of identification with the major of FCS education is a critical component in addressing the shortage of students enrolled in FCS teacher preparation programs. By listening to the experiences of students who have journeyed to finding the major of FCS education, professionals in secondary and post-secondary settings can critically examine and consider the implications of the information shared. In this section, participants reflected on the pivotal experiences, encounters and conversations that were influential in their decision to choose FCS education as a major. In her autobiography, Sara revealed that she never had the desire to become a teacher. However, she had been involved in experiences in educational environments serving as a community volunteer while in high school and then working a part-time job in the after-
school program while in college. Sara reflected on her own experiences as a child in the after-school program:

Well, I grew up in the after school program when I was little. And um, I loved being with my friends … I always remember when I was in after school looking at the ASP teachers and being like that would be a fun job. Like, even though that was a long time ago, like I kind of always remember that in the back of my head and I kind of like, my younger sister, whenever I was in high school I would pick her up from ASP everyday too and going back and seeing the people that worked there kind of refreshed that memory.

Sara’s memory of her time spent as a child in the after-school program is refreshed when she began to pick up her younger sister in the afternoons. She discussed how she came to have a part-time job while in college at the local after-school program:

… I just met a girl in my sorority who told me about how she works at this job and she loves it. And it was perfect hours; she got off for the holidays. She didn’t have to worry about asking off because they were already off and um, she was like, “I think they are looking for new people” and so I just went and applied and I got it and it just worked out perfectly …

Each participant recalled a defining moment that culminated in the decision to declare FCS education as a major. Although Sara didn’t realize it, her experiences of volunteering and working in an educational environment were part of her journey to selecting a major in the field of education. Her defining moment occurred on the playground of an elementary school while working in the after-school program. Sara recalled the encounter in her autobiography:
While at work last fall, I spoke to a fellow teacher on the playground about my major. She asked me what I wanted to do with it and similar questions that I was asking myself the last couple of months. I explained to her my confusion. When she found out I could sew, she offered to pay me to make some school uniform jumpers for her daughter. Then out of no where, she said, “Have you ever thought about becoming a Home Economics teacher?” Why didn’t I think of that? Finally, something that made sense and I would enjoy.

This encounter with the elementary school teacher on the playground changed Sara’s life and her plans for her future career. The teacher listened to Sara discuss her confusion about what she wanted to do with the rest of her life but the teacher also listened to what Sara enjoyed doing. Through this dialogue the teacher was able to identify a major for Sara, one that would combine her interests of working with children, foods, and clothing into a career. This conversation was especially important for Sara as she was unaware of the existence of FCS education as a major. During the interview, Sara elaborated on the conversation she wrote about in her autobiography:

I was talking to her about it and she was asking me what I was interested in and she is like “Well have you ever thought about teaching Home Ec?” and I was like “No!” and then when she said that I was like, “I didn’t even know you could major in that here, like seriously?”

When asked to describe her feelings the moment she realized the significance of this revelation, Sara did so with enthusiasm:

I was excited! ... when she said it I felt like I was finally defined …. I mean everybody gets to college and they are like I don’t know what I want to do … I had
all of these interests … and I had grown up seeing my mom work in a job that she
hates and that has kind of always been a challenge for me because I am like, I want a
job that I love. And I know that a lot of people work in jobs that they don’t like and
just seeing my mom unhappy all of the time and um, I didn’t want that for myself. I
knew it would be a challenge to find something that I love but um, when she finally,
when that teacher was like, “yea, have you ever thought about doing that?” like I said,
I honestly felt like I was defined and like, I realized finally like, yea that there was
something that I can do that combines all of the things that I love and kids and like, it
honestly, doors opened at that moment and I couldn’t wait to get home. I like ran
home that afternoon and went onto the [University] website to pull up the bulletin to
see what I had to do to get it done and who I needed to talk to. And I emailed people
that night, like it was bam, bam right after I found out.

Sara was well on her way to completing a degree in advertising, but she was struggling
internally with this choice. Sara had many areas of interests that she wrote about in her
autobiography but she didn’t know how to combine those interests into a career that she
could enjoy and find fulfillment. In this part of the narrative, Sara revealed how finding out
about the major in FCS education defined her. As I listened to her describe this moment, I
heard the relief in her voice over finding something that she identified with and that defined
her as a person. Sara emphasized that she wanted a job that she loved especially after
watching her mother work in a job that did not bring her much happiness. She realized that a
major in FCS education would allow her to put her “loves” together into one career area. The
eagerness was in her voice as she described her efforts to begin researching the requirements
of the major and the process she needed to go through in order to declare it as her major. She elaborated on her search for information:

I just went to the [University] website and I think I, I don’t remember how I got to it, I don’t think I typed in home ec education. I think I did type in family and consumer sciences. And um, somehow, I don’t really remember how I got to it but somehow, I got to it …

After the conversation with the teacher in the after-school program in which she learned about the major in FCS education, Sara wrote in her autobiography, “Finally something that made sense and that I would enjoy.” When asked what it was about FCS education that made sense, Sara responded:

That is just my personality. That is who I am. My friends … in the recent years they have always been like yea, “[Her name] is going to be the homemaker.” All of my friends call me soccer mom and like I love kids …. I don’t know just being with the kids and being able to teach people how to bake, like whenever I was at home with my sister over the summer that is what we would do, we baked. We baked cookies and we made things and I grew up making dinner like a couple of nights a week for my family. I always loved doing things like that, I just never thought I could make a career of teaching other people how to do things like that … My roommates now, we, I have lived with three different sets of roommates, just because I have stayed at the same apartment every year and everybody else has moved either graduated or something … but consistently I have lived with one girl and she adores my cooking, she, like all of my friends kind of do. I know that sounds full of myself but its, one of my friends she always comes over and she is like “I feel like I come home when I
come over here because it is more like a home atmosphere” and she was like
“…Tuesday nights are my favorite night of the week cause it feels like I am going
to home … cause I can come here and have a dinner, like a homemade dinner and I can
come here and sit in the living room and talk and it is just more comforting.” I just
feel like people need that, they need to feel at home ...

As stated in the review of literature, “personal identity is directly related to
professional identity” (Mimbs, 2002, pp. 48 & 49). In this part of the narrative, Sara
identified herself with FCS education as she made the defining statement of “That is who I
am.” Sara enjoys the identity that her friends have given her for being able to create a home-
like atmosphere and she places importance on people’s need to feel at home. Sara’s
comments supported the statement made by Anderson (1984), “You must have a genuine
appreciation of your individuality if you’re going to make an impact on your life and on
those around you” (p. 60). Bolles (2001) wrote that it was pivotal for one to identify her
uniqueness if she was going to pursue a career which brings meaning and self-fulfillment.
Sara’s friends have identified her as having a set of qualities and abilities that make her
unique. Through her actions of creating a place for them to gather, preparing healthy meals,
and providing time for conversation and relationship building, Sara is attempting to help her
friends improve their quality of life. These are the very things she wants to be able to
communicate to her students as a FCS educator.

Unlike Sara, Lisa did know from the time she was a young child that she wanted to be
a teacher, she just didn’t know what subject she wanted to teach. Lisa wrote vividly about her
memories of wanting to be a teacher:
When I was little, I always knew that I wanted to be a teacher. When I would come home from school, I used to play school in my room or the basement at my house. All little kids probably played school, but I took it to another level. I had a grade book, a class roll, and even a pretend overhead. I would sit in my classroom and play for hours and hours, and if you were to ask my mom, she would tell you that she always knew that I would be a teacher when I grew up.

During her senior year of high school, Lisa took a class that allowed her to work as an intern in an elementary school classroom. The experiences she had as a student in the class were instrumental in solidifying Lisa’s decision to become a teacher. She recalled the defining moment that affirmed her decision to become an educator:

I taught a kid how to read. It was just like so amazing that actually sitting there working with them and putting time and energy into them and then you see that! It was amazing! So, that was definitely the defining point when he was reading a book by the end of the time that I was in there and yea, it was a short book but it was a book nonetheless.

Lisa had a clear recollection of the child:

He was the bad kid so that was even more of an accomplishment. He was the kid that was always moving around, he never wanted to sit still and the teacher always had such a hard time with, which is one reason she kind of gave him to me because he was a difficult kid to work with and even now when I go into the classroom those are the ones that I pick out.

As Lisa described the moment of teaching the child to read, she became very emotional. The intense emotion that this story brought forth in her stayed with her throughout her interview.
While this event was a pivotal moment in confirming Lisa’s decision to become a teacher, she was not settled on what subject matter she wanted to teach. She started her college career as a major in early childhood education. However, she became extremely frustrated after spending time at the university and not getting admitted to the early childhood education program. She discussed this frustration with a fellow student in one of her classes who pointed her towards FCS education:

… it was a girl, it was in an [education] class which was an education class for um, mainly graduates that were teachers … where they read a book and then they go back and analyze the book and why it would be good in the classroom and everything. And the girl was in the master’s program in that, but she got her undergrad in FACS Ed and she just told me all about it and told me about how she really enjoyed it. And so I went home and I just started looking up everything seeing what there was on the Internet and I just looked over the course content and loved it!... I have always been a very crafty person and really liked to cook and sew and do all those things and so as soon as I found out about it, I knew that it was right.

Both Lisa and Sara spoke with others regarding their frustrations and anxieties over their initial majors. During these conversations, they were each informed about the major in FCS education. Lisa also immediately began researching the requirements for the major and she emphasized the fact that she “loved” it, referring to the course content that she found associated with FCS education. Like Sara, Lisa identified quickly with areas that have been traditionally associated with FCS and knew she had always had an interest in those areas. Referring to the student that introduced her to FCS education, Lisa wrote in her autobiography, “She is the reason why I am a FACS major today.” When asked what she
remembered about that critical conversation, Lisa stated “… I think the biggest thing was maybe her conversation and being like “There is something else out there.” She described how she felt the day after the conversation:

Oh! It was like “Oh, my gosh! There is a place for me here at the University!” Cause it was right after I found out that I wasn’t accepted. It was like, I have spent three years here to do nothing, like I don’t have a degree, I’m not on my way to a degree, um, I’m just kind of stuck. And I didn’t get into the program and so after I talked to her it was just like, it was, a new door had been opened … I was meant to talk to her that day…

As Lisa recalled the feelings she experienced the day after the student introduced her to FCS education, she become filled with emotion. She was frustrated by the dead-end journey she had been on in pursuit of a degree in early childhood education. Sounds of frustration and desperation could be heard in her voice but then the sounds of relief were also heard and accompanied by tears signaling the intense emotions she felt and that she continued to experience as she elaborated on finding FCS education. Lisa and Sara commented on the possibilities that they were opened to once they decided to pursue FCS education, both using the analogy of doors opening at the moment they became aware of FCS. When asked what she began to feel as she researched the major in FCS education, Lisa enthusiastically exclaimed:

I was like “This is the perfect major for me!” It’s crafty and it’s, you know all the things that I love! I love, like helping people with, I love helping people and I love cooking and I love doing all kinds of artsy craftsy activities and um you know and I am very into healthy foods and things like that and so, it was just kind of everything
that I really enjoy doing and learning about encompassed into one major and it was just like, it was just amazing! It was the one thing I had been looking for, for so long and kind of felt like I was settling for this or for that and before I had talked to the girl in my [education] class, I was looking into English education and I’m like “I don’t like English. I’m not good at grammar, anything like that.” I couldn’t tell a kid what a pronoun was, I mean I can, but I am not very good at that stuff. Then I was like “Well, I guess I can do music education.” And I started looking into that and then I’m like “Well, I don’t know how to play any instruments.” And so it was kind of like before I had met with her or we had that conversation, I was like ping-ponging around different things and it was, nothing was the right thing for me. Nothing was the right fit. And then she told me about it and I went and I started looking and it was just, it was great! It was the perfect fit for me.

Lisa articulated her love for the areas encompassed by FCS. Like Sara, Lisa also described the major as a “perfect fit” for her. On her journey to FCS education, Lisa felt as if she were bouncing around different ideas but nothing was the right fit. Like Sara, Lisa needed someone to put together her loves into a career area for her. After being pointed toward FCS education and upon researching the major Sara and Lisa fell in love with the content of FCS.

Amy also went on a journey to FCS education. She recalled wanting to be a teacher from the time she was a young child. She wrote about her memories of playing school in her autobiography:

Since I was in about second grade I have always wanted to be a teacher. I grew up playing with a cousin who is three weeks younger than me, and a younger brother. We always played school and I always had to be the teacher. Although this has
always been a dream of mine I was never sure what age group or subject I wanted to teach until high school.

For Amy, the decision to become a FCS teacher occurred in high school. While enrolled in a foods and nutrition course during her sophomore year, she had an important conversation with her FCS teacher that led to her decision:

I was in the kitchen in her classroom and we were making biscuits that day and I just remember talking to her about her job and how much she loved it and I was like “I think that’s what I want to do.” Ever since then, it’s what I’ve stuck with …

The influence of high school FCS teachers on a student’s decision to major in FCS education was documented in Smith’s (1995c) study which supported that home economics education majors were highly influenced by their high school home economics teachers and county 4-H agents. This influence was also documented in Nickols (2001) study in which many of the participants commented that they were in the profession because of a home economist that inspired them. For Amy, her FCS teacher in high school demonstrated a passion and enthusiasm that influenced her decision to become a FCS teacher.

Each of the participants remembered the pivotal moment of learning about and deciding to become a FCS teacher, sharply recalling the details of the event. Both Lisa and Amy desired to become teachers from the time they were young children; however neither knew which subject matter they would teach until later. While Amy realized by her sophomore year of high school that she wanted to be a FCS teacher, Sara and Lisa arrived at the decision later in their college careers. All participants had a person along their journey that was instrumental in pointing them towards FCS education. As discussed in the review of literature, one’s sense of identity can be a critical element in the choice of a career with many
decisions regarding the choice of career being made during adolescence. A career tends to be a reflection of one’s self and a presentation of one’s abilities and personality (Hoeflin et al., 1987). Using a guidance or career counselor is a recommended strategy for secondary students to utilize in investigating their own skills, interests, job possibilities, and post-secondary options. However, due to large workloads, guidance counselors may not be aware of all the options available in each job market nor have the time to really get to know students (Bittner, 2003). Seeking feedback and advice of parents, coworkers, and friends can help one discover his or her passion because others, especially loved ones, may see what brings out one’s passion (Bittner, 2003). Each participant went through a process of identifying her interests and abilities. This supports Statt’s (1994) claim that during the teenage years, the kinds of abilities that people possess are evident and also how these abilities register for the job market. For Sara and Lisa it took someone else pointing out how they could use their abilities in a career. While the topic of identity formation has its own literature base unique to its own inquiries, it should be noted that each participant had to identify the major of FCS education and in doing so reflected on her own identity formation in regard to her interests, abilities, beliefs, and values and the relation of each of these to the major. Ironically, each respondent had an experience with FCS during middle school.

First Exposure to Family and Consumer Sciences

When asked about the course she took in middle school, Sara referred to it as “home ec” and described the experience:

I loved the class! Like, I enjoyed it. We had to make bean bags and that is all I really remember. I remember kind of being disappointed ‘cause we didn’t actually get to cook and like it was more like we watched her bake cookies and we didn’t get to do
anything like that … but watching her bake the cookies and making the bean bags
that is all I remember.
Sara recalled the activities of the class and even emphasized that she loved it. However, Sara
experienced disappointment based on what she expected from the class. She recalled
watching the teacher bake but Sara wanted to be an active participant and actually bake the
cookies herself. This was the only FCS course Sara was enrolled in until college. She
provided rationale for why she didn’t take a FCS course in high school, stating that “I
couldn’t take it in high school ‘cause like just because if you are on the college prep program,
you just don’t have the time to take those electives.” Even though Sara did not take any more
FCS courses after middle school, she still enjoyed the content and activities traditionally
associated with the area of FCS. She wrote in her autobiography about her “fondness for
family, cooking, sewing, and decorating” and how her fondness for these areas grew while
she was in college pursuing a major in advertising. As her fondness for these areas increased,
she began to question if the major in advertising was right for her. However, when asked if
she had considered using her areas of interest for a career, she responded: “I didn’t know I
could use those areas as a career. Honestly … I never felt like I was informed that there were
so many careers that I could take … in that.” Sara’s comments support Bittner’s (2003) claim
that building a career around one’s passions involves identifying what one loves and
considering jobs that may develop out of that passion. Sara discussed being unaware of
possible careers in FCS with a certain amount of amazement in her voice. She didn’t know
that her “loves” could be used for a career. She contributed this lack of knowledge to not
taking FCS in high school:
I didn’t take family and consumer sciences in high school … just the one class in middle school and like, besides that most of my classes were taken up with either yearbook, cause yearbook took a block and we only had, we were on block scheduling so we only had four classes a day and the other three were my core classes. So I didn’t have time to explore anything and whenever I did those career survey things online, it never pointed me in any type of direction like this. But I mean if I went back and took them it might be different.

While in high school, Sara investigated career options by using available career instruments but these devices did not point her in the direction of FCS education. In addition to not taking FCS courses in high school, Sara was also not involved with the subject area’s co-curricular organization, Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA). Sara elaborated on the effects of not being involved: “I don’t think my high school even had FCCLA, but had I had the opportunity to take family and consumer sciences and gotten involved in FCCLA, honestly, I definitely think I would have gotten here faster.” In this part of the narrative, Sara speculated that if she had gotten more involved in FCCLA and taken FCS in high school that she might have arrived at the decision to major in FCS education at an earlier point.

When Lisa was asked about her middle school experience, she stated:

I took, um, home ec in middle school in like the seventh grade and that was the last time I had taken it. And I really didn’t like my home ec class because it was an older lady and all she did was lecture about measuring and that just really stuck out in my mind and it wasn’t a whole lot of fun at the time so it wasn’t something that I wanted to take again because of that one teacher.
Lisa discussed her first encounter with FCS remembering the lecture about measuring and the lack of fun experienced in the class. This first exposure to FCS did nothing to stimulate an ongoing interest in Lisa. In this depiction, the role of a teacher becomes poignantly important in stimulating interest and enthusiasm for FCS. Both Sara and Lisa refer to their first class in FCS as “home ec.”

Amy had a similar middle school experience as Sara and Lisa. She stated:

It was probably when I was in middle school. We had um exploratory classes is what they were called and every nine weeks we rotated and my first class was um just like general family and consumer sciences at the middle school with um, her name was uh, [teacher’s name] … I remember doing fashion and sewing and always wanting to cook and um, she said that we were too young to cook and she was afraid that we would like burn down the school or something so we always just like um, we sewed like needlepoint and stuff like that. That’s the main thing I remember.

When asked if her middle school experience planted any seeds for her to pursue FCS education as a future career, Amy responded:

No … I don’t really feel like the teacher that I had was that excited about it. We did a lot of book work in middle school and didn’t get to really do a lot of the hands on stuff that we did in high school.

These middle school experiences recalled by the participants were instrumental in shaping their early impressions of FCS. All three participants shared disappointments about their middle school experiences in FCS. Each respondent was upset about the lack of hands-on experiences provided by her middle school teacher. The contrast between providing hands-on experiences incorporated with classroom instruction versus only the lecture style of teaching
is brought to the forefront by Amy, the only participant that took a FCS course at the high school level. It was her FCS course in high school that captivated her and influenced her decision to become a FCS teacher. When talking about the differences between middle school and high school, Amy commented on the high school course, “I think that was one thing I loved about it too is that we weren’t just sitting there reading a book and answering out of it that we actually got to use what we were learning in the classroom as well.” Amy described the transformation she experienced regarding her idea and feelings about FCS from middle school to high school.

Actually before I had that class [middle school], my image was cooking and um more of like the nutrition side of it. I didn’t know all the other parts of it like sewing and interior design and fashion and child development and all of that and I guess in middle school I kind of learned that it was more than just what I thought it was but I still looked at it as kind of, I guess because we did book work everyday and we just like read out of the chapter that I looked at it like a boring subject because we didn’t really do any like hands on activities.

Although she had preconceived ideas about FCS, Amy’s middle school experience served to broaden her view of the content of FCS. However, Amy thought the subject was boring and this could be connected to the method in which course information was delivered based on her memory of the experience. When asked if she were surprised at making the decision to major in FCS education, Amy responded:

Not really. Um, I didn’t really think back on like middle school once I made the decision, um, cause I guess my whole attitude of family and consumer sciences changed once I had [teacher’s name] and saw how it wasn’t boring and there was like
more that you could do and um she was excited about it and so was the other teacher we had [second FCS teacher].

Amy, like Sara, also discussed the lack of knowledge about career opportunities in FCS:

I don’t really know if people know like of career opportunities within family and consumer sciences or like if they even know that there are job openings for that in education and stuff like that. I think it will take like taking a class like that and talking to a teacher for a student to know of those opportunities.

Amy commented on her belief that taking a class and talking with a FCS teacher are opportunities for students to learn about careers in FCS.

When Lisa was asked if she had any preconceived ideas about FCS, she responded: Yes. It kind of went back to my old teacher and I was like “ok, well let’s see.” But … the girl that had told me about the major, after I talked with [teacher educator], I went back and told her that you know I was really thinking about it and that I met with [teacher educator] and um, I said “So what kind of classes do you take?” And she started telling me “You take all kinds of finance classes and then you do fashion shows and different fashion classes” and she just made it sound so much different than what I remembered and I was like “You mean its not all sewing and cooking?” And she was like “No, they totally changed it.” So that was what, I don’t know, I guess made me start thinking more about it. Then I went and looked on the course content to see what you know, the teachers were required to teach in the classroom settings and things like that and looked at what I was required to take in college. So
after I looked at all of that and saw how much it had grown and changed as a program I was even more interested.

Lisa’s preconceived idea about FCS education was the stereotypical one of cooking and sewing. The student she talked with explained that there was much more to the major. It is interesting that the student described the major stating that they “totally changed it.” Because of this student’s explanation, Lisa’s interest in FCS became heightened and she was willing to give the major a try. Lisa wrote about being unaware of a major in FCS education in her autobiography:

I never knew that there was such an amazing major that encompassed so many of the important life skills that all people need to know. The more I learned about the program through the internet, the more I was drawn to it, and once I had met with [teacher educator] I knew that this was the major for me.

Each participant experienced a pivotal moment which led her to choose FCS education as a major. However, before these moments occurred, the participants had already begun their journey toward FCS education as middle school students. Although none seemed to have an overwhelmingly positive experience at the middle school level, seeds about FCS were still planted. As they progressed from middle school into high school and college, other influential people appeared on their paths providing direction toward FCS education.

Advising Experiences in Family and Consumer Sciences

The personal guidance the participants received along their journey to choosing FCS education as a major has greatly influenced the development of their passion for the profession and their commitment to the profession. After she made the decision to pursue family and consumer sciences education as a major, Sara met with the FCS teacher educator
and the general FCS advisor at the university. She described her meeting with the teacher educator:

… it was my fall semester of my senior year, when I decided I wanted to do this. So, finally I got to [teacher educator]. And I was like “I basically have three semesters left in [University town] that I can dedicate to staying here and I need to know if I can fit all of this in those three semesters. And she like pulled a bunch of strings and helped me out a whole lot like I would not have been able to do it if it was not for her.

Sara made the decision to add FCS education as a second major during her senior year of college. Therefore, she knew that scheduling courses to fulfill both degree requirements and still graduate in a timely manner would be a challenge. Sara spoke with urgency in her voice when discussing how she needed to make it all work in the time she had left in college. Sara felt like the task would have been nearly impossible without the help of the teacher educator.

The anticipation and tension Sara felt was apparent as she wrote about the meeting with the teacher educator:

She plugged in a few things and replaced a few things and said, “I will make it possible.” Everything fit like a puzzle; I held my breath that each class would work out and that none of them would overlap any of my advertising requirements, and somehow it worked! I had to take two independent study courses and go to school all summer long, but it worked!

Watching in anticipation as the teacher educator worked with her classes and witnessing how it all fit together, reaffirmed Sara’s belief that she had found the right major. Sara elaborated on her advising and teaching experiences she has encountered in the FCS unit:
I feel like everybody is willing to go the extra mile to help you. Like that was the first experience, like when I talked to [teacher educator] the first day getting the major, like she looked at me and she was like “We will get it done. We will do it. I will find a way to do it.” And I never thought that would be what I would hear. Like, I am so used to hearing, “No, you can’t do that. You don’t have enough time to do that, blah, blah, blah” from [journalism unit] that hearing that was like “What? What did you just say?” And um, if it wasn’t for [FCS general advisor], I probably would not have done a lot of things. Like she has helped me a lot. But um, I never had, since I have been at [University], I had never had that personal one on one with any other teachers. Like, a few of my teachers in advertising probably would have noticed me and said “hi” if I passed them. But like, um, as far as advisors go, like the advising here is just so much different. And, I have heard other things with other advisors. I have heard other bad things but um, I am just lucky that I have had the ones that I do. But um, I don’t know. But seriously, if it wasn’t, like I totally give them the credit for getting me to where I am because it wasn’t me. It was them.

She has experienced a culture of caring within the FCS unit at the university. This caring began with her first encounters with the teacher educator and general advisor for FCS education. Sara was glad to finally have advisors encouraging her to complete a degree in FCS education especially having experienced a different level of involvement and concern with the faculty and staff in the journalism unit. The comments revealed by Sara support East’s (1980) claim that “students seem to have a sixth or seventh sense about a college culture because they usually pick one which suits their own needs” (p. 120).
Comments made by Lisa and Amy also support East’s (1980) statement. Lisa shared her experience with meeting the teacher educator and advisor for FCS education:

… I went and met with [teacher educator] and it was like totally different than any other experience I’ve ever had at [University]. Because, I mean, I started out here as a freshman and went all the way through and it was like every time I went to be advised they said “Well, what is your back up major?” And the moment I met [her] she was like “Let’s get you through. How are we going to get this done?” Instead of “Let’s find something else for you to do” it was “We’re going to make this work. How are we going to make this work?” which is how it should be. So I think that, like I felt immediately after I had done all of the research and actually went to talk to an advisor I felt at home with this major.

Lisa and Sara had similar experiences regarding the advising process. Both came to FCS education from different majors offered in different units on the campus of the university. The feeling they received in FCS was unlike any feeling they had experienced in pursuit of their other majors. They were welcomed to FCS education and as Lisa stated “I felt at home with this major.” For both participants, this was the first advising encounter where they were encouraged by their advisors and were not asked about their back up plan. Instead, the focus was on completing a degree in FCS education, the major at which they finally arrived. Amy recalled her advising experiences:

I was actually an early childhood education major when I came in because I had heard that they were getting rid of family and consumer sciences in a lot of schools and I was afraid that there wouldn’t be job opportunities so I was in early childhood education but I knew that wasn’t what I really wanted to do. I went to orientation and
the um, the advisor for early childhood education told me that I um, she was kind of rude, she told me that a lot of my classes wouldn’t transfer in and that I shouldn’t take these certain classes and that she didn’t know if I would get into the major because I didn’t have straight A’s and I was like I have like two B’s, like I don’t see, I don’t know, it was just kind of frustrating. So I like called my mom and I was like I think I am going to go talk to family and consumer sciences and so I made an appointment with [FCS general advisor] and I changed it like the next day because I knew that was not what I wanted to do.

Amy’s fear of not having a job opportunity in FCS education influenced her decision to declare early childhood education as a major during her sophomore year of college. However, she experienced frustration during the first meeting with an advisor for the early childhood education program. This encounter again proves the importance of the role of the advisor in the advising experience and their power to retain students in specific majors. After the disappointing experience with the advisor in early childhood education, Amy made an appointment with an advisor in the student services office within the FCS unit. She described the conversation with the general advisor for FCS stating “She sat me down and went through all of the requirements and changed my major that day … I remember [FCS advisor] being real happy and real sweet to me, excited that I was changing my major.”

When asked how she felt about that advising experience with the early childhood education advisor, Amy said:

I am glad that I made the decision I did. I feel like my college experience wouldn’t have been the same if I would have stayed. I don’t think I would have enjoyed it as much, um, I don’t know I think it was probably good that she was discouraging
because it made me want to change my major and do what I actually wanted to do from the beginning.

Even though she knew that early childhood was not the major she really wanted to pursue, Amy selected it for reasons based on job security. Because none of the respondents began their college careers as majors in FCS education, all three participants experienced a journey to identifying and declaring FCS education as a major. Advisors within and outside the area of FCS were influential in their decisions.

**Academic Experiences in Family and Consumer Sciences**

In addition to experiences with advising, the participants also commented on the impact that instructors within the FCS unit had on their lives as well as the impact of the content they were learning. Sara described her journey through different majors before arriving at FCS education and the feeling that she received upon changing her major:

… I use to want to be a hair stylist when I was little. You go through all those weird career choices. I think at one time I wanted to be a chemist and I hated chemistry in high school … I wanted to be a wedding photographer which is why I went into journalism because I wanted to be a photographer for the yearbook and ended up not doing photography at all and doing layout and fell in love with it and just having the reassurance from my teacher and motivation and her telling me that I was a natural and really good at it made me enjoy it more and so um that’s when I started looking into graphic design. And so, came here and I was going to do graphic design until I found out that I had to submit a portfolio and do all the drawing and art. I had to do the art and stuff in high school and I hated it. Like, I was good at it but I didn’t enjoy it and I didn’t want to go through that again. And then to go through that and …
maybe not get accepted to the graphic school, like made me even more stressed out about it and so I just decided to go advertising. That way um, I was like I can still do what I want with that and then it just took so long to get into the school and everybody in the school was like, it wasn’t nearly as welcoming as everybody here and I was just so turned off about it. I just, the longer I stayed in it and the more that I realized like yea, I am basically taking six classes, five or six classes and they are going to give me a major in advertising. Then when I added this major, I was just like there was like 50 something hours that I have to make up in the next year and a half cause that is when I added it … and I started to just love all of the classes. There is not one teacher that I have had in this College that I have not liked and I just felt way more prepared and cared about like with this perspective, with this major than I do with my other ones.

In this part of her narrative, Sara mentioned several career interests she had before arriving at FCS education. The comparison of her personal experiences with teachers and students in different programs of study provides insight into the different cultures present between two colleges at the same university. She described feeling more prepared and cared about as a major in FCS education than with her major in advertising. Sara commented on her love for the courses in FCS education and when asked what she loved about the FCS unit, she responded:

I think it starts with the material of the classes. Like taking personal finance and taking housing and taking resource management … taking those classes and being like wow! These classes, like, I should have been taught this stuff in high school. I should have been taught how to buy a car and how to save for a car … I struggled a
long time with who am I going to sit with at graduation? [FCS unit or journalism unit]? I am definitely going to sit with FACS! Because they taught me more than anybody else has taught me since I have been at [University]...it is more like information that you need to know, like I feel like everybody should be required because it is just information that is so worthwhile and you need in your life. Then the teachers like, I know, like [professor] has really inspired me and I have had her for 2 classes and she is just an awesome teacher and she is just willing to do, like I feel like everybody is willing to go the extra mile and to help you.

Sara elaborated on her realization of the importance of the content of FCS. This realization grew as she took different courses within the FCS unit. As her knowledge base has developed so has her appreciation of the content of FCS. Sara’s loyalty to FCS has increased and she feels that she will be expressing that loyalty when she sits with the FCS unit at graduation. When asked if her positive experiences with teaching and advising had affected her commitment to FCS education, Sara responded:

Definitely. Cause I wasn’t involved in anything in [journalism unit]. Um, I tried to be. I went to two different clubs and I stayed involved in one club and they were just very unwilling to work with you ... But um, with this College, I have been really inspired just because I feel like I should give back. Not necessarily that is the only reason but um, like I like go to the SAFCS (Student Association of Family and Consumer Sciences) meetings and I have gone to a couple of the tailgates and stuff that they have put on and I have done some fundraising. I hate fundraising! But I am willing to do it for some reason for this College and um, so like seeing me like willing to do those kinds of things and I think that part of it is like I know that they have given me
so much and I just kind of its my way of like thanking them. I guess that I am definitely more committed because of this College but it is because I feel like, but I enjoy it too, so it kind of works out.

Sara has been inspired by the willingness of the people within the FCS unit to help her and that has created a desire within her to give back to the College and its activities, and the FCS profession.

Lisa also reflected on the experiences she has encountered in her undergraduate courses in FCS. She wrote in her autobiography, “After declaring this as my major, I have only grown more passionate about the purpose of FCS.” She elaborated on her experiences during the interview describing her own interest in the course content:

Well, when I changed to this major, I had finished all of my core classes; all I needed were the education classes so as soon as I declared this as my major it was like immediately I was thrown into all of these classes at the same time, all of the FACS major classes. So I guess it was a combination of my child and family development [course number] and my housing and consumer economics [course number] and then um, [education professor] and the [education course], yea … It was probably those first few. Yea, because it is like every class that I take, I am just more drawn into what I am learning and how … it’s like so, the material is so interesting to me.

When she was asked if she has been able to use the content she has learned in class and that she will be teaching as a FCS educator in her personal life, Amy responded:

Yes, I have. One class that was really helpful for me was the family financial planning. Just because I didn’t know much about that subject so it has taught me how to like manage money and stuff like that. I just think a lot of the classes like, would
apply, like I took a housing class and we were talking about the buying decision and the process that you go through and I feel like that will help me in the future too so it will all benefit my personal life as well as be something that I can teach one day.

Amy elaborated on how the FCS courses she has taken in college have helped her in her personal life while equipping her with information she can use to teach her future students and her family and friends:

I’ve enjoyed most of my classes … I feel like even if I don’t teach that subject one day its something that I can use or something that I can teach other people, um whether it is just my siblings or my friends but I don’t know, I have enjoyed most of the classes.

When asked if she felt that her idea and perception of FCS had changed through college, Amy responded with:

I feel like it has expanded a lot. There were not that many classes offered at my high school in family and consumer sciences and I thought it was just cooking and kids, um, but um, when I came here and I realized that even housing and consumer economics is a big part of family and consumer sciences and then interior design, I never knew that interior design classes were offered within high schools and um fashion merchandising and that kind of thing too so all of that plays into family and consumer sciences and I feel like that college and all of the classes I have had to take kind of opened my mind to more of what it is about …

As evident by the participants’ comments, positive learning experiences within the classroom are vital to transmitting the content of FCS to students as well as enthusiasm for the profession. Interactions in the classroom with instructors that are knowledgeable and
inspiring along with the realization of the importance of the life skills taught, has impacted
the participants’ current perceptions of FCS and increased their desire to share this
knowledge with others. The comments revealed by the participants supported a finding from
Mimbs (2002) study which identified one of the reasons most often cited by FCS teachers for
choosing their career was because the example of their own teachers inspired them. All three
participants have been inspired by advisors, instructors, and classroom experiences while
pursuing their degree in FCS education.

**Family Background and Influences**

Identifying FCS education as a major, researching it, and declaring it as a major was
part of the participants’ journey to FCS education. During the journey, they developed an
appreciation for what FCS teaches. This appreciation has been ignited and fueled by caring
advisors and knowledgeable instructors. Another part of each participant’s journey was
informing her family of her decision to major in FCS education. The institutions that have the
most powerful influence on the socialization of individuals are the family, school, and the
nation-state (Statt, 1994). The literature reviewed suggested the importance of
environmental, familial, and personal factors on one’s decision to choose a particular career
path (Agyeman, 1992). This category contains comments from the participants regarding
their families of origin and their families’ reactions to their choice to major in FCS education.
All three participants placed emphasis on the importance of their families. Each participant
recalled the reaction received from family members when she informed them of her decision
to major in FCS education. Sara recalled telling her dad about her decision to add FCS
education as a second major:
I was so nervous about telling my dad ... both of my stepsisters are teachers and my stepsister’s husband is a teacher.... I think my dad just always wanted me to be that successful, career person and so I was just really nervous about telling my dad … I remember he came up for my birthday and took me out to dinner. I was like I need to tell him now. The only way that I could figure that I could sell it to him was the fact that I technically couldn’t graduate with my advertising major until December, this December because I had gotten into [journalism unit] late. If they had offered my campaigns class in the summer, I could have graduated in the summer but at the time they weren’t telling us they were offering it until May, whether they were offering it in the summer or not. And so, they ended up offering it but he doesn’t know that. So he thought that I had to stay until December and that was the deal. As long as I could get out of [University town] and he didn’t have to pay rent any longer and I could be at home, I could do it. I knew that he would be ok with it as long as I could pull that string. And so, honestly, he just wants me to do what I want to do and what I am happy with doing and he was ok with it like he kind of laughed. He was like “Well, we are going to have a family of teachers. I never thought that this was going to happen.” But um, he never really criticized me or anything like that.

Sara was concerned about telling her dad about her decision to change her career path and add FCS as a second major because she knew it was important to him that she become a career woman in a business field rather than in education. Sara recalled the reaction she received when she informed her mother about her decision to major in FCS education:

My mom thinks it is a perfect fit … after I told my mom that day, cause I had basically called her and … I was really nervous and I don’t know why I was nervous
but I was like “I think I have had a revelation.” And um, she was like “what do you mean?” And I was like “well I need your advice.” I was like um, “what would you think about me teaching home ec?” And I call it home ec because that is what people know it as…. So I called it home ec and she … told me you know, like “[Her name],” I think she started crying and was just like “I think that is perfect.”… when I went home that weekend, she had already told all of her friends. So I got the totally opposite reaction from my dad. But they were all like, like having people come up to me and saying “[Her name], that’s perfect for you” like just reinforces it. And I am that type of person that … I need that feedback … I like having feedback.

While Sara was also nervous about telling her mother, she received a more positive and a more emotional reaction from her mother than she had from her dad. As evident in this example, feedback appears to be important to Sara and affirmed to her that she is doing the right thing. The reaction of Sara’s mother was very important to her and she elaborated on it:

And my mom, her reaction … it made me feel really good … knowing that my mom could see me doing it and felt that I would be really good at it, made it even more seem like the right choice.

Others recognized the career choice as being “perfect” for Sara. She elaborated on the importance and the meaning that she attaches to the word “perfect”:

And like I said hearing them say “[Her name], that’s perfect.” Perfect is such a strong word. As far as my friends like they are majoring in speech pathology, I don’t think that that is perfect for them. You know? Like those are weird careers, but I know that I could not do them. But just hearing that, they are like “that is just so you.”
While Sara found comfort in the reassurances that this was the right choice for her from her family and friends, she has encountered some disappointments. Sara elaborated on her father’s reaction further when she discussed a recent conversation she overheard when she was home for the holidays:

I feel like even though like yes three majors in five years is not bad at all but um and I know that and so it doesn’t take it away from me but um I overheard my dad um … over the summer, he was in a conference call in his office and I overheard him and he was telling a little about himself and he went into talk about how he had one stepdaughter that just had a baby and she was a middle school teacher and how he has another stepdaughter that teaches first grade and then he left me for last and said something about me taking a victory lap and that I was still at [University]. He didn’t go into talking about what I wanted to do or any of that. So that in a way like, and I am close to my dad, like, it’s not like we have a bad relationship at all, like I am really close to my dad. But hearing him, it almost sounded like he was more proud of them than me even though I feel like I am doing a ton more than what they did and even though yea, I spent an extra year here but I kept [scholarship] the whole time I was here and I stayed in-state and they both went to private schools outside of the state. Like, I know I cost a whole lot less. And it was almost just like I wasn’t, I don’t know, I feel like in his point of view like its, he is accepting it because he knows that is what I want, but it is not necessarily something he is going to brag about.

When asked how overhearing her dad’s comments made her feel, Sara responded:

It hurts and it really hurt me that day when I heard him talking about me. But um, I don’t care, like if it were my mom, I would probably care more but um, I am just
grateful that he’s, cause I ran out of [scholarship money] over the summer, after the summer, so I had to pay for my last year. And I am just grateful that he was willing to pay that. But I think I will prove him, I think he’ll … once I get into doing what I am doing I think he will understand. Hopefully by seeing me happy and excited and because I have been at school we have kind of grown apart because I am not home a lot so he doesn’t see me very often and when I am finally home again and teaching at home and around more I am hoping that he will be able to see, you know, I think he just had greater expectations and he had that career in mind.

The disappointment was evident in Sara’s voice as she recalled this occurrence. It was particularly disappointing to her that her dad did not mention what kind of teacher she was going to be. Even though he may not brag about her choice, she is grateful that he was willing to help her pay the tuition in order for her to complete her degrees. She hopes to prove to him that she is fulfilled being a FCS teacher and that she is proud of her choice.

Lisa spoke of her family’s reaction to her decision to become a FCS teacher:

My dad still doesn’t really understand what it is. He just tells everybody that I am going to school to be a teacher ... my parents are amazing and they’ve never said, “Well you don’t need to be a teacher.” But they’ve just always been like, “[Name], you are not going to make any money as a teacher.” And you know just little comments like that but um … it’s not the money that’s the thing, it’s the way that you feel about it. My mom seems to understand what it is, I guess, um, she knows that there is sewing and cooking and stuff like that but they don’t really, they don’t ask a lot about it other than “Did you have a good day? How are you doing in your classes?” Stuff like that. Like, they are excited for me because I am excited and
because I am fixing to start looking for a job but yet they are not overly involved in my decision. Although not overly involved in her decision, Lisa’s parents are supportive but do make comments about education not being a profitable career. However, Lisa points out that it is not the money that has driven her decision to become a teacher, it is the feeling she derives from teaching FCS. Her comments lend support to the theory of intrinsic motivation. People may choose to engage in certain behaviors because of the extrinsic rewards such as money, praise, status, or promotions that are expected as an outcome. Other behaviors may be chosen because “they leave the people feeling competent and self-determining” (Deci, 1980, p. 52). Lisa enjoys the feeling that majoring in FCS education gives her. This feeling provides an internal motivator rather than an external motivator. Similar to Sara’s mother, Lisa’s mother seemed to have more of an understanding of the content areas traditionally associated with FCS than her father.

Amy recalled the responses of her parents about her decision:

I remember talking to my mom about it. And my mom … she always thought that teaching would be like a great profession and she was very encouraging about it. Um, I think that’s the only person really that I’ve ever really talked to about it other than [high school FCS teacher].

While her dad did not say much about her choice, Amy’s mother was very encouraging. Her father was more concerned that she receives a college degree rather than the area she chose to study:

He doesn’t really say much. I don’t think he, he just wants me to get a degree. He grew up in a family, he was the first one to ever graduate from college and so as long
as like the three of us go to college, his kids go to college and get a degree he doesn’t care really what we do with it … he just feels like education is important.

In addition to her parents, Amy also reflected on the reactions of her brother and sister to her choice:

My brother is a senior in high school so he has taken a lot of the same classes that I took and he loves them just as much as I did so I think he is excited for me. My sister is also in education, she is a speech pathologist. She is a speech teacher in [city, state] so she was excited for me that I get to be in the education system as well.

Amy’s siblings seem to be supportive as her brother is currently enrolled in FCS courses in high school and her mother and sister are encouraging of a career in education. Positive feedback from family members regarding their decision to major in FCS education appeared to be important to the participants. Respondents also shared comments regarding how their own personal family background had prepared them for the role of being a FCS educator. Lisa felt that her family has contributed to her desire to become a FCS teacher. She stated:

I didn’t come from a FACS background in school but I felt like I was raised with all of the tools that I needed to jump in and be able to be a FACS educator. Like, my mom was very um, I came from a very strong family, a lot of the stuff I’ve learned in child and family development I knew from different classes that I’ve taken in high school but then at the same time, like the way that I was raised, I felt like I kind of could draw from the way I was raised to understand the child and family development stuff and um, you know, my mom was the homemaker, sewed a lot. So I sewed when I was little and knew how to do that kind of stuff and always baking so a lot of the
stuff that FACS is the only thing that I came into this program not knowing a lot about was the finance and I’ve learned a lot about the foods too but more finance.

Lisa’s family helped influence and equip her with the tools she believes are necessary to become a FCS educator. As revealed by this part of her narrative, Lisa has drawn on her own personal background to help her relate to the content taught in FCS courses. Amy also shared how she felt that her family has impacted her in regard to becoming a FCS educator. She explained:

I feel like um growing up in like the Christian home that they’ve influenced me to like want to like serve people and like have an impact on people’s lives and I feel like that reflects back when um thinking about education and how I want to like impact students.

Amy wrote about the influence of her family and how her Christian upbringing has impacted her desire to want to serve people and education provides her with an avenue to serve others. The focus of “family” in FCS serves as a motivating force for Amy. When thinking about the social condition of the country and the priority of family in the lives of many, Amy discussed how her family has influenced her and how she wants to impact others in a similar manner:

I think my family has had a lot of influence on that and just like how they have affected my life and um, I guess just like knowing that I can impact people and use like the way that my family has been like a great part of my life, um, I can, I guess reflect that onto other people.

As reviewed in the literature regarding the theory of intrinsic motivation, the environment can have a profound impact on one’s skills and abilities and on her motivation to engage in particular behaviors. Exposure to specific activities and the encouragement provided by
significant people in one’s life to pursue such activities can influence one’s desire to express a capacity for particular activities. It is not only one’s environment but also the interplay between the environment and one’s genetic endowment that Deci (1980) stressed as influencing a child’s behavior. The comments provided by the participants suggest that feedback from parents and their exposure to particular activities have influenced their choice to become majors in FCS education.

*God’s Plan for Selecting Family and Consumer Sciences Education*

Comments made by the participants in this study supported the ideas found in the literature regarding the feeling of being called to a particular vocation by a higher being. When reflecting on the need for her class schedule to work out perfectly so that she could add FCS education as her second major, Sara stated:

…when it came down to it to the hour, it fit into my schedule … and none of my classes overlapped with my advertising classes … it was just really weird how well it worked out and seeing that made me more like “Well, this is what God wants me to do” because obviously it was so perfect, it was like a puzzle fitting together. And um, so I did it and here I am …

Sara’s decision to add FCS education as a second major was confirmed for her as she witnessed the scheduling of classes fitting together like a puzzle. Due to the entrance requirements and the waiting period before she could be officially admitted to the advertising program, Sara had to take electives from other areas. She wrote about her elective choices in her autobiography: “I took a few education classes, foods and nutrition, child and family development.” When asked how she decided to select electives within the FCS unit, Sara responded:
… because I was having to wait so long to actually get into [journalism unit], I was pulling teeth for [arts and sciences unit] electives, and um, even though those were none of [arts and sciences unit], I was, and see the advisors are so bad, so I wasn’t really geared a particular way toward the advisement and I took one class, it was actually, cause I was a sociology minor for a long time and I took a sociology class, … but it was actually a child and family development too, it went both ways and so I got one of my child and family development classes from that … and then as far as the foods and nutrition went, I just honestly, it looked like it was easy … its weird because every single one of those classes, like I needed in the long run but I don’t, nothing in my mind was like “Oh, this might be interesting.” I just took them but I ended up loving all of them … I wish I had been “Maybe I will teach later on and that’s why I took it.” But honestly, I, I was so consumed with my sociology because I hated them but they were like telling us if we got into [journalism unit] we had to have so many [arts and sciences] hours … I am like I am in [journalism unit] and you are making me take [arts and sciences] classes? That is what really aggravated me about the major cause I was taking more classes outside of the major than I was in the major. I hated arts and sciences and if you look … that is where my grades are bad are in arts and sciences. Taking those classes overwhelmed me so much that I felt like I needed these other classes that people were telling me were easy. That is honestly why I took them.

Sara enrolled in FCS courses because she needed to fill her schedule with electives; unknowingly she needed all of the FCS classes that she took once she officially added a
major in FCS education. When Sara discussed her job in the after-school program mentioned previously, she made reference to a force pulling her toward FCS education:

I just went and applied and I got it and it just worked out perfectly. But it is weird because when I look back and even when I was writing that and when I had to write my autobiography for my student teaching I look back and I am like it is really weird cause it seems like I have had all of these forces pulling me toward this direction and I haven’t realized it until I got here because that is just what it seems like because having all of those classes like if I hadn’t taken those classes early on I probably would have been, I probably wouldn’t have been able to do it and if like, just having those other experiences like in the schools and stuff and like, I don’t know it is just weird to me, like when I think about it, it gives me goose bumps cause I am like something was telling me that this is where I needed to be.

Sara reflected on multiple occurrences that have all seemed to be leading her to FCS education including taking electives she would eventually need as required courses, working in an after-school program, and the lack of scheduling conflicts for the courses required for each major she was pursuing. When asked about how she feels her beliefs and values have shaped her career choice, Sara responded:

Underlying, like my mom has just always been like “God just wants you to be happy.” Like you know, like He wants you to do what, or be where you can inspire other people and motivate other people and be happy. So I knew that advertising didn’t make me happy. I, like I said, I just felt like everything was fitting into place and like I felt like this was God’s intention all along and that um and just everything that has gotten me to where I am. When I look back and see where I have been and
even how that has impacted where I am um I just feel like He did that on purpose, and especially when I had to schedule my classes and none of my classes overlapped. Like I had classes in advertising and in my other majors that I had to take and they were only offered at one time and I had classes that were only offered at one time in this major that I had to take at that time. Like, they were not offered in the spring or they are only offered in the fall and if I couldn’t get it, I only had one spring and fall and summer to work with and if they weren’t offered at that time then I was out of luck and nothing, it was like a puzzle. Like, I am telling you like by the hour it fit just like a puzzle and by, and when I saw that and when I saw [teacher educator and advisor] rework everything and get it to fit into those three semesters, like, I was just, it just kind of felt, my mom got goose bumps when she found out and I was just like, yea, this is definitely what He wants me to do.

Her mother has impressed upon her that God wants her to be happy in her career choice. God wants her to be where she can “inspire” others and motivate others and where she herself is happy. Her belief in God having a plan for her and that this is her life’s calling is clear by her statements.

As evident from her autobiography, Lisa knew that she wanted to be a teacher and she participated in activities at her church that allowed her to work with children. Lisa referred to teaching as her calling and wrote about activities that she engaged in that would prepare her for her future career: “Another way I would prepare for my calling was that when I was in high school I would help my fellow classmates understand material that they were shaky on and tutor some classmates.” When asked to describe why she felt that being a teacher was her calling, Lisa responded:
I think its, its the only thing that I’ve really, really ever felt passionate about, like whenever I am in the classroom and dealing with students its something that I know is what really I am supposed to do cause I’ve had other things that I’ve done and just never felt the real connection that way. Like, when I was in middle school, I was um, I was a candy striper in a hospital and I mean it was fun and it was nice to meet new people and to do all that and I did it in outpatient and in the pharmacy. But it wasn’t what I wanted to do. So I’ve kind of dabbled in different areas yet stayed strong in education and I feel like that is my knack, my nitch, if you will and whenever people, you know, they will meet me, my mom will come and watch me with kids or just new people that I’ve met will immediately they will say “Oh my gosh! You are such a teacher. That is what you are, you are a teacher.”

In her response, Lisa described feeling passionate about teaching and feels like she belongs in the classroom. Activities with students in the classroom affirm her calling as well as feedback from mother including her mom’s recognition of her natural identity as a teacher. Referring to the conversation she had with the graduate student that introduced her to FCS education, Lisa wrote “That day was one of the best days that I had at the University regarding my classes and my education.” She described her feelings the day after the conversation with great emotion “Oh! It was like “Oh, my gosh! There is a place for me here at the University!”… I was meant to talk to her that day and figure out.” When asked if she felt that her beliefs or values system are related with her choice to major in FCS education, Lisa stated:

I think so … I believe that the whole reason that I found like this, I was meant to be this, that I was meant to be a FACS Ed teacher, um and that I was meant to meet her
that day and talk to her about the classes. Um, and I think that being that our classes
teach about family and you know that is a big part of my beliefs, the family unit, so I
do think that they are connected um, I’m not going to go expressing my beliefs lots to
my children. If they ask me questions, then I will. But I’m not going to you know,
force it on them.

She explained her belief that she was meant to be a FCS teacher and that it was intended for
her to meet the student that introduced her to the major. When asked if she had experienced
any of the same signs or confirmations while intending to major in the early childhood
program, Lisa answered “No.” However, once Lisa declared FCS education as a major, she
experienced encounters that confirmed her decision. She elaborated on specific encounters:

… I mean I met her and the girl was like “Go talk to [teacher educator].” Then she
was amazing! And then it was like every teacher that I’ve met has kind of had that …
I was meant to be in this class. I was meant to be with this teacher. I mean there are so
many different, um, you know you can choose different classes to take within the
umbrella of FACS Ed and so it was kind of like, some of the teachers that I had were
great amazing teachers! So I definitely think that has been since I have been in this
program. And the friends that I’ve made!

As Lisa reflected on these experiences, she was filled with emotion, especially when
discussing the friendships she has built with other students majoring in FCS education. Lisa
firmly believed she was meant to be a FCS education major. Since declaring FCS education
as her major, she has been impacted by the teachers and the friends that have crossed her
path. Amy also believed that her positive experiences with her family and her Christian
beliefs are the reason she is a FCS education major. As mentioned previously, she feels that
her Christian upbringing has impacted her desire to want to serve people. The comments shared by participants support the literature on the topic of passion and the importance of having a sense of mission and purpose in one’s job if one is to feel truly passionate about her work. As each participant shared her belief that pursuing FCS education was her life’s calling, her passion for the profession began to emerge more clearly.

**Summary**

This chapter explored the respondents’ reflections of their journey to FCS education. Six themes emerged from their narratives: (1) pivotal moments on the journey to identifying and declaring a major in FCS education; (2) their first exposure to FCS at the middle school level; (3) advising experiences at the undergraduate level; (4) academic experiences at the undergraduate level; (5) family background, including the reaction to their choice to major in FCS education, and the influence of their family; and (6) feeling that they were called by God to major in FCS education.
CHAPTER 5

TURNING TO THE MISSION

The goal of this study was to examine the development of passion for the FCS profession in three undergraduate students majoring in FCS education. Three purposes were stated. The first purpose was to ascertain an understanding of undergraduate students’ identification with FCS education and their decisions to declare it as a major. The second purpose was to examine the participants’ knowledge of the content with an understanding of the integrative nature of the FCS profession. The third purpose was to identify the participants’ motivation and passion for being a FCS educator. If one has identified with the major, become knowledgeable of the content and knowledge base of FCS, then an intense passion for FCS education may develop and propel her in fulfilling the mission of the profession of FCS with passionate commitment.

I stated originally that the second purpose was to examine each participant’s knowledge base with an understanding of the integrative nature of the profession. The FCS profession is integrative in nature meaning that it draws knowledge from all disciplines to improve the human condition for the families, individuals, and communities that FCS professionals serve. As a result of conducting and synthesizing the results of the study, I realized that the participants did express their understanding of the integrative nature of the profession and it was evident that their knowledge of FCS content had developed through their coursework. Categories that emerged through the analysis of participants’ autobiographical writings and individual interviews pertaining to the second purpose were focused more on the mission of the profession. The categories included a focus on participants’ interpretation of the mission of the profession, specifically their beliefs in the
importance of teaching life skills to improve the human condition, and their development of personal missions. In addition, participants provided responses to a scenario depicting a situation in pop culture and how constant media exposure of that situation affects young people. The responses of the participants revealed their understanding of how FCS education is relevant to current societal issues and how FCS curriculum taught in middle and high schools can be used to educate students on how to make choices that will improve the quality of their lives and the lives of their families.

**Interpreting the Professional Mission**

As indicated in the review of literature, agreement on what should comprise the mission of the profession has been debated since its beginning. The mission of the profession developed by Brown and Paolucci (1979) was provided in chapter two and is being used for the purposes of this study because of its grounded philosophical formation. Although professionals may differ on which mission they support and quote, a common belief evident in the professional literature is that the FCS profession seeks to empower families as they perform functions to improve the human condition individually, as family members, and collectively as members in their communities. The participants in this study interpreted the mission of FCS as educating others about how to improve their quality of life. The participants placed substantial emphasis on teaching life skills to others and acknowledged life skill education as a vital part of FCS. Their belief in teaching others life skills they view important to daily living was articulated as a strong motivating force for their decisions to major in FCS education. As a college student, Sara realized the need for her own friends to acquire life skills:
… when I got here and I met all of these people that weren’t close with their families and didn’t, they weren’t homesick, not that not being homesick makes you not close to your family but I was just homesick all the time and like seeing that people didn’t know how to do their own laundry and people didn’t know how to sew on a button and they didn’t know how to cook for themselves and I am just like where were your families? Where were your parents? I don’t understand why people, just because I was raised and taught to do that growing up like I just don’t understand why other people weren’t. So that like inspired me, I guess, to want to show people how to do that.

In this narrative, Sara conveyed her surprise upon realizing that her friends in college didn’t know how to do simple things in order to care for themselves. Questioning why these skills were not taught in their families of origin and realizing the need to know how to care for one’s self, Sara was inspired to choose a career that would allow her to teach life skills to others. Believing in the importance of her role in teaching life skills has impacted how she identifies herself. When asked how she described herself, Sara responded:

As a person, I think that I am very, very well-rounded cause I love sports and I love cooking. But as a teacher, cause I know that … my teacher is getting or I know that [State School Superintendent] or whoever she is feeling like family and consumer sciences isn’t for everyone per se or saying that it is kind of closing doors because it is presenting limits or something, I don’t know. But um, I think once again that it is just so important that I instill that yea, I am teaching life skills basically, like I am teaching the skills you need to get through life and um to be on your own. I think that is the main thing about it.
When asked if the role of teaching life skills excited her, Sara enthusiastically responded:

Yes! ... it excites me because um, I just see the bonding with all of the Connection teachers at my school. And they are all so, basically what you teach is who you are, basically, and um, it is funny to see all of those people at one table because they are all so different even though they are all teachers, they have these missions and different facets and its exciting to see that a student has an opportunity to explore all of those different things. I am excited that I am hopefully going to be one of those individuals ... I feel like those teachers are not given as much credit because they are not … teachers of academics. Everything is academics. That is the main importance and I understand that … I feel like … once you get to a certain grade, as far as academics go, I know that it is important to um go through college and get to higher levels of math and different sciences but as far as like being in the real world and living your day to day life, like it is going to be those other things that play a bigger role.

Sara painted a picture of how she views the importance of the career and technical teachers, referring to them as “Connections” teachers in the middle schools and the importance of what they teach in relation to real life. Sara made the statement that one’s identity is connected to what she teaches. Even though she realized the marginalization that teachers in career and technical program areas experience in comparison to teachers of the “academic” areas of math and science the excitement was present in Sara’s voice as she discussed how she hopes to be one of those teachers who has a mission and provides opportunities for students to explore different areas while learning vital skills. When asked if she were ever hesitant to say that she would be a FCS teacher, Sara responded:
Not necessarily a family and consumer sciences teacher. I never, ever, ever, ever, ever in a million years thought of that type of teacher. I had thought about teaching. But it has always been in the back of my mind, like growing up, like teaching might be fun but I never, I was always like no they don’t get paid anything.

Although she had considered teaching in general, Sara never thought about being a FCS teacher. She viewed teaching as a non-lucrative career and therefore did not seriously consider it as an occupation. When the thoughts of becoming a teacher did enter her mind, she thought about teaching subjects other than FCS. She elaborated:

Connections never sprang to my mind when I thought about being a teacher. When I thought about being a teacher, the only thing I could think of that I would ever imagine teaching would be math because that is the only thing that I felt that I was good enough at that I could teach but at the same time I was like, I don’t want to teach math all day long … I knew I didn’t want to be in the same class with the same kids all day long so that totally ruled out elementary school. And then I knew that I just couldn’t teach the same thing all day … the more I thought about, I mentioned earlier why there are so many reasons why I wanted to do middle school and like one of them is because I just love my sister’s age, like I love those kids … that was such a hard age for so many people, like I know that everybody hated middle school. It is just such awkward years of whatever. But um, I guess I kind of like a reverting back to those years and making it better for those kids. But um, also I knew that I would be in the nine weeks system where I would get new kids every nine weeks and through the three periods a day like I could teach different things. I wouldn’t be teaching the same thing over and over again and that basic element of I saw that as benefits as far
as teaching in the middle school. The other reason I wanted to do middle school is cause there is in high school unless you get like the family and consumer sciences like basics class, you have to pick like whether you want to do sewing or you want to do food and nutrition or you know you have to pick. And I couldn’t pick between, I couldn’t pick any one that I like better. I love them all. Like, if I did sewing, I would totally miss cooking and … I feel like in high school I mean I didn’t take any of the classes so I don’t know but I felt like besides the child care class or whatever … they left out the financial and the budgeting and I felt that was kind of like forgotten about and maybe why people feel like it is just cooking and sewing and babysitting. But um that’s part of, a part of the curriculum that I really, really, really want to include as far as how to balance a check book and do that stuff. That is part of the stuff that I really want to include in my curriculum. And so, I just love all of them. And I think the financial planning is one of the reasons why I realize I loved that stuff so much but um, I couldn’t choose so that is one reason I want to do middle school because I can do all of them.

In this narrative, Sara expressed her desire to teach middle school indicating that she wants to make a difficult time in life a better time for her students. Although Sara did not consider teaching FCS initially, she now realizes the importance of what is taught, and she is excited about the variety she will get to experience as a middle school teacher regarding the curriculum she will teach, the scheduling of classes, and the rotation of students. Sara spoke of her love for the areas of FCS especially the financial planning curriculum. Through her words, Sara conveyed how important it is that she teaches students how to create a budget and manage their resources and her feeling that the public doesn’t realize that financial
education is an integral part of FCS. Instead, it is sometimes overshadowed by the stereotypical image of only teaching students how to cook and sew. Sara desires to teach her students a variety of life skills so that they can improve the quality of their life, particularly at home. Sara shared her thoughts regarding helping people create a home:

… in your waking hours, like most people when they come home, they want to come home. Like, they have been at work all day but that is the one thing that like, yea there are some workaholics that don’t like to go home but for the most part, people want to come home, and that is just a strong word when you think of it in that sense. And, um, I just think that it is really important. Cause that’s, honestly you work, a lot of people work just to get the money and um, I can’t do anything about that, like if that’s what they want to do, that’s what they want to do. But when you come home is when you can be yourself and you can relax and when you start, for the most part, start to enjoy your life and … the time that you spend there and with the people that you spend it with and so it is important that people know how to make the most of that.

Sara’s comments are evident of her interpretation of the mission of FCS to improve the human condition. Sara pointed out the importance of home and her desire is to help people create a safe, comforting place to relax and enjoy their time with those closest to them. Her desire to help people learn life skills and create this environment appears altruistic and when asked what she hoped to give from being a FCS teacher, Sara responded:

The more I think about it the more I maybe should focus on, in the middle school, I really want to work in middle school and in high school I feel like it is important to introduce the roles of other um careers you could go into cause like I said, I had no
idea of the majority of careers that this College offers and the longer I have been in the College the more I could major in all of these and be happy. But um, as far as the middle school, I just feel like it is important to get those children inspired, like, and that is such an age where they need a role model and somebody to look up to and um, all of my sisters, the reason I want to do middle school, well there are several reasons I want to do it. But um, my sister is that age and so all of her friends are that age and I am with all of her friends a lot of the time because I am usually their taxi driver in the summer time and um, they all love me and they will all bake with me and they love to bake with me and they make fun of me but they still enjoy it and I make it fun and so, then they go home and when I hear them tell their moms, you know, because I am friends with their moms too because it is mostly her softball team that I am really close with but um, so I am friends with both sides, so when I hear them talking to their moms about “[Her name] taught me how to do this and [her name] did this” it just kind of makes me feel good … But I think it is important that they are inspired so that they, if they want to cook they can cook and for them to know that they can do those things and if they want to sew something that they can sew it. Like, I just feel like if they have those basics and if like, they maybe like me, like a couple of years down the road and find out well I was making, like Miss [her name] told me how to make a pillow and I love to sew and I remember how much I sewed. And then they get here and they realize they want to do textiles, then that’s awesome if I was the one that sparked that because I had to spark that myself, you know. I felt like I could have cut a lot of corners if I had someone spark that for me. I think it is just getting them,
getting those like skills in their head and maybe getting their interest in them so that if that is something they are interested in, you can start that.

As Sara explained what she hoped to give as a FCS educator, she made connections between teaching students basic life skills such as cooking and sewing and then getting those students inspired to pursue a career in an area that uses those interests. Her desire is to “spark” an interest in them because she had to spark her own interest and find her own way to a major that she loves and finds inspiring. Because of her lack of exposure to careers in FCS, Sara believes it is important to expose students, especially high school students, to career opportunities in the profession.

Lisa echoed Sara’s belief that everyone needs to take FCS courses. In her autobiography, Lisa wrote “I never knew there was such an amazing major that encompassed so many of the important life skills that all people need to know.” During the interview, Lisa elaborated on the life skills she was referring to and the importance of them:

I think of the, you know, kind of like what you would teach in a [introductory FCS] class about students; you know, “don’t rush out and get credit cards.” That, you know teaching them about the finances before they get out in the real world and don’t have their mom and dad to help them make their decisions cause I know when I came to college I had a lot of friends that from the day that it started until December they had a credit card that was completely maxed out. Just teaching them those kind of life things … that their choices now can really impact them later and helping them decide on what kinds of careers there are that they can choose in FACS or outside of FACS, related careers, and showing them that there’s lots outside of the town that they are from and there’s, you know, the food choices that they need to make and how to
make a proper meal on a budget, how to create a budget, how to you know, the things that you want, you can’t have everything that your mom and dad have, you have to grow to have that and what kind of job do you need to have to grow to have that, whatever “that” is in your mind. So those are the kinds of things that I hope to teach my students, hope to be able to get across to them and make them very well-rounded individuals that are prepared for the real world. Cause, I know, like coming out of college I didn’t know anything about, or coming out of high school, I didn’t know anything about finances other than I had a bank account and I had money in it. Mom and dad put some money in it and I had to work for the rest of the money. But you know a lot of it I have learned through college but the majority of what I have learned has been in these FACS classes. I feel like that the stuff that has been required of me [in college] has not made me as ready and prepared for after college as these courses have and even my friends that are in child and family development and stuff like that, we all comment and say how everybody needs to take a [FCS] class and I think it is the same way in high school, I think everybody needs to take the FACS I class

In this narrative, Lisa elaborated on her desire to teach students about the real-world and the potential impact of their choices regarding their finances, nutrition and food-related choices, and decisions about career opportunities. As a college student, Lisa has made connections between the content she has learned as a FCS education major to her own life thereby improving her own awareness and application of important life skills. Similar to Sara, Lisa recognized the value in teaching FCS. When asked if others understand what she will do as a FCS teacher, Lisa stated:
A lot of times people do, um and then I will say, if they look really confused, “It’s the new and improved Home Ec.” And they are like, “New and improved? What do you mean?” And I am just like “Well it takes what they used to teach but they add it more with the financial aspects and the food aspects so it is a well-rounded program that consists of everything that every person needs to know to be functioning and well, basically.” That’s the way I look at it.

Lisa provided her explanation of how she clarifies what FCS teaches to someone who doesn’t understand. She finds herself using the term “home ec” to help someone struggling with identifying the area. Lisa approaches explaining FCS with enthusiasm relating the content to important societal issues such as finances and nutrition. When asked how she communicates the importance of what FCS teaches, Lisa stated:

I get that question a lot … I just start explaining to them what it is that you learn and what it is that you teach and they’re amazed that a class that’s not required is so important or teaches so many important things I guess. I guess to my students, I’m just going to express it in a way that’s fun, that’s upbeat, that’s going to get them involved. It’s not going to be the typical, I guess, lecturish style. It’s going to be more hands on and um, fun, I hope. I hope I can find ways to make it lots of fun. I mean I am sure I’m gonna have to focus on other things that are more, not everything can be made fun but I’m gonna try to do that because I feel like that is when they’ll gain the most out of it and will pay the most attention and be more into what they are learning.

Both Sara and Lisa want to get their students involved in classroom activities and by doing so hope to obtain the interest of the students for the subject matter and convey its importance to them. The way they want to transmit lessons taught in FCS is very different from the
memories they shared regarding their first exposure to FCS. Each recalled watching her
teacher perform lab activities rather than being allowed to engage actively in the learning
process. Lisa desires to present course material in a way that students find interesting so that
students see the relationship of course concepts to their lives. The manner in which she
presents the material she views as essential to improving the students’ lives will be important
so that they have the desire to realize its value, internalize it, and apply it to their daily living.
When asked how her own perception of the importance of FCS will impact her in the
classroom, Lisa stated:

I guess it impacts me the same way it would any teacher when the kids are like “Well
what do we need to know this for?” that always flies over any teacher and they are
like “Well, because!” but um, I guess, whenever I hear comments like that it bothers
me and everything and so when I hear those things it makes me change the way that I
want to present the material or as I am sitting there listening to how it’s presented I sit
there and think well how can it be changed so that they’re not sitting there thinking
“This is boring, this is senseless” How can I make it not boring and senseless? How
can I prove to them that this is something that’s needed for them, relate it more to
their life as opposed to just notes on the screen … I think that’s the big way to make
the students understand that this is something they will use, that they will have to
have a checkbook and that they will have to know how to wash their clothes and not
to put, well how to take care of rayon as opposed to cotton and things like that.
Lisa is energized by wanting to reach her students with the importance of the life skills that
she will teach as a FCS educator. Lisa has applied her knowledge obtained through FCS to
her own life and improved it. She remarked on how the FCS courses she has taken while in college have personally impacted her life and lives of her friends and family:

It's weird. After I had my [course number], I took, I think it was [course number], after one of my [name of course] classes, I set up a budget and … I yearly pull like all of my records and so it is like all of those finance classes have set me up better financially and I have all of these financial ideas and plans and everything that is in place. And then, child and family development wise, um I able to apply it all to my family. My poor family, they get so tired of it and my sister has just adopted these two kids and I'm like, “Oh, you need to do this and this” and I am like telling her all about you know different things and approaches and then um, the special ed side, the two little boys are special needs, and so I’m like you know, everything that I have learned, I have applied to what I know or what are my experiences outside of me. Um, and the other day a girl at work was asking about some new weight loss drug that is on the market and I just start telling her all of this information that I have learned in these foods and nutrition classes and she is just blown away that everything that I know and all of the knowledge that I have and I feel like, um, it’s the knowledge that I have learned these two or one and half years that I have been a FACS Ed major, it snuck up on me. It’s totally surprised me. It’s like I know things that I didn’t know that I knew. I didn’t realize that I had learned. So I think that is pretty amazing … It’s like you’re talking and you are like “Where did that come from? I did not realize that I knew that!” So it is pretty cool.

When asked how the ability to share knowledge with others that could improve their current situation made her feel, Lisa answered:
It makes you feel so smart and well-prepared for what you are going to teach. I was even talking to some of the girls in my class about it and they were like “We have been having the same thing” where it is like we just start talking about it and totally didn’t realize that we knew that. So we just surprise ourselves.

It is evident that a progression has occurred in Lisa and her peers as they transform from being students absorbing knowledge to teachers disseminating knowledge. This progression from being a student to a teacher is another part of her journey toward becoming a FCS educator. Lisa identified the major and decided to pursue it, she learned about the content, and is now sharing this knowledge to help others improve their quality of life. Lisa commented on the mission of FCS regarding the focus to improve the quality of life:

I definitely, I definitely think that is the main part of it. I think that is what the classes that make up family and consumer sciences that is their main mission. Having said that it is to improve the human life then I think it would just be devastating to consider taking it out or downplaying family and consumer sciences classes. Um, I know that there are a lot of counties that don’t feel like it is needed, that they are not key classes so I think that is really sad considering the condition that our country is in, that we need to improve the conditions of our lives and the one thing that is promoting that is kind of being downplayed, not talked about, not encouraged to students.

With a very genuine and serious demeanor, Lisa expressed frustration over the marginalization of FCS courses in her state. She released much emotion as she discussed her feelings about the importance of FCS. Believing in the mission to improve the human
condition and society’s need for such information, Lisa thinks it would be devastating to eliminate FCS courses from school systems.

Amy also reflected on the life skills taught in FCS. Referring to her high school FCS teacher, Amy wrote “Her classes taught me so many life skills that I would have never learned otherwise.” During the interview, Amy elaborated on the life skills she was referring to stating:

Um, like I didn’t know how to cook anything. My mom had tried to teach me but it never really like worked and so I learned how to cook, basically, in her class um, which I feel like everyone needs to know that um, and also just like other classes um in family and consumer sciences not necessarily that [teacher] taught but like just child development and parenting classes and stuff like that I learned like a lot about child development from those classes too. I don’t know, I feel like her positive attitude and the like the way that she was like so encouraging was a good influence on me as well.

Like Lisa, Amy has also found herself in situations where she has been able to teach skills she has learned in FCS to others. She explained:

I have a few times. Like my friends, um, were wanting to cook something the other day and I was like telling them how to do it and they were like “Ok, Miss Home Ec.” Like they, they always ask me for advice about stuff like that, so I have a little bit.

In her autobiography, Amy described the relativity of the subject matter of FCS and she referred to the life skills that are taught in FCS courses. Through this passage, she echoes the sentiments of Sara and Lisa:
I feel that the area of family and consumer sciences is something that can be beneficial to every student no matter what they choose to do with their future. Family and consumer sciences introduces life skills that every student needs to know no matter what profession they chose.

Amy discussed the events that led her to place this much importance on FCS:

I can just remember talking about that in my family and consumer sciences classes in high school. Like in the parenting class, she was like “Probably everyone in this room will be a parent one day so you need to pay attention.” Or just like when we talked about foods and nutrition, [teacher] was like “Everyone needs to know this stuff.” That was constantly being reinforced in those classes and it is just what kind of stuck out to me about family and consumer sciences that everyone needs to be aware of those life skills.

In her autobiography, Amy alluded to the future of FCS and she stated “This subject will always have an impact on students’ lives and their futures.” She further substantiated this statement and her feelings on the importance of life skills during the interview explaining:

I just feel like it is such a foundation for life in general, um, like parenting and even like interior design, like everyone, most people might own a home and want to know how to decorate it one day, so everything is just basis for things that you will need in life and um, I feel like even if they change the name, it is still going to be the same subjects taught and its going to impact the students just the same. They are the foundation for life in general no matter what their future plans include.
While in high school, Amy became aware of the importance of the life skills taught in FCS. Amy provided examples of how she has used information learned in FCS in her own life. She explained:

I worked at a day care and stuff that I learned in those classes was helpful for me to know if a child was doing something if that was normal for the age that they were or um, just like how to handle certain situations with children at the day care. Then also um, I guess just cooking in general like I feel like, basically after having that and then having foods and nutrition classes here I feel like if I have a recipe then I cook anything that I want … and its just affected me in that way I guess.

All three participants were able to make connections between what they have learned and how they have used it to improve their own lives. Amy commented that she did not realize the importance of what she was learning while she was in high school.

… we had to fix a meal as our like final project in our class and we had to do it at home and I think that is when I like really realized the importance of what she was teaching me and how like one day I am going to have to do this everyday for my family and um I was better able to appreciate my mom and all that she does for our family and all of the meals that she prepares for us and I think um, it took that for me to realize how important what I was learning was.

Carrying out a class activity at home, made Amy realize the significance of what she was learning and enabled her to appreciate the role of her mother. Now that Amy realizes the value of the skills taught in FCS classrooms, she expressed how she will communicate this importance to her own students:
I think just being positive and um showing that I am excited about it will allow the students to know that I think it is important and maybe they should think that as well … I feel like um because they like choose to be in there that they are going to be excited about it and that they are going to want learn about what I am teaching and I feel like I can use that as an opportunity to just like show them um all the different like things that I am required to teach and also stuff that I think they might want to know and um I hope that I will just be able to show them in the time that I have just like the importance of it and just be excited about it and um just be a positive influence in their lives for the little bit of time that I have.

Amy further articulated the connections she has made between the content she has learned in her FCS classes and what she will be teaching, stating:

One class that was really helpful for me was the family financial planning. Just because I didn’t know much about that subject so it has taught me how to like manage money and stuff like that. Um, I just think a lot of the classes like, would apply, like I took a housing class and we were talking about the buying decision and the process that you go through and I feel like that will help me in the future too so it will all benefit my personal life as well as be something that I can teach one day.

Amy described how the FCS classes that she has taken in college have helped her in her personal life and helped to equip her with information she will need to teach one day. Amy wrote “This subject will always have an impact on students’ lives and their futures and as an educator impacting my students will be my main goal.” Amy’s goal is to impact others positively and she enjoys the feeling that she experiences by helping others. During the
interview, Amy shared her ideas about how FCS can positively impact the lives of students with special needs:

I feel like a lot of the stuff is stuff that will teach them like um just how to care for themselves and how to just like a lot of special needs education is centered around teaching the students independence and I feel like the subject matter of family and consumer sciences will definitely help those students like learn independence and help them as they like are out of high school and they don’t have someone taking care of them all the time.

Through her words, Amy brings attention to the significance of teaching life skills to all populations. In addition to teaching students with special needs independence, Amy also discussed how FCS can be liberating:

It allows you to like learn how to care for yourself. I feel like it teaches you whether it is family financial planning and you learn how to like live on a budget and balance like your money or if it teaches how to cook for yourself I guess it all allows each student to have independence and um do stuff without relying on their parents or someone else to take care of it.

During the interview, Amy shared that she was a very shy person and reflected on how this might affect her as a FCS educator.

It’s actually kind of scary to me because I have always been really shy and it’s not really easy for me to talk and so to think that I am going to be the one having to talk all of the time and lead the classroom. It is kind of scary but it’s also like it kind of gives me confidence to think that I will be able to impact these students and I feel like
as time goes on it will get easier and I will learn what works and what doesn’t and just learn how to be confident and how to like express stuff to students.

Although she realized that her shyness may impact her teaching, Amy also reflected on how believing in the mission of FCS could help her overcome her shyness:

I think it will help definitely. I have to learn to talk to other students just as other students will have to learn independence or how to be successful in their future jobs as well and um, I feel like that mission kind of gives me confidence to teach these students because I hope to improve their quality of life

Believing in her interpretation of the mission to teach life skills to improve the quality of life for her students provides Amy with confidence as a FCS teacher. When asked if she would be as motivated if she were teaching a different subject, Amy stated:

Um, I might be but I don’t know, I feel like, I love working with kids so I feel like early childhood might be easier for me because I feel like they are younger and that’s, it’s probably easier for me to talk to those students but I feel like I wouldn’t be as excited about teaching some of the subjects that I would have to teach to those students as I am about family and consumer sciences. I have also considered even math education because that was one of my strong points in high school but I just never like really had the desire to stand up and write a bunch of numbers on the board all day long, so.

Like Sara, Amy also considered teaching math but she wasn’t as motivated by that subject. Amy enjoys working with children and feels that working in early childhood education would be easier and less challenging for her than teaching FCS to middle school and high school students. As reviewed in the literature, the theory of intrinsic motivation...
supports that individuals may purposely select challenging activities because of the satisfaction derived from engaging in the activity. Deci’s (1975) theory of intrinsic motivation suggested that intrinsically motivated behaviors are based in people’s need to be competent and self-determining. The concept of intrinsic motivation was related to the workplace as Statt (1994) explained “If people feel the job provides them with the right amount of stimulation, reward and challenge they will respond with their best efforts and creativity” (p. 101). Amy’s decision to pursue something she finds more challenging than another safer alternative such as early childhood education supports the theory of intrinsic motivation.

**Development of a Personal Mission**

It is evident by the comments shared in the previous section that the participants want to teach life skills to their students, friends, and family. The participants desire to impart knowledge they feel will help others make more informed choices that could affect their individual well-being and the well-being of their families. The interpretation of the profession’s mission by the participants is to improve the quality of life through educating their students about family relationships, parenting, finances, nutrition, clothing, and consumer choices. In addition to developing their knowledge base and understanding of FCS, the participants have been forming their own personal missions. These personal missions will be put into action once these students become FCS educators. Sara elaborated on her mission:

I think it is just like I said, getting them interested in it and like presenting them with as much as I can in that little bit of time, like in as many different facets of family and consumer sciences that I can squeeze into those nine weeks. But um, but just trying to
introduce them all to those possibilities and um so they, cause now, like my classes they seriously just think it is cooking and sewing and that’s it. They don’t realize that there is so much more to it and um so when they were, one of my classes they were doing a color wheel and they were like “What does this have to do with family and consumer sciences?” And my teacher was like “Well, I am introducing the interior design unit.” So I think it is just trying to get people to realize and its going to take more than just me like I know that I am not going to be the person that is going to change it but I know in my classroom that my kids will understand that it is not just cooking and sewing and that there are so many more facets of the area, the whole area. So I guess that is what I plan to do.

In this narrative, Sara explained that her mission will be to expose her students to all of the possibilities in FCS and to broaden their understanding of the scope of the field to help them see beyond the stereotypical image of cooking and sewing. She provided an example of observing the interaction between the FCS teacher and students in a secondary classroom where students were not aware of interior design as an area of FCS. Sara made reference to the identity crisis that has plagued the profession for many years and recognized that she alone will not be able to resolve it. However, Sara does take ownership of what will occur in her classroom and the message she will communicate to her students.

After becoming aware of FCS and increasing her knowledge base, Lisa’s passion for the profession and her purpose became increasingly clear to her. She wrote in her autobiography “After declaring this as my major, I have only grown more passionate about our purpose as FACS Educators.” Lisa articulated her purpose as a FCS educator:
Well, right now my purpose is trying to keep the name from changing um, as all
FACS people are right now trying to keep that from happening. I am writing letters to
all the senators with everybody. I was in [professor’s name] class and so she’s
promoted us to write letters and things like that to all of them. But outside of that I
would say I guess my purpose is to make well-rounded individuals who maybe can if
nothing else can walk away with knowledge of my class and to understand … they
have lots of opportunities and lots of chances out there and to help them make the
right choices, I guess … I know it sounds silly but we all say that we want to impact
one person and I guess that is my purpose to impact just one student.

At the beginning of this narrative, Lisa referred to an issue involving the name of the
FCS secondary program in her state. The State Department of Education proposed that the
name of the secondary FCS program be changed to a name other than FCS. She and her
classmates were encouraged by one of their professors to become advocates for retaining the
current name and promoting the secondary FCS programs. Because it was a recent issue, it
was very much on the forefront of her mind. As she continued talking, Lisa reflected on her
purpose beyond the current issue and vocalized that her purpose will be to make well-
rounded individuals. Her motives appear altruistic as she wants to teach students to make
better choices to enhance their quality of life. She became filled with emotion as she talked
about impacting one student and helping him/her have a better life. When asked what she
hoped to give from being a FCS educator, Lisa stated:

Opportunity to the students to have something that they might not have known about
or thought about previously, maybe … that would probably be the biggest thing cause
there are so many kids that come into this class thinking “This is an easy class” …
“I’m just gonna take this class to graduate cause I don’t want to take any science” or whatever it was that they didn’t want to take another one of and they just kind of, they’re the lost students and those would be the ones that I would try to make them see that there is stuff, they can change their path that they’re on and show them opportunities that they have.

Lisa described her desire to give students opportunities to learn and realize things about themselves that they might not otherwise have. The way she constructs meaning out of giving opportunity to her students is powerful, especially the way she said the word “opportunity” and described her desire to give it to the students. Lisa reflected on two of her mentors in FCS, the practicum teacher and the teacher educator for FCS, and she contributed her growing passion for the purpose of FCS to the influence they have had on her life. In her autobiography, she wrote “I just hope that as an educator that I can be as inspiring and encouraging as all of these ladies have been to me.” During the interview, Lisa elaborated on what she hoped to emulate from the example shown by her mentors:

The compassion. Because no matter what [practicum teacher] faces, I mean she can be crying right before class starts about something that is going on in her family and as soon as the kids walk in, it’s all gone. She is the strong person again for them and doesn’t let it show that her whole world has fallen apart on the other side. So I think the compassion.

Because of the example of her mentors, Lisa wants to model compassion to her students.

The emotion stirred by talking about the influence of her mentors was evident in Lisa’s voice and through her tears.
Like Lisa, Amy referred to impacting students and she wrote in her autobiography “This subject will always have an impact on students’ lives and their futures and as an educator impacting my students will be my main goal.” Amy described the influence behind the creation of this goal:

Well, I grew up going to church and we went on mission trips and every summer we went somewhere different and um we would set up block parties in inner city communities and um have like children come and feed them and they would be like so grateful and just like how good that felt like to know that you like helped someone out for one day. Um, I just wanted to have a profession where I can like always impact people in that same way.

Amy expanded on how she felt that FCS education would allow her to impact others positively:

I feel like it will allow me to teach students things that they can always use and also like um, in my family and consumer sciences classes in high school we would like every semester we would raise money for a family within our class and we would give that family something for Christmas or do stuff like that and I just felt like I could use my opportunity to like as like family as the basis of the subject matter to impact other people in the community as well.

Using the family as the basic unit of society, Amy wants to engage her students in activities that help families within her classroom and community. Amy shared how she will achieve her goal of impacting students:

I hope to be a teacher that students feel like they can talk to about anything or they can come to if they have a problem. I just feel like being that support for them will
impact them more than anything, especially for students that don’t have that support at home.

Amy shared how her high school FCS teacher impacted her and her friends:

… there were a couple of my friends that would go and just like sit with her and talk to her like everyday before school started because their parents had to drop them off early cause they had to be at work so they would just like go sit with her for awhile.

But she was very approachable and easy to talk to and was willing to help anyone …

I want to be like a teacher like that, that people can talk too easily and stuff.

Through the example of her FCS teacher, Amy developed a desire to imitate the same caring behavior to her future students.

Each participant developed a personal mission in alignment with her interpretation of the mission of the profession to improve the human condition. The participants want to implement their commitment to their personal mission by impacting their students positively and by providing their students with opportunities to learn information they deem important to successful family functioning and optimal well-being.

Responses to the Scenario

After participating in the individual interview, each participant was given a scenario of a contemporary situation and asked to write how she would use FCS content to address the situation. The purpose of this activity was to further examine the participant’s understanding of the integrative nature of FCS and her ability to use the content of FCS to solve contemporary problems. Participants identified the major elements of the situation presented in the scenario, examined the possible effects and consequences, and reflected on what could be done about the situation. Participants explained how middle school and high school
students may encounter a similar situation and articulated how FCS classes could be employed to help students facing similar circumstances. Finally, participants discussed how FCS education and educators could be utilized to aid in the prevention of similar situations.

Participants identified the major elements of the situation as parenting problems, lack of focus on the family and values taught by the family, poor choices related to nutrition and health, poor financial practices, and the influence of drugs and a lack of accepting responsibility for one’s actions. Participants discussed possible consequences of being overexposed to this situation in the media. One possible consequence is that of lowering values and building immunity to the lower standards accepted by society as a result of the media messages pervading homes. The constant barrage of information that enters the home through the television and Internet can influence the perception of what is normal and accepted by members of society. When reflecting on what could be done about the situation presented, Sara wrote:

We need to not accept it. Uphold your family’s values and place emphasis on them. As a caregiver, it is important to explain why someone like [Celebrity] is not a positive role model, place other more influential role models in the spot light of your children. Talk to your kids and give them valid reasons why they should not want to idolize celebs like [Celebrity]. Communication within families and by the parents is important to addressing these issues. Until these celebs face more detrimental downfalls for their actions—instead of success—the media will continue to place these people in the spotlight because that is what the public wants to see. If we can convince our children not to idolize these individuals, and turn off the TV when it
speaks of the latest rumors and etc., eventually the media will get the picture and go on to report other things that make a positive difference in people’s lives.

The response Sara provided corresponds with the emphasis that she placed on family during her interview and her desire to teach others how to have a better home life. All three participants indicated that educating the public and providing good role models is important to addressing contemporary situations in society. Participants related the contemporary situation faced by the celebrity in the scenario to the lives of the students they will teach and how FCS courses could be used to help students facing similar situations. Sara wrote:

Gossiping and spreading the latest embarrassing stories about things students did or things that happened in homeroom is a huge aspect of middle and high school. It is very similar to being in the spotlight like [Celebrity]. Typically, after a few days, the school forgets about what happened, and they go on to seek new and improved gossip to spread. We don’t know if gossip is true but the more we hear something, the more likely we are to accept it and believe it. In FACS classrooms, topics such as self-esteem, peer pressure, and gossiping are covered in detail. It is important to stress that one should be their own person and to stand up for what they believe in, but it is equally important to teach these students that people associate them by first impressions, the people they hang out with, and the things they are seen doing (as sad as that is). Teaching these students how to present themselves and get others to associate them with the things they desire to be associated with is a skill that can be taught in the classroom.

During her interview, Sara discussed how middle school was an awkward time for kids and how she wanted to make it a better time for them. In this part of her response she speaks to
gossip that occurs at the middle and high school level. She related the context of gossip being spread in the schools to the spotlight on the celebrity featured in the scenario. Sara addressed how FCS courses instruct students about self-esteem, peer pressure, and gossiping. She discussed how teachers could use the information covered in FCS courses to reach students and teach them how to present themselves positively and build better relationships.

Lisa also recognized that middle and high school students look to these celebrities as role models. She wrote:

I think that high school and middle school students definitely look up to [Celebrities] and all of those other rich and lavish girls that are so frequently in the media for being bad. I think that the things that these girls are doing are issues that we cover in family and consumer science classes. For instance, in child and family development classes, the students learn about babies and usually have to carry one around with them for a few days. This is done to help prevent students from having children too early. Then the classes also teach to some extent about finances and planning, and these would obviously have helped [Celebrity] being that she does not save or invest any of her money.

Lisa identified the relationship of the issues that celebrities encounter to the information covered in FCS classes. The information about the situation of the celebrity in the scenario given to the participants indicated that the celebrity did not save or invest any money. Financial literacy is an important life skill that is taught in FCS courses. During her interview, Lisa mentioned the importance of the financial information she gained in her FCS classes taken during her college education and emphasized her desire to teach students how to manage their money.
Amy related the situation in the scenario to the lives of middle and high school students and reflected on how FCS classes can be used to help students. She wrote:

Middle and high school students that may come from backgrounds such as [Celebrity] may have the same issues as her, just maybe not as extreme. They could experience a death in the family that could cause issues in their lives or not receive attention from their families and seek to gain that attention from other areas, whether positive or negative. Family and Consumer Sciences classes could teach students the importance of family and appropriate coping skills for situations such as [Celebrity’s].

Although maybe not as extreme, Amy sees the relationship between the issues faced by celebrities such as the celebrity featured in the scenario and middle and high school students. In keeping with her desire to want to teach about the family, Amy focused her response on FCS courses teaching the importance of family and tools to aid students when they encounter difficult situations.

Throughout the analysis of their autobiographies, individual interviews, and responses to the scenario, it was evident that participants believed that all areas of FCS are important to helping students improve the conditions of their daily living. After analyzing the response to the scenario given by each participant, it is interesting to note that each seemed to articulate her specific solution of how FCS courses could be applied to the questions presented in the scenario based on what she thought was a central aspect of FCS. For Sara it was enhancing family time and improving the quality of relationships; for Lisa it was promoting financial literacy; for Amy it was focusing on the importance of family and impacting the students in a positive manner.
For the last question pertaining to the scenario, participants were asked “How family and consumer sciences education and educators could be employed to aid in the prevention of similar situations?” Sara wrote:

I feel as a FACS educator I will be responsible to eliminate whatever gossip I can eliminate in my classroom. I know that complete elimination is impossible and if students want to get it out, they will find a way, so it is up to me to challenge these students and to get them to think of things in a different perspective.

Sara’s responsibility as a FCS educator is to encourage her students to think critically and challenge them to think from a different perspective. She recognizes her role in her classroom and her responsibility to be involved in solving everyday problems that are important to her students.

Although Sara’s response focused on what she can do in her classroom, Lisa’s response focused on the larger environment.

Well I think that one way that family and consumer sciences could be used to help aid in prevention would be for this class to be made mandatory of all high school students. Based on the skills that it teaches, and the obvious spiral it can send one into that has not had any of the education, it seems that it would be beneficial.

Believing that the skills taught in FCS can be beneficial to all students, Lisa’s response advocated that a course in FCS be required of all high school students prior to graduation.

The response given by Amy focused on teaching students about family relationships and self-esteem.

Family and Consumer Sciences can teach students in similar situations self-esteem, help them to understand the importance of family, and provide an outlet for these
students, such as FCCLA opportunities. In being in a family and consumer sciences classroom, students can learn the parenting skills and appropriate behavior when dealing with children that [Celebrity] apparently lacks. They will also learn about grief management and the importance of their family in their lives. I hope as an educator I can be someone that my students can talk to if they are facing these situations and encourage them to react differently than [Celebrity] has.

Through the responses given, it was evident that the participants realized the value of what FCS teaches and how courses could be used to teach middle and high school students how to improve their lives. Amy and Sara both mentioned what they could do as FCS educators bringing their responses to a very personal level. Sara talked about what she could do in her classroom. Similar to comments made during her interview, Amy wrote about being someone who her students could talk to about difficult situations. As discussed in the literature review, the uniqueness of the FCS profession is demonstrated by the integrative approach that brings the knowledge base of the profession and of its supporting disciplines together to enhance the quality of life and meet the emergent needs of individuals, families, and communities (Adams, 2001).

The FCS profession is focused on addressing the challenges of families and daily life through holistic, interdisciplinary, and integrative perspectives (Peterat & Smith, 2000). As discussed in the literature review, one of the outcomes expected to come from dialogue regarding the body of knowledge included “Affirming the commitment to provide appropriate instruction of persons entering the profession” (Anderson & Nichols, 2001, p. 18). The appropriate instruction of new professionals entering the profession includes providing them with a comprehensive education in FCS that will allow them to comprehend
the holistic focus of the profession and the relationship of one area of specialization to another. The participants of this study discussed the importance of the life skills taught in FCS and vocalized their experiences of learning the content taught in classes offered by a FCS unit accredited by AAFCS. They made connections between what they had learned in class and the real world. The participants voiced their desire to help others make informed decisions about their well-being, relationships, and resources. They expressed a desire and enthusiasm about teaching others how to improve their lives. Believing in the mission of what one does everyday contributes to making her a passionate professional and each participant articulated her belief in the mission to help others have a better quality of life. The comments from the participants support the literature that people who enjoy what they do and find meaning in it will find it life-giving, enjoyable, and exhibit amazing sources of energy (Anderson, 1984; Hoeflin et al., 1987). The search for a career that one can be passionate about can be related to one’s personality, identity, and motivation for a particular type of work and career field.

**Summary**

Three themes that emerged in this chapter were (1) the participants’ interpretation of the mission of the profession; (2) the development of a personal mission by each participant; and (3) the responses of the participants to the scenario indicating their understanding of the integrative nature of the profession. After listening to the participants and analyzing the data, I began to see their passion for FCS emerge. They first had to identify the major and then learn the knowledge base associated with it. As their knowledge grew, so did their passion for the subject area and their beliefs in their roles of educating others about improving their lives. Recognizing and identifying one’s values, interests, and motivations are necessary
steps to clarifying one’s passion. As we progressed in the discussion of their journey to FCS education, I believe the participants’ passion for what they will teach as FCS educators emerged and their motivations for being FCS educators were revealed.
CHAPTER 6

UNDERSTANDING THE MOTIVATION AND PASSION FOR THE PROFESSION OF FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

The goal of this study was to examine the development of passion for the FCS profession in three undergraduate students majoring in FCS education. To examine the development of passion, three purposes were stated in a hierarchal order with the assumption that the process of developing passion for FCS proceeds in a hierarchal manner. The first purpose was to ascertain an understanding of undergraduate students’ identification with FCS education and their decisions to declare it as a major. The second purpose was to examine the participants’ knowledge of the content with an understanding of the integrative nature of the FCS profession. The third purpose was to identify the participants’ motivation and passion for being a FCS educator. If one has identified with the major, become knowledgeable of the content and knowledge base of FCS, then an intense passion for FCS education may develop. This passion may be the motivating force which will propel her to carry out the mission of FCS as a committed FCS educator. The focus of this chapter is on identifying and understanding the motivation and passion of each participant for the profession of FCS, specifically FCS education. Categories that emerged related to this investigation included benefits expected from being a FCS educator, passion for FCS, commitment to the profession, and their emerging identities as FCS professionals.

The participants’ journey to FCS education began with identifying the major and declaring it as a program of study and followed with developing their knowledge base. Their motivation and passion became more evident as I analyzed participants’ autobiographies, individual interviews, and responses to the scenario. Their motivation for FCS lies in their
admiration for the mission as they interpret it and their desire to fulfill that mission. The participants are motivated by FCS and its mission because it is relevant to their own lives, they find the content of FCS interesting and they enjoy it, and they want to work with people to help them improve their quality of life.

Benefits of Being a Family and Consumer Sciences Educator

The participants’ motivation for FCS became more evident when I inquired into what they expected to receive from being a FCS educator. Sara contemplated her desire to spark an interest for FCS in her students. When asked if her benefit will be knowing that she stimulated an interest for FCS in her students, Sara stated:

I mean, honestly, I don’t think I will know. I don’t think I will know that I sparked it. But um, the possibility of being the one that sparked it and even if I didn’t know, I think would be a benefit and like being at my school now, my teacher is an awesome teacher and um, but she is kind of unorganized and I think that the kids find it kind of hard to relate to her but um, I am just observing and helping out a little bit. And so, working with the kids and kind of spending a little bit more time and actually sitting down with some of them and like helping them with their work and like the other day one kid told me that I was his favorite teacher and hearing that, just kind of like, I don’t know, it just made me really happy. And then he was just so cute cause he was like “When are you going to start teaching?” and I said “Next year.” And he uh, he goes “Oh, ok.” And I was like “But I won’t be here.” And he was like “Well, way to ruin my day.” It just like, I don’t know. I couldn’t wait to come home and tell my mom that I had my first kid say that because that just meant a whole lot. And he doesn’t know that that meant a whole lot but the type of kid he is, like he, he is not
the type of kid that just sucks up to the teacher so it meant a lot that it was coming from somebody like him too. But um, I don’t know. I know being a teacher, you don’t get benefits. Yea, you get the summers off and whatever but you need the summers off to get your sanity. So um, like I know that the benefits have to come like within and you just being happy with doing what you’re doing and hoping that you are making an impact on the kids.

In her response, Sara explained that she doesn’t think she will always know when she has impacted a student and sparked his/her interest in FCS but she is excited about having the opportunity to do so. She shared her first positive comments received from a student and her excitement over discussing the experience with her mother. She realized the benefits she will receive are not necessarily the same as the world defines them in regard to monetary reward. Instead, Sara discovered that the benefits will come from within as an intrinsic reward. Sara vocalized her own experience with choosing a career for internal reward rather than external reward when she summarized her journey of arriving at FCS education:

   It has been a rollercoaster … It’s been a ride and it’s been five years which I keep being reminded of that fifth year. But it has definitely been worth it, definitely been worth it. Like if I had graduated last year with advertising, I don’t know where I would be right now, honestly. Like, I know I would probably not be doing advertising. And so I am grateful that I did arrive at it when I did. Like it just came in the nick of time which is probably when I needed it. Like, if I had with my background like as far as the journalism and stuff I would not have, I mean obviously, not having home ec in high school and not doing FCCLA and all that like would have definitely come here as a freshmen still with the same career path. But um, I don’t
know, like, I don’t think at that point in my life when I was a freshmen, of course my experiences in high school are what influenced me and made me that person, but at that point I don’t think I was ready to accept this as my major.

In this narrative, Sara constructed meaning on arriving at the major of FCS education and has an interesting revelation about her self believing that as a freshman she wasn’t ready to accept FCS education as her major. Sara elaborated about why she was not ready to accept FCS education as her major:

I was too money oriented and it took a long time for me to realize that money wasn’t important. Like, and I think the reason that I was money oriented is cause I have seen the financial stress of my family in the past couple of, like since I was growing up in my family and they thought it was ok to tell me about that kind of stuff but um, I didn’t want that for myself. But growing and living in the dorms and living in the sorority house and finally living in my apartment, like it took that progression and it took, like I liked to cook when I was younger but I didn’t love to cook until I got into my apartment and then like between dorms and apartment is like when I fell in love with the Food Network and fell in love with all of these different things and with real estate and like I think I have significantly changed as a person from my freshman to my junior year. I was a totally different person. Not as far as personality wise like I still was “[name]” but as far as my interests but as you said it has been resorting back to my old interests. Like, for a little while there I was more like, like I said money, career oriented versus just happiness. And um, so I think that is what changed me, my wants for later in life but um, I don’t know, I think it, like I said, I think it just came in the nick of time and that’s when I think I was supposed to have that little journey
and path and go that route for a little while and then I think it was just time for me to come back.

Before arriving at FCS education, Sara had to realize some things about herself. She was pursuing a major in an area that would bring her financial reward over happiness and through time she discovered that life wasn’t all about money. Her thoughts about her wants for later in life influenced her decision to change her major as well as reflecting on her interests and her ability to create a fulfilling career utilizing those interests. She expressed how being in the classroom during her practicum experiences has reaffirmed her decision to be a FCS teacher:

As far as the courses I have had and actually finally getting into the classroom and experiencing that, it’s kind of been like a reassurance. Cause you know up until I got into the classroom, I was just like on pins and needles hoping that once I get into the classroom its gonna be what I expected. And um, actually getting into the classroom and seeing the interaction and the fun that goes on in there and um just kind of like yea, this is right … as far as the fun and all of that stuff, it was what I expected. It is what I wanted.

While Sara has arrived at a major that she feels will bring her happiness, she still gets some pressure from her family to pursue a career in business:

… like my grandma she’s always like “Well, aren’t you going to do something with your advertising?” Like I get that all of the time. And my dad, just last week over Thanksgiving, he was talking with my aunt and um her daughter and her husband or son-in-law or whatever um, they live in [City]. He just started this, he has got his hands in all kinds of things. But um, he started something and ended up getting a
check for like $1.5 million right before Thanksgiving. Like, they are both making, she is in marketing and he’s kind of doing marketing but doing more governmental stuff. And um, she is like “you know if you ever change your mind about teaching, I know that as far as marketing goes, he could get you a job and you would be paid well.” So I got that money thing back in my head and um, honestly, it didn’t take, it didn’t take anything out of me to tell her “no.” Like, I was just like that is not what I want to do. And, like basically to turn down a starting salary of like $90,000 but um like, that is not where I want to be. That is not the state, the city, the career, that is just not where I want to be and I finally realized that and I am finally able to accept that. But she is like “Well, if you change your mind, you know you will have that opportunity for a while.” So I mean like yea, it is comforting to know that that opportunity is out there if things don’t work out but I want things to work out.

Pursuing a career based on the potential for monetary reward was brought back to the forefront of Sara’s mind at a recent family gathering. However, Sara is confident about her choice to become a FCS teacher and she is able to accept it as her major and career. This confidence gives her the ability to reject an offer for a job in marketing. While Sara was reassured that there are lucrative career opportunities in marketing and that her family is willing to help her find a job in that area, she desires that things work out in FCS education.

Similar to Sara, Lisa also heard comments from family members regarding the lack of money to be made in the field of education. However, Lisa knows she is not pursuing this career for monetary gain. When asked what she would receive from being a FCS teacher, Lisa responded:
Well, like I’m already getting the benefits, I think. Cause the other day I was sitting in the practicum class and I’ve done my practicum with the same teacher that I am with right now twice because I ended up pushing back my graduation date from doing three practicums and um, so I was sitting in the class the other day, just sitting off to the side and it was, classes were changing and like one of the students just came in to talk to me, just to see how things were going because she hadn’t seen me since last semester. I think, just the um, the relationship I would have with my students that you know, I don’t want to be their friend by no means but I want them to know that they can come and talk to me and that they can confide in me and things like that. I mean, I am not going to talk to them about what I did this weekend but that they do have someone that cares. And when they do come to me to talk to me about things that are bothering them or they just need a shoulder, I think that will be the return, for me.

Even though she has not graduated, Lisa already feels that she is receiving benefits as a FCS educator in training. Her benefit comes in the way of forming relationships with her students and being a support system for them. Amy spoke of the benefits she expects to receive as a FCS teacher:

I feel like any teaching profession is a great job, a great schedule, it allows opportunity for you to spend time with your family if you have kids you will be on the same schedule as your children. I feel like just being around people all of the time will benefit me and um knowing that I can have impact on high school students and allowing maybe their high school experience to be better than they had expected.

Both Lisa and Amy spoke about impacting students positively and they perceive this as a benefit. The benefits discussed by each participant involve receiving internal rewards rather
than external rewards. According to the literature reviewed on the theory of intrinsic motivation, the reward for a behavior is internal to the individual. The participants verbalized their expected benefits and benefits they have already received. Internal rather than external rewards were mentioned. They are not pursuing this major for the external rewards but for the internal satisfaction they experience as they impact the lives of their students.

**Passion**

The goal of the study was to focus on the development of passion for the profession of FCS in three undergraduate students majoring in FCS education. Data collection procedures were designed to obtain information that would allow for the investigation into the overall goal of examining the development of passion. The purpose of the final data collection method, the group interview, was to focus specifically on the topic of passion. To begin the discussion on the topic of passion, participants provided individual definitions of passion. Sara defined passion as “an internal drive to fulfill a desire.” Sara’s definition coincided with “internal” or “within” corresponding to the theory intrinsic motivation which asserts that motivation must come from within, from internal rewards rather than rewards provided by the external environment. Sara’s definition is similar to one found in the literature describing passion as something that is intensely personal (Anderson, 1984) and as the motivation that drives people to be creative, productive, and efficient at work (Cassidy, 2000). Lisa stated that passion was “… something that you feel really strongly about. You tend to have passion for things that you feel strongly about.” Her definition parallels the definition found in Webster (2003) which defined passion as “any emotion, as hate, love or fear; intense emotional excitement as rage, enthusiasm, or lust; the object of any strong desire.” Amy described passion as “… enthusiasm, excitement, and love for something.”
Amy’s definition resembles Anderson’s (1984) description of passion as an “intense emotional excitement” and as a feeling that comes to people who are “intense about some object, person, ideal, or belief” (p. 12). After the participants shared their definitions, I read to the group the definitions provided by Anderson (1984), Cassidy (2000), and Webster (2003) for reflection. After analyzing the definitions provided by each participant, connections were made between the ones they provided and the ones found in the literature. This indicated to me that the participants did possess an understanding of the concept of passion.

In addition to defining passion through a review of literature, statements and quotes within the professional literature on the topic of passion and its relationship to family and consumer sciences were located. To encourage dialogue on the topic of passion, I provided seven of these statements and quotes to the group participants. A large portion of this section contains the quotes and the participants’ responses to the statements and quotes.

The first quote I presented to the participants was “The heart of family and consumer sciences is demonstrated by the passion with which an individual practices” (Nickols & Anderson, 2001, p. 6). After reading the quote, there was a long pause as the participants pondered the meaning. Sara began the discussion:

I guess, I don’t really know if this is, cause I am having a hard time trying to understand what that is saying. But, um, that, pretty much that you enjoy the things that you are teaching as a FACS teacher.

Amy followed her by remarking:

It just makes me think about certain teachers that compare like, if they are excited about it and if they are passionate about it then they are going to go above and beyond
in the classroom. And the teachers that aren’t as excited about it, their classrooms aren’t as exciting and they aren’t as involved with FCCLA and stuff like that.

In Sara’s response, she formed a connection between enjoyment and passion in one’s professional practice. Amy provided a comparison between two types of family and consumer sciences teachers, those displaying passion versus teachers that do not. The group commented that they had witnessed the actions of teachers with passion and those without it. Their observations are based on their practicum experiences and their time as FCS students at the secondary level. Lisa provided a comparison of a passionate teacher to one who did not demonstrate passion, discussing the teacher with passion first:

Very talkative, outgoing and ready to interact with the students and get into what the day has to bring. And then the other teacher is like “Hey, go sit down,” not very enthusiastic, very straightforward but wasn’t really trying to interact with the students, just wanted them to get their stuff done and her be by herself.

Because narrative inquiry focuses on the lived experience of participants, it is easier and more appropriate for participants to speak to their own personal experiences, providing examples when necessary to place themselves within the context of their thoughts. Once the conversation turned to their personal experiences, the participants were better able to respond to the quote and construct meaning. Both Amy and Lisa recalled teachers demonstrating passion and those who did not. After thinking about what she had learned by observing her practicum teacher, Sara elaborated on her response:

My practicum teacher, like I could tell talking with her that she had a strong passion for the subject but I don’t feel like she was able to present that to her students. Like
talking with her one on one I could see it. But with her in front of the classroom it was almost like it wasn’t there.

While she felt that the teacher was passionate when they discussed FCS one-on-one, Sara did not feel that the teacher was able to communicate her passion for FCS to the students.

The second quote focused on the ability to transmit a commitment to FCS to others. Bower (2001) stated “Whether you see your commitment as a passion, a mission, or even a fever, it is contagious and we are carriers” (p. 20). The participants were asked to respond to this quote by considering if they had caught any passion from FCS professionals. Lisa responded:

I definitely think I caught it from my last teacher that I was with, the practicum teacher that I was with cause she was so passionate about it. It was like her entire life. So just being around her and going to her classroom and how much she taught me I guess led to me being more passionate.

The influence of the practicum teacher that Lisa was observing led her to becoming more passionate about FCS. Lisa characterized her role model’s passion:

… she’s always, the students, she’s so passionate about the students and always “Did ya’ll have a good weekend? Did you have a good day?” Um, and all of that kind of stuff. But then she was always, everything that she taught she had so much enthusiasm about it and trying to express to them how important it was.

The teacher demonstrated passion for the students, enthusiasm for the subject, and expressed its importance to the students. Sara’s passion and commitment for FCS was inspired by her advisors and instructors at the undergraduate level. She explained:
Well, like with me, like this just all came all of a sudden and so, um meeting the like advisors, it wasn’t necessarily my practicum teacher or any like in the classroom experience, but it was more like the teachers that I have had and seeing how inspired they are by the subject that got me even more excited about what I am going to be teaching.

Amy reflected on whom she caught the passion from and stated “I think just my high school teacher that I had. She was passionate about it and she is the one that made me passionate about it.” All three of the participants identified professionals within FCS that had inspired and ignited passion for FCS within them. For Lisa it was her practicum teacher, for Sara it was the advisors and teachers in the FCS unit at the university, and for Amy it was her high school FCS teacher. As a group, they agreed that the advisor and teacher educator for FCS at the university had been instrumental in their developing passion. Lisa described the professor stating “She was just so encouraging and didn’t want to let anybody get away, you know? She was willing to do whatever it took to get you to where you needed to be and that to me that was amazing.” Sara recalled her experience of meeting the FCS teacher educator:

I remember the first day that I walked into her office. I was so scared because like all of a sudden I got this desire to do this. And I walk into her office and I’m like I have three semesters. Is this possible? And she gave me the biggest hug. She had no idea who I was, first time ever seeing me, gave me the biggest hug and she said, “Sit down we’re going to find a way.” And she did.

Unlike Amy, Lisa and Sara did not have someone at the high school level that had inspired them to select FCS education as a major. Instead, they arrived at the major while in college pursuing other majors. As Lisa stated “I just stumbled across it.” After listening to Sara’s
recollection of her meeting, Lisa referred to the teacher educator stating that “She did the exact same thing for me.” The FCS teacher educator played a pivotal role in connecting Lisa and Sara to FCS education and welcoming them to the major, ensuring them that they could complete the degree. As they stumbled across the major, they were caught by the professor they now revere as a mentor and inspiration.

During their individual interviews, the participants expressed their desires to improve the quality of life for students, family members, and friends. The participants were provided with a third quote focused on the essence of FCS:

The essence of family and consumer sciences can be summarized using three words – head, heart, and soul. The profession’s body of knowledge is the intellectual foundation or head. The heart is the mission to improve the quality of life, which reflects our passion, caring, and compassion as professionals. Soul puts us in touch with the “whys” of our being that which inspires, motivates us, and gives meaning to our work (Nickols & Anderson, 2001, p. 2).

After reading this quote to the participants, there was a long pause as they pondered the meaning of the passage. Sara stated:

It definitely goes along with, like I feel like that kind of summarizes my interview from before. So it is almost like a step ladder, like you have the foundation is the head and then I feel like I haven’t necessarily as far as seeing um, like it change other people’s lives and as far as like the soul part I don’t think I’ve completely accomplished that because I haven’t seen that yet, I feel like I haven’t changed anybody’s life yet because I haven’t started teaching and I don’t know that I will
change anybody’s life but I feel like that’s as far as that goes, I don’t feel like I’ve completely accomplished that.

In this passage, Sara constructed meaning of the quote by comparing the development of the head, heart, and soul to a step ladder. She reflected on her individual interview and feels like the quote summarized what she discussed during the interview. At this point of her professional journey toward becoming a FCS educator, she has been able to work on developing her foundation or knowledge base which she refers to as the “head” by taking courses within FCS but has not been able to develop the heart and soul fully because of a lack of teaching experience. As evident by comments revealed during her individual interview, she interprets the heart of the profession or the mission to improve the quality of life for others. However, she feels that she needs more actual teaching experiences to further the development of the soul. There was a long period of silence as the group deliberated over the meaning of the quote. To encourage more dialogue among the group, the fourth quote was provided and focused on developing commitment as a result of finding a passion for one’s work: “Finally, I hope you will find a passion in what you are doing – so much so that you will develop a deep commitment to your professional practice” (Ralston, 2001, p. 28).

Participants were asked to focus on their current passion for FCS and consider if they have developed a commitment to FCS education based on their lived experiences. Lisa responded:

I think so. I mean, I don’t know of anything else that I would want to do. I mean, I probably would like to get my master’s in counseling but that also goes with family and consumer sciences in a way because of the child and family development and all. But I definitely, I am so passionate about the things that it encompasses that I don’t see myself changing into something else.
Lisa articulated her passion for FCS and voiced her desire to remain within the field. When contemplating pursuing a master’s degree in counseling, Lisa made a connection back to the knowledge base of FCS. Sara followed Lisa stating:

I feel like all the different facets, like, are like all passions, like you said (referring to Lisa), that we love and its almost like taking the step and making it your major and kind of wanting to teach and it makes it official and shows that you are committed to it, it shows that we are committed to all those different areas.

Lisa and Sara both commented on their passion and love for the areas encompassed within FCS. Sara communicated that commitment to FCS is first demonstrated by taking the step to declare it as one’s major. I presented the participants with a fifth quote: “… family and consumer sciences is one of my passions. It provides my spirit the ability to communicate with all ages, a purpose for my being, and a way to extend myself and educate others” (Fairchild, 2001, p. 29). The participants had difficulty articulating their thoughts in response to this quote. To stimulate dialogue and spark their thoughts, I presented them with a hypothetical situation. Prior to giving them the details of the situation, I related the conversation back to something they had recently experienced. I stated:

All of you commented on the name change issue that has been up in the last several months as far as the secondary level. They wanted to change, it was being initiated and supported by the State School Superintendent to change it to something other than family and consumer sciences and we didn’t know what that was going to be. Each of you discussed your feelings about that. Think about that situation, just being a student, at this point and you talked about it in class and remember how you felt about that, you know, as a student majoring in this area. Now, think on a different
level that you are out there teaching. You are teaching family and consumer sciences. You are told that family and consumer sciences courses are going to be eliminated from middle schools and high schools all over the United States. What would you think about that?

There was a pause as participants contemplated their responses. I encouraged them to revisit the feelings they experienced when they where recently involved in the name change issue within the state. Sara started the dialogue:

I just think I would feel lost. Like, because, even though prior to changing or adding this major, I had other ideas about things I wanted to do but for so long I have set my mind to doing this and like you said I have committed myself to it and then once you commit yourself and then somebody is taking that away, I would just feel lost because I wouldn’t know what to do next.

Sara has mentally made a commitment to FCS education. If someone were to take it away from her, she would experience a feeling of being lost. Lisa immediately followed by stating:

It would almost be devastating because um what we do teach, so many people need and its stuff that maybe their family can’t teach them because of the new structure of the family, how it has changed over the years, I feel like we are needed more than we were in the past. And so I think if they just eliminated our area, it could be very detrimental, I think.

Lisa expressed how she views the current need for FCS professionals to help individuals learn information, skills, and values that may no longer be taught in families due to the altered institution of the American family. The conversation among the group continued as the hypothetical situation of program elimination brought some very real concerns for these
preservice teachers to the forefront. Sara stated “It hits home too because I fear that that actually could and very well happen and so that scares me.” Sara believed the elimination of FCS programs in middle and high schools could become a reality. She voiced her concern for this realizing that many programs had already been eliminated from schools at the local level. Lisa provided more insight on her fear based on observations of a large metro area in her home state:

And in some schools like [County] they don’t have that much of a focus on it. They’re like “Oh, we’ll have one FACS teacher.” And then in other areas there are lots of FACS teachers and they have lots of different areas. Um, they don’t have one teacher trying to teach one child and family development class and then one foods class, they have one teacher that only teaches child and family development and one teacher that only teaches the foods. And so … I think it shows that like in [County] they only have one and [County] is such a large school system that its not the primary focus in a lot of big prominent school systems so that would make me think, be more “ify” I guess towards it.

Lisa articulated her feelings that FCS may be more important in smaller communities and rural areas than in large metropolitan areas. Her judgment of this is based on the observation that in a very large county school system, there may only be one FCS teacher teaching all areas of FCS. Although the opposite may be true in other counties, smaller counties, that show their support for FCS programs by having more than one teacher in the department.

Amy vocalized her concerns about program elimination:

… when you said that I didn’t really think about myself because I am sure that I could find other jobs. It might not be one that I enjoy as much but I just thought about
students and what they are going to be missing out on if it is taken out of the school system.

The initial thoughts that entered Amy’s mind were of the students realizing that they would be losing in this situation because they would not be receiving valuable information taught in FCS classrooms.

Sara expanded on her feelings about the program elimination:

… not that I’m not committed to the kids but I like have completely devoted myself to this and told myself this is what I am supposed to do. I never felt, until I found this major, I never felt that way before. And having that taken away, I would feel like basically I would have to start all over again in finding something that I desire that much because now that I know what that feels like to desire something like that, I don’t know that I would be able to find anything else.

Although Sara realized the students would be losing in this situation, she recognized that she had invested herself in FCS education, believing that she was called to this profession. She has journeyed to FCS education from other majors and knows the feeling that she has derived from being in FCS. Sara believed it would be hard to find another career field that could bring her the kind of fulfillment she has experienced as a FCS education major and she stated “I would go back to my other majors that I have but it wouldn’t fulfill me at all.”

The participants commented on other feelings that would arise if programs were to be eliminated, including anger. Lisa stated, “Definitely anger … Just look at the anger we all had when they were going to change the name. I mean everybody was angry.” Lisa expressed that she would feel anger if FCS programs were eliminated. Lisa brought the feelings she thinks she would feel about the hypothetical situation back to the situation that recently
occurred involving the name change of the secondary programs within her home state. Lisa could connect to that situation because she had actually experienced it and she was sure of her feelings on that issue. Lisa reflected on what made her angry about the name change situation:

They came at it from a different way. They said “Oh, we are going to come together and think about changing the name.” And we all get there and it’s “Ok, give us some names that you want to change it to.” Well that is not really discussing anything about it. So it kind of, I felt like they were trying to screw us over in a way, get us in a corner and us say something and use it against us.

In this narrative, Lisa is referring to the State Department of Education when she says “they” and the Department’s actions at focus group meetings held across the state to discuss a new branding for the secondary FCS programs. Based on the literature reviewed, a theory of motivation should recognize human emotions as they are integrally related to motivational processes. Emotions such as anger, love, excitement, and aesthetic pleasure can motivate individuals to behave in certain ways (Deci, 1980). Anderson (1984) stated “Internal motivation is connected to how intense your feelings are about achieving an objective” (p. 92). These descriptions of internal motivation are closely related to the definitions and descriptions of passion provided in the literature and discussed with the participants. As the conversation focused on the feelings recently experienced by the participants regarding the possibility of changing the name of the program area at the secondary level, their passion and motivation for FCS became more obvious. This supported Peterat’s (2001) statement “when discussion of name change for the profession, research community, school subject, or post-secondary program arises, it signals a challenge to deeply held meanings and to personal and
professional identities constructed over a number of years” (p. 30). Although Sara was not present at the focus group meeting held in proximity to the university, she did articulate her feelings about the situation:

I didn’t go to the meeting but like it would make me upset because I already feel like 75% of people don’t even know what family and consumer sciences is … like we already have to say “Oh, I am family and consumer sciences teacher.” “What’s that?” “Home ec.” And so then we would have to be like “I am a human resource teacher.” “What’s that?” “Family and Consumer Sciences” “What’s that?” “Home Ec.” I just don’t think I could deal with that, like that would drive me crazy.

Sara verbalized the confusion that she feels would result from another identity change. Amy attended the focus group meeting held near the university and she reflected on her feelings of the discussion to change the name to an undetermined name but she had heard that the name “human resources” was a possibility:

I guess I feel the same way. I still have to constantly correct people, like “Its home ec” when I say “family and consumer sciences.” I just feel like it was completely unnecessary, like to change it to human resources it takes the focus off of family which I think is the central focus of what we teach.

Like Sara, Amy also experiences frustration over constantly explaining to others that FCS is the name of the profession instead of home economics. Amy felt that the proposed change being initiated by the State Department of Education was unnecessary and would take the focus off of family which she supports as the central focus of the content of FCS.

Each participant recalled hearing the news about the initiative to change the name of the secondary program. Remembering that her practicum teacher was against the name
change, Sara expressed her own feelings about the issue the moment she became aware “I was just frustrated. Because of what I just said.” Sara felt feelings of frustration and realized that another name change would further complicate the identity issue. Lisa first heard the news from a professor during a class and she recalled that the professor was angered and upset by the proposal. Lisa spoke with her practicum teacher about the issue, “I talked to my practicum teacher, which was [practicum teacher’s name] and I got an ear full there too.” Lisa reflected on her feelings regarding the issue:

At first I was so confused cause I’m like “Whoa” I don’t know a whole lot about all of this and so I kind of had to do my research and then the more that I heard, especially at that meeting, the more I sat there, it was just kind of like more, I don’t know, more frustration and anger building up. I wanted to say something but then I didn’t want to stand out and sound uneducated about what I was really talking about. And then it was very overwhelming.

In this narrative, Lisa expressed feelings of being confused, frustrated, angry, and overwhelmed. She desired to advocate for FCS but wanted to make sure she sounded educated. Amy recaptured the feeling she experienced while at the focus group meeting:

Um, I was kind of upset. I was basically listening because like she said, I didn’t really know much about it. I was confused about why they thought it was necessary to begin with and so basically I was just listening. It was kind of frustrating to think like I don’t even know what I’m going to be teaching is going to be called.

Sara immediately followed Amy’s comments explaining “It frustrates me that they, to me, don’t have a good reason to why they want to do it. That is what frustrates me the most.” The dialogue continued uninterrupted as Lisa stated “I think the things that angered me the most
was like saying that it was, somebody told us that it was considered a sexist name. And I was like how is this any more sexist than agriculture? Because agriculture just does not scream “Hello, ladies, let’s join.” Sara immediately interjected “Or FFA. How does that?” Lisa quickly followed with “Or the shop class or anything like that. So I felt like we were just kind of being targeted in a different way.” Amy stated “I don’t feel like changing the name is going to make more males interested.” Sara followed with the statement:

    I think that is up to the teacher to make males more interested. If all opportunities and all of the careers are presented to those kids even as early as middle school then they are going to know that it is not just how to be a mommy.

The group engaged in lively dialogue as they commented on their perspectives of the unnecessary need to change the name. The energetic dialogue continued as the group discussed their views about the proposed name change being related to the perception that FCS is a sexist title and a profession that only contains content relevant to females. Sara’s comments revealed the beliefs she shared during her interview about the role of the teacher in stimulating interest and awareness in students.

    During her individual interview, each participant discussed the name change issue commenting on the marginalization of FCS and her frustration over the identity issues that effect the profession. Sara stated “I feel like a lot of people think that this is not a career oriented like area, more so, besides like business and you know I feel like people don’t take it as seriously.” Sara expressed concern over others not realizing the significance of the FCS content or recognizing the area as a career field. She commented on people still referring to the profession as home economics:
… everybody still calls it home ec … I find that kind of aggravating cause, I mean I am sure there are reasons why they changed it from home economics but I know now that they are trying to change it from family and consumer sciences to like human resources or something and I just feel like they are trying to make it something that it is not. They are trying to almost make it um more, I don’t really know what they are trying to do. Like, make it more something that everybody, I guess I can see why they are doing it but it just aggravates me but more and more people don’t know what it is because of their pulling away from the basic that everybody understands.

In this narrative, Sara refers to the name change issue at the secondary level in her home state. In her interview, Sara elaborated on her feelings regarding the name change:

I have mixed feelings about the name change cause like I said, I can see why they want to change, because I can see that they may want to broaden the field so that it is more appealing to I guess men … it frustrates me because at one minute you think that it is the teachers that have not been showing them all of those different facets but then you are like I am going to be a teacher, I don’t want to be blamed for that, like, you know I am sure that some teachers have basically stuck to cooking and sewing and whatever, but um I just feel like they are trying to make this world, I feel like there is just, I don’t know, it frustrates me because I feel like people feel that you have to have a career in business and that you have to have a career in science or pharmaceuticals or something to be successful and that is what frustrates me. Even with my friends that is what has frustrated me because they have always seen me as a lower achiever because those are not the things that I want. But, I think that is ok. We don’t all have to be these huge people and not saying that you can’t be a huge person
in family and consumer sciences you definitely can, it depends on which way you want to go but um, that is what upsets me, is that it is not looked at as important.

Sara clearly communicates her frustration about others not viewing FCS as important. She provided her own encounter of the frustration she experiences from her own circle of friends who view her as a lower achiever because she does not want to pursue a career in business. She revealed her feelings that some teachers may be unfairly blamed for the creation of the stereotypical image. Sara articulated what she can do as a teacher to promote a positive image for FCS in her classroom:

Like I said, my mission, I guess will be to stick to what I said and to introduce all of the different facets and make those kids understand that it is not just cooking and sewing and yea it is real estate and interior design and textiles and making them understand that there is more to it than the stereotype. Because growing up, honestly, I didn’t know there was more to it.

Because she was previously unaware of the depth and scope of FCS, Sara is inspired to communicate a clearer understanding of the vast content of FCS to her students. During the interview, Sara sometimes referred to FCS as home economics. She explained why she did this:

And I call it home ec because that is what people know it as. Not very many people, like even when I went to the teacher fair, a week and a half ago, nobody knew what I was talking about when I said family and consumer sciences … they would see my resume and they didn’t know what that meant, especially the men.
Recently, Sara encountered professionals who still do not identify home economics as FCS. The lack of recognition by others causes her to continue to refer to the area as home economics.

Like Sara, Lisa articulated her frustration over the identity issue and the marginalization of career and technical courses at the secondary level:

I feel like in the educational setting its “Oh, those are just CTAE classes, oh you know, whatever. Those are the stupid kids that take those classes or the kids that are not going to go to college.” Those kinds of things frustrate me and it frustrates me when a kid wants to take the class and maybe their parents won’t let them or their advisors won’t advise them for them. Those kinds of things frustrate me, um and just, it just frustrates me to think that there is a possibility that one day these won’t be offered. That’s really frustrating and it’s sad to me that I didn’t know about these classes when I was in high school because of my advisors. Because if I had known, I mean, I took, I took psychology, two psychologies and I could have taken family and consumer sciences instead of one of the psychologies or something like that to change it up that I just didn’t know about.

In this passage, Lisa expressed her concern over the possibility of eliminating FCS courses at the secondary level. Lisa reflected on her high school experience and explained her own frustration over not being aware of these courses. Lisa also expressed her views over the recent name change issue within the state vocalizing why she believed the program name should remain the same:

Well, because I think that most people here, nobody knows what FACS is, nobody, nobody on campus, nobody knows that’s an option. So I think that if it changes in
high school that’s going to make it even more confusing. Nobody’s going to feel any kind of direction, I mean the girls that I am graduating with we all just stumbled across this major through word of mouth. There was no unit that dragged us into it, there was no “Oh we are going to be in the College of Ed.” There was nothing that stood out and I think that if they change that name they’re only going to make it harder for students to find their FACS major that they want, um, and I think that a lot of the reasons that they want to change it are very silly, very silly.

Lisa discussed the organization of units on the campus of the university and explained that she and her classmates happened to arrive at the FCS education major not because of a clear identity but rather through word of mouth.

Amy shared her frustrations over people still not recognizing the FCS name:

It’s kind of frustrating because every time someone asks me my major, I’m like “Its family and consumer sciences education.” And they are like “What exactly is that?” And I have to be like “Its home ec.” And so its kind of, I think its bad that it still hasn’t changed like after all of this time and the fact that they are wanting to change the name again is kind of frustrating too. But um, basically, when I say home ec, most people know what that means, um but I just explain the different classes that I can teach and that I can teach middle and high school cause a lot of people don’t even know that.

Each participant declared their frustration over identity issues and the name change issue within the state. When asked what her feelings were regarding the latter issue, Amy explained:
I think that they should leave it the same. I’ve actually sent letters for one of my classes to like the Governor about how I feel like it is going to make [State] separated from all of the other states because most of them call it family and consumer sciences and um, it is even difficult when you have like the [family and consumer sciences unit] here and we like will be teaching something that we don’t call family and consumer sciences in the future and its just kind of, I don’t know, its scary to think about that I am going to be teaching in a field that they don’t even know what they want to call it yet and they are constantly changing things but I guess that is how education is, they change stuff all of the time.

Amy discussed why she felt that “family” was important in the name “family and consumer sciences”:

… I had heard that the name that they were going to take family out of the new name and I feel like that is an important part of our subject; it’s like the basis for everything that is taught. And um, I don’t know, I just think that if they take that out then it could change like how things are taught, like for instance I know that they teach classes for industrial cooking and that kind of thing instead of just cooking for an individual or family now and I feel like it could change like some of the subject in some way … more career oriented than family oriented.

Once the group began dialoguing about their collective feelings evoked by the name change issue they recently experienced, other parts of the interview were immediately fueled and their understanding of quotes and ability to respond to them deepened. As the group began to reflect on Sara’s comments about the role of a teacher, the conversation returned to a quote presented earlier: “Whether you see your commitment as a passion, mission, or even
a fever it is contagious and we are carriers” (Bower, 2001, p. 20). Lisa identified more with
the quote and contributed: “I mean I am a good example of that from middle school because
when I first took family and consumer sciences I totally did not catch it cause my teacher was
horrible.” Lisa claimed that she was a good example of not catching passion and commitment
for FCS from her middle school FCS teacher. Without hesitation, Sara commented “I don’t
even remember hardly any of my middle school experiences” with Lisa quickly following
commenting that “I just remember measuring and her doing like measuring for days.” With
frustration and disappointment in her voice, Sara exclaimed “I didn’t even get to cook!”

After this dialogue, participants were able to consider the type of FCS teacher they
desired to become. Their arrival at this construction of meaning supports two characteristics
of narrative inquiry that differ from the thinking in the grand narrative, temporality and
people. The notion of temporality allows the researcher to see things and events in time with
a past, a present, and a future. The characteristic of people allows the researcher to view
people in a process of change whereas the grand narrative advocates for people-free notions
(Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Through the group dialogue, we were able to focus on the
participants in the process of becoming more inspiring teachers which was influenced by
their past experiences. Lisa stated “Yea. It makes me think about how I want to be totally
different from that and more active.” Sara became very passionate about her role as a teacher:

Even taking all of these career and technical education classes and seeing how many
of those classes there are because I have never really thought about it. But seeing that
those classes are put there to present those kids with other opportunities and get their
interest sparked earlier so that they can see that there are more things to do besides be
a doctor or be a lawyer or be a teacher. There are more opportunities. I know in my
classroom I want to have a bulletin board that has all the different types of careers that you can have in family and consumer sciences so that they know that they “Oh, I could be a builder or I could be a real estate agent.” Like, a lot of them don’t know that’s part of that area.

Sara commented on the important role that career and technical education courses play in sparking the interest of students so that they can see other opportunities available to them and as a result of this she plans to communicate career opportunities within FCS to her students.

The focus group meeting pertaining to the name change situation attended by Amy and Lisa was their first experience of being involved with a controversial issue related to their professional practice. Lisa recalled the feelings of some of the teachers who she sat with at the meeting:

I sat by the lady, the group of ladies that had attended the [location of first focus group meeting] meeting and they were very like, um agitated and wanting to like be heard. But remember, [the facilitator] wouldn’t ever go over to their table and actually do anything. So I was more trying to listen to what [the teacher] was saying cause I felt like she had a lot to say, she had so much to say, she was trying to get her voice heard. But I wanted to know what that was that she wanted heard …. everybody was saying just that it needs to be consistent and that we are going to lose students if we don’t keep it the same. Then when the comment was brought up about boys not taking the class, the teachers were like “Well, we have so many boys in my class” and you know “I have 50% boys in my class” and you know “I have 50% boys, 50% girls” and so they were just talking about different … whatever was said, whatever
Lisa wanted to hear what the teacher who attended other focus group meetings had to say about the proposed name change. Lisa did not vocalize her opinion to the large group but she did contribute to the conversation occurring at her table. Lisa said “I think I was the first one that said that I think that it would be a disadvantage to have it different from high school and college, that you would get lost.” Lisa spoke from her own experience of not identifying FCS at the collegiate level. She believed that if the secondary programs have a different name than the post-secondary programs within the state, then a student’s ability to identify with the area in the transition from high school to college will be further complicated. The participants responded to the situation regarding how they would feel if FCS were eliminated from middle and high schools across the country. Feelings of anger and being lost were discussed and led to the discussion of their feelings recently experienced over the name change issue within their home state.

The second response to the situation dealt with the action that participants might take if they were alerted to possible program elimination. Again the participants referred to their recent advocacy efforts regarding the name change issue and drew on these experiences in their responses. Amy stated “I wrote to the Governor and everyone on the School Board.” Lisa remarked “I did one letter but I sent it to a lot of people.” When asked what she was thinking as she wrote her letter, Lisa stated “I hope I sound educated.” A professor of education at the university encouraged the students to become involved in the discussion surrounding the name change and advocate for FCS. In an effort to assist the students, the professor provided them with sample letters and information to serve as a guide for writing
their own letters. Amy talked about how she used the guide to write her letters “I used the argument that in most other states it is called family and consumer sciences so why would we want to be different from the other states.” Amy provided further explanation of the content in her letters stating “She gave us a quote about the mission of FCS and I used that to say why I feel like it should remain the same name.” Referring to the guide provided, Lisa used a different approach in her letter, “I used that one and then I said that you shouldn’t have it different than in high school because then they are going to go to college and be lost.”

After giving the participants an opportunity to think about their feelings and actions regarding their recent encounter with a proposed name change at the state level, I brought their attention back to what they would do if all FCS programs faced elimination. Without hesitation, Lisa simply but confidently stated “Fight.” She elaborated on what she would do to fight:

I mean like go to the groups that they had because I am sure that if they eliminated it, like you (referring to the researcher) would get another group together and send around more emails. So I guess I would just try to come to all of those and make sure that it is not going to be easy for them (meaning those wanting to close the program) because we saw that this time when we made it hard and we fought and we made our voice heard that it did make a difference.

Although she doesn’t necessarily mention that she will be the leader of the fight, Lisa does indicate that she will be an active participant in the advocacy effort. As a result of this situation, Lisa learned the valuable lesson that a group of united voices are much stronger than a single voice and that her voice does matter. The participants verbalized concerns about not sounding educated or not knowing enough to speak out even though they desired to be
advocates. The group agreed that they were nervous because they were students. However, in presenting them with the situation regarding program elimination I encouraged them to think about their role as a teacher and asked them if they would be confident as a teacher to speak out. Lisa stated:

I think I would especially because I would be a teacher and so I feel like I would have more knowledge about everything and actual classroom experience to back me up on it and so I feel like I would be more adamant on stating what I thought.

Sara immediately followed Lisa’s comments, stating:

I have never protested anything before and I am not typically a fighter unless it is something that I am very passionate about and um so if I was at home teaching and not in [university town] anymore I am sure I would probably contact somebody here to find out what I needed to do and what I could do because I would have no idea where to go on my own.

Sara conveyed that she is normally not a fighter unless she is passionate about the issue. Feeling that she would not know where to go or what action to take on her own, Sara indicated that she would contact someone at the university that might be able to provide the needed guidance. These feelings might be contributed to her young age but I believe there is an implication here for undergraduate programs to educate students about public policy and advocacy efforts. When asked about her comment that she would make contacts, she elaborated “Yes. I definitely would. The first person I would call would be [general FCS advisor] because I think she would lead me in the right direction.” The advisor mentioned in this statement has been mentioned previously as one who has been an inspiration to Sara and served as a valuable source of information, always pointing Sara in the right direction. Amy
also agreed that she would fight and she realized the power of a group. She stated “I would fight. I would write another letter, another email or do whatever everyone else is doing because the more people that get together to fight for it the better chance we’ll have.”

When asked how they felt after leaving the focus group meeting, Amy claimed “I was annoyed.” When asked if they felt defeated, Lisa at first stated “No.” Then she quickly changed her answer to “Yes, I did actually.” Lisa turned to Amy and asked her if she also felt defeated and Amy stated “Yea. I kind of felt like they didn’t …” Lisa interjected “She wasn’t listening” referring to the facilitator not listening to the attendees. Amy further explained the situation:

Yea, she didn’t listen to anything anyone would say and that was frustrating. I think that is why I was annoyed. We were trying to like tell you what we want; we are the ones that are teaching it, not you.

Lisa commented on how the State Department’s representative present at the meeting annoyed her:

… whenever she would interject comments they would just be, it wasn’t anything that would help solve it. It was always like “We need to compromise on this” and somebody even stood up and said “A compromise is not one-sided. You are trying to force us into a compromise and you’re telling us that we have to come up with a name and that is not a compromise.” Little things like that that she would say just kind of annoyed me.

Amy and Lisa recalled the events of the focus group reflecting on their feelings and the comments made by others. The presence of a state representative and a professional from business and industry was important to Lisa. She said:
I remember being glad that there was a state representative. I was glad that he was there to show that it wasn’t just educators that were feeling this way about it. I remember a guy, was it business ed or something, or a businessman from [specific part of state] came up, all the way up and so that made me glad that it wasn’t just FACS people that were involved, it wasn’t just us being little women getting our panties in a wad about something.

In this narrative, Lisa discussed the attendance of two men at the meeting. It was as if the men’s presence validated the fight to keep the name and proved to the State Department of Education that it wasn’t just a group of upset women. When asked if she feels that the teachers who were speaking out were perceived as a group of complaining women, Lisa responded “Yea … Well, I mean they are kind of an older generation right now of FACS teachers so I could see where that could be the perception.” Lisa made generational comparisons and feels that the family and consumer sciences professionals advocating to keep the name may be perceived as a group of old women fussing.

After this dialogue, the group returned to the quote “I hope you find a passion in what you are doing – so much so that you will develop a deep commitment to your professional practice” (Ralston, 2001, p. 28). In light of pending retirements by seasoned FCS educators who spoke out passionately about the name change issue, participants were asked if they saw themselves as the new group of committed FCS educators stepping out and advocating for the profession. Sara responded:

I would hope. I mean I know I would but it worries me because I don’t think that the people that we will have backing us up are going to be as powerful as the people they had backing them up because when they all retire and they are already getting rid of
our programs in different places and there are people that are like “Oh, well I am going to get into another career.”

Lisa quickly followed stating:

And I feel like if something were to happen like within the next few years while we are still early teachers after say a vast majority of the older teachers retire, then we will not have has much of an argument maybe or pull when it comes to keeping things the way that we want them to stay because we are so young so I feel like that could be a disadvantage to us. Does that make sense? Like if all the older people have retired … and maybe they get more respect because of their age from the representatives.

Lisa reiterated some feelings similar to those held by Sara; those of being young, not as respected and not as experienced in fighting a battle and gaining support. She feels that their youth may be a disadvantage.

I asked the group what they thought the fight for their generation was going to be and how they would convince someone such as the State School Superintendent to not eliminate FCS programs. Lisa started the dialogue:

Maybe like that she just needs to come and see what we are about and see that what we offer and what the kids would lack by not taking our classes and um, point out what FACS teaches and what kids would be missing by not taking FACS classes … because we teach such vital things to the students.

When asked if they felt that they could communicate the importance of FCS to lawmakers and people with decision-making power, Sara responded:
I feel like they are going to argue back. As far as like technology and stuff like I feel like if we are defeated we will be defeated by technology. Like “Oh, they don’t need to learn how to do laundry because they have a machine that does it for them” or “America’s making more money, they can pay people to do their laundry” or “Nobody cooks at home anymore because everybody goes out to eat.”

Lisa quickly followed with a counter argument: “But then an argument could be everybody goes out to eat which is why we are so obese. We could always try to counteract them in someway, maybe.” Sara stated that she knew that they could counteract the argument but she worried that the perception will be that the content is not needed. Lisa brought the argument back to the importance of family and the impact of society on the family:

Everybody is working and making more money which means they are not spending as much time with their family which means those are the values that we need to instill in them in our child and family development classes to make sure.

Sara added to the conversation regarding the importance of family and the role of FCS in strengthening the American family:

I mean I already feel like just in the past couple of decades that there’s been lots of damage done just from diminishing the program as much as it has been diminished. I feel like the family is not nearly as powerful as it used to be and I know that there are lots of reasons … but I mean part of it probably is due to the lack of kids having that.

In Sara’s response, “that” refers to FCS courses. The flow of dialogue was occurring rapidly as the group participants developed an argument using their knowledge base of how FCS could help improve society.
The participants’ passion for FCS became more evident when I asked them if they could provide an argument to decision-makers wishing to eliminate FCS programs to provide additional funding to other academic areas such as math and science. Sara responded “Yes. I would be like good luck to the economy because everybody’s going to go into debt because nobody is going to know how to do anything and good luck to America being fat.” Lisa quickly contributed additional information for the argument:

How are those kids ever going to get jobs? Yea, they might be brainiacs but we teach them how to do resumes and proper business attire and everything like that, interview skills, everything, they would not, where would they get that? Not from their mom and dad, because mom and dad would still be working.

Amy strengthened the position of the importance of FCS courses realizing that it reinforces academic skills learned in math and science by providing labs and practical application to life. She stated “We have those classes because it teaches how they use that math and science in the real world and I feel like that what we teach reinforces what they learn in those academic classes.” In a rapid flow of words, each participant presented a rationale for the importance of FCS at the middle and high school level. They related the concepts taught in FCS to solving issues faced by individuals, families, and communities.

After the engaging dialogue among the group concerning the possibility of program elimination, we returned to an earlier quote:

The essence of family and consumer sciences can be summarized using three words – head, heart, and soul. The profession’s body of knowledge is the intellectual foundation or the head. The heart is the mission to improve quality of life, which reflects our passion, caring, and compassion as professionals. Soul puts us in touch
with the “whys” of our being that which inspires, motivates us, and gives meaning to our work (Nickols & Anderson, 2001, p. 2).

In the previous dialogue about this quote, Sara’s response focused on the head and her developing knowledge base in FCS. After stimulating their emotions about how they would advocate for the preservation of FCS, Lisa articulated more about the development of the heart. She said “… I think that our hearts, we’ve already been building on just with our practicums and gaining those relationships that we have with our students and our teachers and our practicum classes.” Although the head develops through the acquisition of knowledge, the heart is developing through relationships they are building with the students and teachers that they are working with during their practicums and student teaching experiences. It is in the environment of the classroom with the students that their mission to improve the quality of life becomes a reality. Sara commented on the soul believing that she has acquired part of it but that it will develop more fully once she begins teaching.

Sara’s belief that she will experience a transformation as a FCS professional, prompted the introduction of a sixth statement regarding passion that was provided by a review of literature which can be summarized as passions change and transform over time as individuals develop a deeper understanding of themselves (Attwood & Attwood, 2006). Sara identified with this statement responding:

I feel like that is how I’ve felt ever since I found this major. Like, like I knew things that I enjoyed and I knew things that I liked and I just couldn’t figure how, I just couldn’t put that into a career. And then I was like “Oh my gosh! There is this major that encompasses all of it.” I felt defined.
Sara related to the statement about passions changing and transforming over time. She felt that she has been changing and transforming ever since she declared FCS education as a major. When reflecting on her transformation into a FCS professional, Sara commented with humor saying “I have transformed into one of those old ladies that are very passionate about it.” Sara referred to herself as changing into a passionate professional and behaving as passionately as the older, more seasoned professionals that attended the focus group meetings within her state. When asked if she possessed something that wasn’t present before she became a FCS education major, Sara remarked “I feel like I have a person, if that makes sense. Like … I literally feel like this is what I am supposed to do and so I feel like I have a purpose.” She articulated her purpose by clarifying that it is “To teach this class and I guess to keep people knowledgeable about why it is worth it and why it is necessary so that it is never questioned.”

Lisa vocalized her transformation into a FCS professional since declaring FCS education as a major:

I know I have because when I came to it and declared it as a major, I didn’t know as much and so the more I knew, the more my knowledge gained, I feel like I became more and more passionate about it. And I saw how it was needed and how important it was and how applicable it was.

As Lisa explained her transformation into a passionate professional, correlations to the quote about the essence of FCS were evident. In the quote, the head is mentioned first and represents the knowledge base. As Lisa became more knowledgeable and realized the importance of the content and the mission of FCS, her heart for it grew and thus her passion.

Amy commented on her transformation:
I have definitely changed. I think, my high school was small and we had maybe four family and consumer sciences classes so I never knew what all family and consumer sciences encompassed until I came to college and all of the classes that I have had to take so that definitely changed my perspective and made me want to teach it even more because I feel like every area has something that people need to know.

Amy has also experienced a transformation during her undergraduate education in FCS.

The comments revealed by the participants brought the group and researcher back to reflecting on and constructing meaning about the quote regarding the essence of FCS with the knowledge as the head, the heart as the mission, and the “soul putting us in touch with the “whys” that inspire, motivate us and give meaning to our work” (Nickols & Anderson, 2001, p. 2) as FCS professionals. Participants verbalized that they have experienced a progression in developing the head, heart, and soul as a result they have experienced a transformation that can be summarized with the statement that passions change and transform over time as individuals develop a deeper understanding of themselves (Attwood & Attwood, 2006).

Through constructing meaning as individuals and as a group, I believe the participants developed a deeper understanding of themselves and their passion for FCS education. The meaning constructed through participating in dialogue and analyzing their comments provided support for the rationale behind stating the purposes of the study in a hierarchal order believing they must first identify with the major, develop knowledge and understand its integrative focus, and then realize their motivation and passion for FCS education. The statement on the essence of FCS provided a vehicle for reflection on the journey to developing passion for FCS.
After dialoging about their transformations into passionate preprofessionals, the conversation returned to the first quote that was provided “The heart of family and consumer sciences is demonstrated by the passion with which an individual practices” (Nickols & Anderson, 2001, p. 6). After meaningful dialogue, participants were able to reflect more about their own passion and examples of professional passion they have witnessed.

Considering the passion displayed by the FCS teachers and other FCS professionals present at the focus group meetings, Lisa stated “It was in everybody’s voices. I think that especially the people that were at the [first meeting] and then went down to [second meeting] and then came up to [third meeting]. That demonstrated their passion.” Lisa was impacted by the commitment of some of the teachers and professionals that made an effort to attend the three focus group meetings held around the state. Commenting on the passion of this group, Lisa said “Well, because I feel like passion, people’s passion greatly is attached to their emotions and they were very emotional about it.” When asked if she initially understood the passion possessed by this group, Lisa recalled:

I think at first I thought they were crazy. I didn’t really understand. Then when I saw the names that they wanted to change it to I felt like I became more passionate because I was like “What? Human Services?” Human services has nothing to do with family and consumer sciences. It just, that is when I felt like, when I first got there I was totally lost and didn’t know what all of these crazy people were doing but at the end of the meeting I felt more.

During the initial part of the meeting, Lisa did not have a clear understanding of the passion held by some of those attending the focus group meetings. As she listened to the discussion, her own feelings and emotions changed and she experienced an increase in her own passion.
for FCS. As the interview progressed, I read final statements about passion: “Your passions are the loves of your life. They are the things which are most deeply important to you” (Attwood & Attwood, 2006, p. xxii) and “Who you are is defined by what you feel strongly about and by your capacity to take action on those feelings” (Anderson, 1984, p. 12). In Sara’s response, she reiterated information shared in her interview about others identifying her with FCS education: “I felt that. No matter who I told they were like ‘Oh, my gosh! That’s totally you.’” Lisa and Amy agreed that they had encountered similar conversations with their friends and family. When asked if this major defined her, Lisa responded “I think that it does … Everything that I enjoy doing is in this major. There’s nothing that I don’t enjoy about it.” Amy followed with:

> It stands for what I feel is important because I was brought up in a really strong family; I want to teach other people what I have learned and hopefully improve their quality of life the way I learned stuff in my FCS classes and I feel like it is stuff that I will always take with me.

**Commitment to Family and Consumer Sciences Education**

**Identity as a Family and Consumer Sciences Professional**

Comments revealed by the participants through their writings and interviews lend support to the literature reviewed regarding identity formation and personal commitment to goals, beliefs, and values. Referring to Levine’s (2003) statement that “Identity formation can be conceptualized as an ongoing psychosocial process during which various characteristics of the self are internalized, labeled, valued, and organized” (p. 191) and Waterman’s (2004) definition of identity as the “goals, values, and beliefs to which an individual is unequivocally committed, and that give a sense of direction, meaning, and
purpose to life” (p. 209) the participants revealed their commitment to FCS education and the purpose it has given them in their own lives. Sara explained realizing that her identity differed from her classmates in the journalism unit. In her autobiography, she wrote:

After just one year as a [journalism unit] student, I began to feel like my personality was not like that of my fellow classmates. They were much more competitive and cut-throat than I turned out to be. While they were building their resumes with internships and other experiences, I was baking cookies and sewing Roman shades for my mom’s dining room. I tried getting involved in Ad Club and the on-campus agency, but it became more and more apparent that this was not the lifestyle for me. As my fondness for family, cooking, sewing, and decorating developed, I began questioning my future in advertising.

During her interview, Sara elaborated on these feelings:

It is funny how I resulted and I think sitting in my advertising classes and seeing everybody around me so cut throat on internships and doing this and doing that and how they could get more involved and I am just like I don’t want to do this. And I never even tried to get an internship like I had made one small, small attempt. I sent an email and he didn’t respond so I was like forget that. But um, it just didn’t inspire me. And that is not like me cause I am not, I’m not a slacker, usually, I’m not at all but when it came to that major, I just didn’t care and I wasn’t inspired and I didn’t realize that until I got out of it and got into this one.

Sara was not inspired or motivated by the major in advertising and she struggled with identifying with her peers within the journalism unit. Her lack of motivation to pursue an internship in advertising was not typical of her personality; however she didn’t know that she
was so uninspired regarding the advertising major until she changed her major to FCS education. When asked if FCS education inspired her, Sara responded:

I feel like it does. Like and being at the school and like now and seeing when I am there with my teacher and even if the students aren’t there and we are kind of just like preparing for a lab the next day like I catch myself laughing because I can’t believe that I get to do this like that this will be my job like, I am like crumpling up cookies for like a lab tomorrow and I am just like “I can’t believe this will be my job.” It just makes me happy that I found something like that …

In this narrative, Sara conveyed that being a FCS teacher is a privilege for her and she is genuinely happy about her career choice.

Lisa reflected on her commitment to FCS education. In an emotional narrative, she explained:

I actually, being that [FCS teacher educator] is unhealthy, um, I had told some of the girls the other day, I was like “I want to take over her position.” And they are like “[Her name] you can’t do that, you don’t have any of the credentials or anything.” And I said, “No, I want to do that because we need somebody that is going to be a good voice for what FACS Ed is because there is nobody, I mean [FCS general advisor] is amazing, but [she] is not FACS Ed, she’s FACS. And so there needs to be somebody, an advocate out there, at every, at you know … orientation! There needs to be somebody there that tells all about this amazing major and you know come join this one class and see what’s like and you know to just draw kids in because we have so many FACS teachers that are great that are all fixing to retire. And there are no FACS teachers, I mean, there are 8 of us that are graduating in May. That’s not going
to fill the demand for FACS teachers. So, yes, I have thought about being the voice of FACS.

Lisa’s passion for FCS education is obvious in this passage. She commits herself to playing a role in preserving FCS education. When asked what led her to feel this way, Lisa stated “I guess the compassion that I have for it. The fact that I do feel strongly about it and the um, what it means and what it stands for, I guess is what makes me so compassionate.” The compassion she now has for the major and for the mission of FCS has compelled Lisa to want to be a leader for the profession.

Lisa spoke about the impact that declaring FCS education as a major has had on her identity:

I’m not sure if it is just that I have grown and become more educated in the educational field or not but I definitely identify myself as a teacher. Um, I didn’t use to. I was just a student, a typical college student going to school to get a degree, ready to graduate and make real money instead of part-time wages. And now its like, I just definitely identify myself as a teacher, as an educator, as a counselor of sorts um, after all of the child and family development stuff that I have had. Yea, I would definitely say but I think that it has been more of a, I’m getting older in my life so identity things are changing at the same time that I am closing my college career.

Realizing that a progression to her identity as a FCS teacher has occurred, she now labels herself as a teacher, educator, and counselor. When asked what it was like to reflect on her journey to FCS education, Lisa exclaimed “It’s weird! I guess I am so emotional because I’ve never really thought about it! Like, I’ve never talked about it or anything so it’s kind of like the first time ever! So, I don’t know. It’s weird.” The emotion she displayed throughout her
interview surprised her and when asked if she knew she had this emotion she responded “No! Which is even weirder! It snuck up on me. Because I guess that is me changing into my identity as a FACS educator and voice.” Prior to participating in this research study, Lisa had not engaged in deep reflection on her upcoming role as a FCS educator and professional. Her new realization of her passion for FCS is a pleasing outcome from this narrative inquiry process which encouraged the construction of meaning between the researcher and the researched. Lisa articulated that she had not taken the time recently to consider the changes she has experienced:

Yes, I think that is one thing here lately that’s what I have been after cause I’m like I’ve been here so long, I’m one of the oldest people in my class and it’s kind of, I am just ready to get to the finish line. I am just ready to get there and then now I’ve sat down and started thinking about it and talking about and that’s when it I guess makes you … emotional.

During her individual interview, Lisa displayed her emotion toward FCS and was brought to tears. When asked what made her passionate, she stated “I have never thought about it.” She exclaimed with excitement and realization “I don’t know, it’s just, I don’t know! ... God, I don’t know what’s wrong with me.” Commenting on her realization of her emotion, Lisa exclaimed “Oh, I think it’s a good thing! I think it is a very good thing. And I’m a very emotional person, very passionate.” Lisa viewed her passion as a positive emotion, one that will serve her in her profession as a FCS educator.

Summary

The stories these young women shared illustrated their motivation for being FCS educators and their developing passion for the profession. Their motivation has been
identified and they are in the midst of developing their professional passion. Four common themes that emerged in this chapter were (1) the perceived benefits of being FCS educators; (2) the passion they hold; (3) their commitment to FCS; and (4) their emerging identities as FCS professionals.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND REFLECTIONS

The goal of this inquiry was to examine the development of passion for the FCS profession in three undergraduate students majoring in FCS education. To examine the development of passion, three purposes were stated in hierarchal order. The first purpose was to ascertain an understanding of undergraduate students’ identification with FCS education and their decisions to declare it as a major. The second purpose was to examine the participants’ knowledge of the content with an understanding of the integrative nature of the FCS profession. The third purpose was to identify the participants’ motivation and passion for FCS education. The purposes were stated in this specific order because I had postulated that if one had identified with the major and become knowledgeable of the content and knowledge base of FCS, then it was possible for a passion for FCS education to develop. This passion may be, then, the motivating force that would propel her to carry out the mission of FCS as a committed FCS educator.

Narrative inquiry was used to investigate the participants’ lived experiences of identifying the major and declaring it as their program of study, developing their knowledge base in FCS, identifying their motivation and passion and expressing their feelings, emotions, and commitment to FCS education. Multiple methods including autobiography, individual interview, written response to a scenario, and a group interview were used to collect data from three young women meeting criteria established for participation in the study. To be selected the participant had to be a female senior majoring in FCS education, have demonstrated characteristics reflecting leadership and academic ability, and have displayed
passion or enthusiasm for her chosen major. These characteristics had to be evident to faculty and staff advisors working within the FCS and education units at the research site.

Through the use of inductive analysis, themes were developed from the stories the young women shared pertaining to their journey of identifying FCS education and their continuing journey of developing their knowledge base and passion for the profession. In this chapter, a summary of the findings that emerged from the inquiry based on the three stated purposes and recommendations for practice and further study are provided. A personal reflection of the research process concludes this chapter.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Identifying and Encouraging Potential Family and Consumer Sciences Educators

Found within the context of this study are solutions that can provide insight into the development of passion for FCS education in students and young professionals. As conclusions are summarized, the specific recommendations provided by the researcher in response to those conclusions are embedded within the text of this chapter; however, the recommendations are in bold font to allow for easier identification. A list outlining the recommendations is provided in Appendix D.

The participants embarked on a journey to FCS education before they realized that they would develop passion for it. The first step in the journey was to identify the major of FCS education and then decide to declare it as a program of study. Developing understanding related to this step in the journey was the first purpose of the study. Several themes associated with this step emerged from the stories of the participants including pivotal moments in the journey, their first exposure to FCS, their experiences with advising and instruction at the undergraduate level, the influence of their families, and their belief in God’s
plan for their lives. Insight gained from the information shared regarding each of these themes can be useful to professional practice.

Based on the recollections of the respondents, experiences in FCS courses at the middle school level can be influential in forming students’ first impressions of the field. FCS teachers at the secondary level are in a position to influence and encourage students to pursue a career in FCS education. According to Miller and Tulloch (1999), “Teachers are perhaps the most critical component in attracting students into the profession” (p. 2). Teachers, especially at the middle school level, have an opportunity to influence the perception of students regarding the image of FCS. All three participants recalled the activities they engaged in while taking a FCS course in middle school. Assignments focusing on completing book work and participating in activities with limited hands-on exposure were recalled most vividly. Providing students at the middle school level with classroom experiences that can captivate their interest in the subject matter could have long-term effects on their career decisions and their lasting images of FCS. Each participant commented that she was unaware of the many career opportunities in FCS while she was in middle school with two of the participants not considering FCS education as a career option until later in their college careers. The results of the report by Jensen et al. (2003) suggested that FCS teachers at the secondary level focus most of their time on FCS specialty areas or related disciplines when integrating career education into the curriculum. Based upon the understanding gained in the present study, it is recommended that secondary FCS teachers at all levels introduce the vast array of career opportunities in FCS with a special focus on FCS education.

After analyzing the participants’ experiences with identifying the FCS education major along with their preconceived ideas about FCS, critical evaluation of the current
marketing of FCS education programs to potential students is encouraged and developing strategies to improve marketing programs is recommended. Although one participant was influenced by her high school FCS teacher, the other two participants were directed to the major by other individuals. One participant was guided to the major through a conversation with a coworker who recognized the participant’s interests and was able to pair those with a possible career. For the other participant, it took the encouragement of a fellow classmate who provided a view of FCS unlike the view previously held by the participant to spark her interest and begin her inquiry into the area. Each participant had to research whom to speak with about declaring the major. The two participants that arrived at FCS education later in their college careers commented that they didn’t feel like the major was clearly visible as an option on their university campus. A recommendation would be to make the major of FCS education more noticeable on college campuses. For example, teacher educators and recruiters for FCS units could serve as guest speakers in freshmen orientation courses or seminar courses held in all parts of the university campus. As guest speakers, these professionals could not only promote the FCS education major but also share information on topics related to improving the lives of audience participants. These seminars, connected to the body of knowledge found within FCS, might stimulate an interest in the major by those in attendance. It is also recommended that recruitment efforts begin at the secondary level. Two participants in this study indicated that their high school class schedules were filled with courses geared toward college preparation leaving little time to take electives such as FCS. Teacher educators and recruiters for FCS units should visit secondary FCS classrooms and career fairs and make a special effort to reach wider audiences by visiting classrooms in program and academic areas other than FCS.
A conclusion drawn from the data of particular importance for FCS professionals, specifically FCS secondary teachers, professors within FCS units, FCS teacher educators, and FCS college recruiters and advisors, is the importance of personal contact and encouragement demonstrated to students pursuing a major in FCS education. Each participant recalled the influence of the general advisor within the FCS unit and the encouragement of the FCS teacher educator. In the same manner, all participants also remembered very negative advising encounters they experienced in other units on the university campus. The participants’ passion and commitment to FCS grew as a result of personal identification and relationships they developed with faculty and staff. Literature focusing on the recruitment of FCS education students and FCS majors in general was reviewed. In 1980, East described differences among colleges offering degrees in home economics and stated “students seem to have a sixth or seventh sense about a college culture because they usually pick one which suits their own needs” (East, 1980, p. 120). The participants in this study experienced a culture of caring that made them feel “at home” with this major which inspired them to want to give back to the College and ultimately the profession because of the warmth, help, and encouragement they received from faculty and staff working within the FCS unit and the secondary teachers supervising their practicum experiences. The statement by East could be applied to current students and should urge school faculty and administrators to know and consider the backgrounds of their majors so as to aid in program planning and recruitment efforts. The researcher suggests activities believed to foster personal identification with students and encourage their retention in FCS education. These activities could include exposing students at the secondary and post secondary level to majors available through FCS units, determining which students are
interested in pursuing education for careers in this area, assisting with the college application process, providing career counseling, mentoring activities, and academically enriching activities throughout the students’ college careers.

Other conclusions that can be drawn from the themes related to the first purpose of this research focus on the influence and support of family on one’s career decision and the belief that one is called to a particular vocation. Each participant discussed the role of her family in shaping who she is as a person. Participants shared how their family lives impacted them and in return their desire to help improve the quality of family life experienced by others. The response of family members and significant others to participants’ decisions to major in FCS education concurs with the contention that seeking feedback and advice of parents, coworkers, and friends can help one discover her passion (Bittner, 2003). All three participants discussed their belief in God and felt that they were called to be FCS educators. Thus, they felt that being a FCS educator would provide them with opportunities to impact others in ways that are aligned with their Christian beliefs. These reflections support conclusions found within the literature (Attwood & Attwood, 2006, Bellamy, 1999; Bittner, 2003; Bolles, 2001) that one’s vocation is a calling that may be tied to her spirituality and belief in a higher being. The responses of the participants in the present study can be related to the findings of previous investigations focusing on FCS education recent graduates and practicing teachers. For example, 30% of respondents in Mimbs (1997) study of recent graduates in FCS education indicated they felt that being a teacher was their calling. The participants in the present study commented on their desire to work with others to improve their quality of life, their interest in families, and the ability to do the things they love as reasons for majoring in FCS education. These reflections further support the results of
Mimbs’ study which indicated that interest in FCS subject matter, enjoyment of working with young people, interest in families, helping people, professional satisfaction, and creativity were the reasons most often cited by participants for influencing their career choice in FCS education. The participants in the present study attended a large university in the southeastern United States, the region commonly referred to as the “Bible Belt.” A recommendation for further research is to conduct a similar study in a different geographic location of the country to determine if these religious and other motivations are influenced by region or degree of urbanicity. In addition, conducting a similar study with a more diverse group of students across ethnic and racial groups as well as gender might yield different results.

**Development of Model for the Process of Developing Passion for Family and Consumer Sciences Education**

The second purpose of the study was to examine the participants’ knowledge of the content of FCS with an understanding of the integrative nature of the FCS profession. After identifying FCS education and declaring it as their major, the participants continued the journey by increasing their knowledge base and understanding of the integrative nature of the profession. It was evident from the data collected that participants had a variety of experiences that helped them to develop their knowledge base and understanding of the profession. Themes that arose from the data included the emphasis that participants placed on their belief in the importance of what is taught through FCS education. Participants focused heavily on their desire to teach life skills.

In the third purpose of this study, I wanted to identify their motivation and passion for teaching FCS education. As a result of conducting and synthesizing the results of this study, I
realized that I identified their motivation for being FCS educators. They are motivated by their interpretation of the mission of FCS. In the review of literature, I provided the mission of FCS developed by Brown and Paolucci in 1979 who defined the mission as

Enabling families, both as individual units and generally as a social institution, to build and maintain systems of action which lead (1) to maturing in individual self-formation and (2) to enlightened, cooperative participation in the critique and formulation of social goals and means for accomplishing them (Brown & Paolucci, 1979, p. 23).

Although this statement of the mission is philosophically grounded and calling FCS professionals to focus on the larger environment and the functioning of families therein, participants’ present interpretations of the profession’s mission is to improve the quality of life for others. Their interpretations coincide with the first part of the aforementioned mission statement, “(1) to maturing in individual self-formation” (p. 23). Their role as they revealed in this study, is to teach life skills to their students, friends, and families. They are motivated to be FCS educators because of their belief in the mission as they currently interpret it, the relevancy of the content to their lives, the enjoyment they experience with the curriculum, and their desire to work with people to help them improve the conditions of their daily living.

Because motivation and passion are connected, it was difficult to clearly articulate the third purpose during the initial phase of the research process. Thus, the manner in which I should have articulated my purposes became clearer in the latter stages of my research journey. I stated originally that the third purpose was to identify the participants’ motivation and passion for being FCS educators. As I progressed through the research process, I realized that the third purpose was actually to identify the participants’ motivation and investigate
their passion for being FCS educators. The process I experienced to arrive at identifying the
motivation and thus investigating the passion is expected and part of narrative inquiry. As
written in the chapter focusing on the methodology,

The purposes and what one is exploring and finds puzzling, change as the research
progresses. This happens from day to day and week to week, and it happens over the
long haul as narratives are retold, puzzles shift, and purposes change (Clandinin &
Connelly, 2000, p. 73).

I experienced the evolving research process as I searched for the factors motivating
these participants to be FCS education majors and ultimately professionals in the field.
Through the evolving process, I began to reflect upon how I should be considering the role of
passion in the lives of the participants and its place in this inquiry. What I was looking for in
terms of my purposes became clearer through the research process. I developed a model of
my conceptualization of the process of the development of passion for FCS education as
shown in Figure 1.

I used the metaphor of “journey” throughout the dissertation realizing that I, too,
experienced a “journey” to FCS education as well as a “journey” to understanding the
meaning that continued to evolve through this research process. On any journey, one has to
take steps to reach the ultimate destination even if she doesn’t know what that final
destination will be or where it is located. As I began to conceptualize the process of the
journey one takes to develop passion for FCS education, I came back to a phrase shared by
Sara when she was reflecting upon the statement:

The essence of family and consumer sciences can be summarized using three
words – heard, heart, soul. The profession’s body of knowledge is the intellectual
foundation or head. The heart is the mission to improve the quality of life, which reflects our passion, caring, and compassion as professionals. Soul puts us in touch with the “whys” of our being that which inspires, motivates us, and gives meaning to our work (Nickols & Anderson, 2001, p. 2).

Figure 1. Initial conceptualization of the development of passion for FCS education.

Sara stated:

It definitely goes along with, like I feel like that kind of summarizes my interview from before. So it is almost like a step ladder, like you have the foundation which is the head and then I feel like I haven’t necessarily as far as seeing um, like it change other people’s lives and as far as like the soul part I don’t think I’ve completely
accomplished that because I haven’t seen that yet, I feel like I haven’t changed anybody’s life yet because I haven’t started teaching and I don’t know that I will change anybody’s life but I feel like that’s as far as that goes, I don’t feel like I’ve completely accomplished that.

In the process of analyzing and reflecting on this narrative, I envisioned steps along the journey and compared those to the hierarchal manner in which I had stated the purposes. I realized that a conceptual model of steps would depict the hierarchal manner of identifying and declaring the major, developing knowledge, and becoming motivated. However, passion was not depicted in the model and it appeared that the process for developing passion would end at the top of the stairs. This was not my intent nor did it reflect the essence of what I found as a result of this investigation.

Figure 2. The process of developing passion for FCS education.
I continued to view the process of developing passion for the profession of FCS, specifically FCS education, in a hierarchal manner. Passion is created throughout the process as shown in Figure 2. The first step, *identify*, involved identifying FCS education as a program of study. The first purpose of identifying FCS education and declaring it as one’s official program of study is necessary before proceeding to build the knowledge base needed to function as a FCS professional. The second step, *knowledge*, required that participants develop knowledge of the FCS content with an understanding of the integrative nature of the profession. The development of knowledge of the content of FCS with an understanding of the integrative nature of the profession was evident as a necessary part of the process in the participants’ journey to developing passion for FCS and was stated as purpose two.

The participants applied knowledge learned in FCS to their own lives. Through this process, the participants came to believe in the importance of what FCS teaches because they witnessed how it affected their own lives. It was during this step of acquiring knowledge that participants begin to interpret the mission of FCS. As they internalized the professional mission, each participant developed a personal mission which appeared to be aligned with her interpretation of the mission of the profession to improve the quality of life for others. Each personal mission was unique and articulated differently focusing on areas that the individual deemed important; however, common elements were present with each personal mission being aligned with the participant’s interpretation of the mission of the profession. Therefore, the third step, *personal and professional alignment*, involved participants interpreting the mission of the profession, internalizing that interpretation, and developing personal missions aligned with their interpretations.
**Motivation** was the fourth step in the process of developing passion for FCS education. As originally stated in the third purpose of the study, I identified the motivation. I came to understand that alignment with the profession’s mission and personal interpretations of that mission were what provided the motivation for the participants to pursue FCS education. After identifying the motivation, I investigated their passion, not necessarily identifying their passion because their passion was evident from discussions about their motivation for teaching FCS. Their passion for FCS education developed from their beliefs in their personal and professional missions, which were the motivators. They are passionate about improving the quality of life for others--their interpretation of the mission of FCS.

This motivation led to the development of **commitment**, the fifth step in the process of developing passion for FCS education. As the researcher, I am led to believe that passionate professionals are more likely to demonstrate their commitment to the profession and that passion will be the propelling force that motivates them to become advocates for anything that may challenge that personal and professional mission. Developing passion for FCS education is a process beginning with the first step of identifying the FCS education major. Passion continues to develop as one progresses through the aforementioned five steps.

I placed the head, heart, and soul terms that have been used to describe the essence of the FCS profession in the model. **Head** was placed in the foundation of the model because it corresponded to the steps of identifying the major and developing a knowledge base. As the knowledge base of the participants’ increased, their hearts for the profession began to develop. The **heart** corresponded with the alignment of the professional and personal missions. These alignments led to motivation for being FCS educators and commitment to the work of FCS professionals which corresponded with the **soul**.
Interpretations of the Mission

The participants’ comments emphasized their desire to teach life skills to their students, friends, and family members. Based on the mission developed by Brown and Paolucci (1979) and the explanation of home economics education by Brown (1980), FCS involves much more than teaching skills. Yet during my preparation as an undergraduate student I didn’t think beyond the teaching of life skills. I realized the value of the content and the importance it held for helping others live better lives. I, like the participants, experienced alignment with the professional mission as I developed my own personal interpretation of it to improve the quality of lives for others, and I also wanted to impact those with whom I came in contact.

Upon reflecting on the difference between the researcher and the researched, I realize that I am at a different place in my professional journey which can be contributed to differences between ages, educational levels, and work experience. At this point in their journey, these participants lack the depth, breadth, and experience to fully comprehend the mission articulated by Brown and Paolucci. I find myself in a continual journey to develop and comprehend the mission more fully. In 1981, Horn wrote *Home Economics: A Recitation of a Definition* in which she discussed how the definition of home economics had been “written down, repeated, quoted, and paraphrased again and again” (p. 19). Horn referred to the definition developed by Brown and Paolucci, East’s 1980 book about home economics, and the Lake Placid conferences and articulated the difficulty she experienced in trying to develop anything else that could better describe the definition of home economics and its implications for practice. However in 1981, just as now, there was concern about the status of home economics. Horn provided a discussion focused on two issues she viewed as central to
the situation. The first issue was a memorized definition of the profession versus the reality of professional practice. Horn stated “The first issue pertains to the lack of congruence between the way in which we define ourselves and the way we actually perform” (p. 19). She further stated that “Almost every acceptable definition of home economics includes the well-worn phrases that we all use over and over again: “the well-being of families,” “the improvement of home life,” “the preservation of values significant to the home” (p. 19). She realized that individual concepts of home economics existed and ranged from a definition of home economics as a single (yet complex) field, focused on home and family, to one which perceives home economics as extremely diverse – a collection of many specializations grouped together, not because of any philosophical relationship, but for purposes of centralized administration (pp. 19, 20).

As referenced in the literature review, Horn recognized that the basis of being a FCS professional is the ability to draw knowledge from many disciplines to focus on the problems of individuals and families (Horn, 1981). Horn saw a “unified approach to the problems of families, based upon a broad foundation in many disciplines (anthropology, economics, psychology, philosophy, etc.) …” (p. 20). She encouraged professionals to examine the philosophical commitment that specializations have to the mission of the profession and not be set on the traditional associations but critically analyze how specializations actually fit with the definition of the profession. The second issue she identified was her concern over the “level of students we are attracting to home economics, and the sequence of their professional education” (p. 21). According to Brown and Paolucci, the “professional home economist has to be a master of theoretical knowledge as well as practical technique” (Horn, 1981, p. 22).
Horn questioned the ability of faculty in higher education to produce such a professional in a four-year baccalaureate program. She contributed part of the problem to the loose manner in which we use the term “home economics.” Acknowledging that certain concepts of home economics could be taught at all levels of education including elementary, high school, and adult, Horn was certain that we are not teaching very young children the knowledge needed to be a home economist by definition. In fact, Horn advocated that the broad knowledge and analytical abilities required of home economics professionals could not be developed quickly. She believed that units offering baccalaureate degrees could produce “adequately prepared technicians in four years” (p. 22). Horn stated “Most 18-year-olds haven’t even made up their minds about having families of their own; it’s hardly time to develop a comprehensive understanding of family functioning that will enable them to serve other families in solving problems.” (p. 22). Horn (1981) proposed that a professional school model be used for the education of home economics professionals with students entering the school after completing an undergraduate major. This model would include program areas such as “individual and family behavior, resource utilization, public policy, and the process of practical reasoning” with a portion of the final year consisting of an internship with families (p. 23).

I refer to Horn’s (1981) work to illuminate the point that the participants in this study may be at an appropriate level of interpretation of the profession’s mission for their level of education and development. I suspect that the motivation for many committed and passionate FCS professionals lies at their desire to improve the human condition through instruction in family and consumer sciences. However, our own interpretations of the mission of the profession may vary depending on our job, education, age, and experience. After analyzing
and reflecting upon the narratives provided by the participants, I propose that the participants have not identified with the second part of the definition developed by Brown and Paolucci but they have identified with the first part of the mission statement.

As revealed in their narratives, the participants identified with FCS and they were motivated by the mission as they interpreted it to teach others how to improve their daily lives. In essence, they are helping others to mature “in individual self-formation” through the education they will provide their students, friends, and families. The participants were not pursuing a major in FCS education for the possibility of external reward. Instead, they were attracted to it because of their altruistic desire to teach others concepts that can help improve the quality of their lives and they enjoyed the feelings they experienced as a result. The participants derived their pleasure from embracing the mission of the profession as a FCS educator. I believe that passionate professionals demonstrate their support for the mission by embracing and believing in it and demonstrate commitment to the profession by engaging in behaviors that coincide with the mission to improve the human condition.

Through my doctoral work, I have been encouraged to question the solutions to practical perennial problems encountered by individuals and families using the technical, interpretative/communicative, and emancipative interests of the critical science approach. In their in-depth philosophical essay defining home economics, Brown and Paolucci referred to home economics as a critical science. The critical science perspective is complicated and my ability to use critical science continues to develop. According to Vincenti and Smith (2004), critical science “should become a way of viewing the world, our work, and ourselves” (p.70). As a leader and educator, I will strive to employ the critical science approach as I seek to embrace the mission of FCS set forth by the definition developed by Brown and Paolucci and
to know and understand forces that influence families and consumers to aid them in living better lives. As a FCS educator, I must work to create changes in my students’ thought and reasoning processes that result in enabling them to develop an understanding of the possibilities that emerge as a result of using critical science to “participate in the critique and identification of social goals and means for accomplishing them” (Brown & Paolucci, 1979, p. 23). A recommendation for further study is to conduct a similar inquiry with practicing professionals within the profession of FCS who have demonstrated commitment to the mission developed by Brown and Paolucci. Another recommendation for further study is to explore the concepts of passion and motivation with students pursuing majors other than FCS education to investigate their passion for their profession. Guiding questions could include: Is passion for the mission of FCS what sets FCS professionals apart from other professionals? Do other professions have missions? Are those missions taught? Is the mission of that profession what attracts someone to that major? What about the personal contact? Is it characteristic of just family and consumer sciences?

**Motivation, Passion, and Commitment**

Deci’s (1975) theory of intrinsic motivation proposes that intrinsically motivated behaviors are based in people’s need to be competent and self-determining. The theory of intrinsic motivation suggests that one must feel self-competent and self-determining to stay motivated. The need to feel self-competent can be related to the need for emerging FCS professionals to develop competence regarding the knowledge base of FCS. Feeling good about one’s professional practice because she has demonstrated knowledge can lead to being motivated to continue the work with self-determination. As disclosed in the findings of this
study, the participants enjoyed the feelings they experienced after sharing their knowledge gained from courses taken during their FCS program of study to help friends and family resolve issues and be more informed when making decisions that effect daily living. Participants provided examples of opportunities they have had to share information specifically pertaining to child development and parenting concerns and choices over consumer products. Participants expressed their surprise and delight in realizing their levels of competence related to FCS and their abilities to communicate this information to others. Participants reported that they had considered other career paths, however they did not feel as inspired or motivated by those choices as they did with FCS education. As revealed by the participants in this study, each had to proceed in steps along their journey but they had to first become aware of FCS education as a potential major, followed by developing their knowledge base. After identifying the major and developing a knowledge base, the belief is that the stage is set for passion to develop. Every student majoring in FCS education may not develop a passion for the profession.

What, then, is the difference between those who develop passion for the FCS profession and those who do not? As revealed by the participants in this study, it is developing a personal mission aligned with the mission of the FCS profession. This alignment of missions was their motivation for being FCS educators. Being motivated by a mission that they are aligned with and identified with was the motivation fueling their passion for the FCS profession. By identifying this as their motivation, the investigation of passion revealed that the participants were passionate about their interpretation of the mission of the profession which was to improve the quality of life for others. By investigating the professional passion of the participants, conversations about commitment were held. For the
purposes of this study, I was not inquiring into the development of commitment to the profession, rather exploring the development of passion and conceptualizing the steps one takes on the journey to developing passion for FCS. I believe, as a result of what was revealed by my respondents, that passion ultimately leads to professional commitment. Ralston (2002) conveyed a similar belief in a letter to students in the College of Human Sciences at Florida State University, “Finally, I hope you will find a passion in what you are doing – so much so that you will develop a deep commitment to your professional practice” (p. 28). A recommendation for further study would be to develop an inquiry focusing on students who withdrew from the FCS education major analyzing the reasons given for their withdrawal from the major and compare what they disclose with the findings revealed in this study by participants who selected FCS education as a major and developed a passion for the profession.

Recommendations for Public Policy

After moving through the process of identifying and declaring the major, developing their knowledge base, forming a personal mission aligned with their interpretation of the professional mission, the process of developing passion for FCS had begun for the three participants in this study. The passion they felt toward FCS appeared to be leading to a commitment to the profession. Passion was particularly evident when discussing the name change issue that was occurring in the state where the research site was located at the same time of this investigation. Two of the participants were actively involved in advocacy efforts and their activity had been encouraged by a professor at the university. However, both expressed shyness and reluctance to lead a charge attributing this to their young age and inexperience.
As I reflected on the political struggles that were occurring at the time of this study between the FCS teachers and professionals and the State School Superintendent and Department of Education, I began to consider the current preparation of FCS education majors for engagement in public policy. Braun and Williams (2002) reviewed current thinking about civic engagement which they termed democratic engagement and proposed roles for FCS professionals. They described democratic engagement as “a process of participating in public decisions developed through collective, reasoned arguments oriented toward mutual understanding” (Braun & Williams, 2002, p. 13). They suggested that democratic engagement requires people interact peacefully, share knowledge and perspectives on issues, and organize to act publicly on these issues (Braun & Williams, 2002).

One arena for people to become engaged in the democratic process is by involvement in public policy. Braun and Williams (2002) summarized public policy describing it as “an agreed upon course of action, guiding principle, or procedure considered to be expedient, prudent or advantageous – a settled course of action adopted and followed by the public” (p. 13). They recognized that the political science field describes public policy in a “more formal and limited manner as an intentional course of action followed by a government institution or official resolving an issue of public concern” (p. 13). Public policy occurs in many forms including laws, rules, and decisions over funding, customs, and traditions (Braun & Williams, 2002).

Braun and Williams (2002) recognized that the term public policy could make people “think public decision-making is such a formal process that they could not become involved in a meaningful way” (p. 13). Braun and Williams (2002) predicted that the challenge to FCS
professionals and the professional association will be to lead the focus on families as
decisions are made in the public arena. I believe that emphasis on this responsibility should
be incorporated in FCS education programs at the undergraduate level. The participants in
this study shared their experiences and recent involvement with an issue within their state
regarding changing the name of the secondary program to something other than FCS, a move
that was initiated by the State School Superintendent and the State Department of Education.
During the group interview, participants discussed how they felt overwhelmed when
attending a focus group meeting held to address the issue. The participants wanted to
advocate for FCS education at the public meeting but did not want to sound “uneducated.”
The participants had been encouraged by a professor to write the legislators and state
officials expressing their views on the situation.

However, I believe, based on the findings revealed in this study, that more emphasis
needs to be placed on educating preprofessionals about the political process and the role of
politics in education. Providing educational experiences focusing on how to adequately
prepare for engagement in discussions involving issues affecting one’s professional practice
and that are influenced by politics is likely to increase the confidence of future professionals
encountering similar situations. A recommendation derived from the meaning revealed in
this study would be to educate undergraduate FCS students, specifically FCS education
students about democratic engagement with specific focus on involvement in public
policy.

According to Anderson and Miles (1990), “Policy education is grounded in the idea
of empowering people to become involved in shaping and influencing their well-being” (p.
391). This type of instruction is particularly important for career and technical education
areas that are constantly competing for federal funding and justifying the existence of their programs. Combining FCS and democratic engagement, Braun and Williams (2002) asked “What more important public work can there be than that of the development and strengthening of families as the basic unit of democracy?” (p. 13). It is recommended that a required course taught at the undergraduate level focus on public policy and how to effectively advocate for FCS programs at all levels of education and in communities. Realizing that the roles of the FCS public policy activist can vary depending on the issue at hand and the context, Braun and Williams (2002) described different roles of engagement including citizen professional, educator professional, analyst professional, and advocate professional. They stated “A role for members who are in formal and informal educational settings is that of policy educator” (p. 14). While the role of policy educator occurs in many venues including higher education, secondary classrooms, and community organizations, Braun and Williams (2002) wrote “The educator role can be fulfilled in secondary or university classrooms where historic and contemporary policy issues are part of the curriculum” (p. 14). Braun and Williams (2002) explained

Not every FCS professional is a skilled educator; however those who are can participate via teaching and learning. Who can better combine the content of family and consumer sciences with the public policy arena in which policy decisions are made that affect the quality of life for families? (p. 14).

FCS is a profession integrating knowledge from many disciplines to improve the human condition. Recognizing the possible influence of FCS professionals in the public policy arena, Braun and Williams (2002) stated “The FCS professional has the right and responsibility to study an issue and speak out as both an educated citizen and as an FCS
professional who is arguing for a specific course of action” (p. 15). Offering a college course utilizing the critical science model and democratic engagement could help students understand what could be and engage them in a process focused on social change to improve the human condition. This course should not be limited to just FCS students but students from all programs of study emphasizing that the FCS profession uses knowledge from all disciplines to improve the human condition. Through this course the mission of FCS needs to be communicated to other potential majors who have personality characteristics that would increase their identification with the purposes and goals of the FCS profession.

Summary of Study

This study joined literature on passion, its definition and role in choosing a career, with professional literature in FCS regarding the soul and essence of the profession, and the shortage of and need for FCS educators. The investigation also drew upon the theories of motivation, particularly the theory of intrinsic motivation to be a lens for examining the motives of three students for choosing to major in FCS education. It combined reflection on the concept of passion with reflection on motivation to produce a unique study that yielded valuable insight for practitioners to consider and use.

Reflecting Back to Look Ahead

I have been on a journey throughout my doctoral studies. The journey was one that I embarked upon to become a researcher, scholar, and leader within the FCS profession. Arriving at the topic of my inquiry was also a journey that continually evolved through my doctoral studies. During my preliminary examination, my committee expressed that they had observed my passion for FCS. This conversation began a reflection on what makes a FCS professional passionate about her practice. This conversation initiated the journey toward my
topic of inquiry. I wanted to unearth a topic that I was really interested in investigating because I desired to be more than a just a researcher completing degree requirements, I wanted to be a researcher with a passion who contributed to her field. I wanted to uncover my passion and allow it to guide my research and practice. As I started this journey, I asked myself why am I so passionate about FCS? A consideration for when and where this passion for FCS education began was necessary.

I started by examining the development of passion for FCS in my own life. It was impossible to write my autobiography without centering it on my development into a FCS professional. However, the development of my passion for FCS did not occur instantly, rather it has progressed over time and now continues to be felt more intensely each day.

My passion has increased as I have been pursuing my doctorate and especially during the writing of my dissertation. In the midst of my research process, there was turmoil in my state between the State Department of Education and the FCS teachers and professionals. I didn’t realize how intertwined my personal and professional identity was until I became involved in advocating against a proposed “rebranding” of FCS at the secondary level initiated by the State School Superintendent. Three focus group meetings were arranged around the state to discuss this “rebranding.” I was moved to actively participate in the discussion and immediately began contacting teachers, extension agents, legislators and other stake holders to attend the focus group meeting held in my region of the state. This marked the beginning of my first political involvement. Once the meeting began, it was obvious that the goal of the meeting was not to discuss retaining the name but rather to change the name. During the meeting, dialogue flowed passionately in the words of secondary and post-
secondary teachers, retired teachers, representatives from business and industry, college students, and high school FCCLA officers and their parents.

As an active spokesperson, I discussed the mission of the FCS profession and how these focus group participants, specifically teachers, obviously had intertwined personal and professional identities and that is why the issue was so important to them. The name signifies part of who they are as people and professionals—their identities. Therefore, I summarized that the debate was about more than the title of a program. Professionals understanding and believing in the FCS profession also feared what would happen to the curriculum if the word “family” were removed from the title as had been discussed. As evident from the responses of the study participants, this belief in the mission with family at the center is a powerful motivator. The FCS professionals present were proud of what they did on a daily basis as was evident in their comments and the passion they used when speaking. Two of the study participants, Lisa and Amy, attended one of the focus group meetings but all three participants had been involved in conversations with a professor and their practicum teachers. The sentiments regarding this issue were recalled during the group interview and stimulated much of the discussion. For me and the participants, the experience of advocating for family and consumer sciences brought a realization of passion to the forefront. Maybe our passion as professionals does not surface until we discuss it with others holding similar beliefs or until we have a reason to advocate for the purposes and goals set forth by the mission of the profession. Regardless, it reinforces that passion is at the core of our professional beings.

My journey to becoming a passionate FCS professional is not complete. It is continually evolving. As I reflected on my development into a FCS professional, I
remembered those who have been on this journey with me mapping my path to success. They have influenced me and challenged me. They have held me in high regard and expected great things from me. They have encouraged me to step out into the world and try new experiences, but they have never sent me alone or unequipped for the journey. They have provided maps, each a different map but yet all the maps have connected to carry me forward on the journey both personally and professionally.

I reflected on these past experiences to see where they have taken me and how they have affected me. I use these experiences in my daily practice and keep them in the forefront of my memory so that I remember the feelings I had as a student who needed someone to provide guidance and the feeling of relief that emerged when that someone was present to offer direction. As a FCS educator, I want to impact my students. I try to be a blend of all the wonderful advisors and mentors that I have encountered. My passion for FCS has become so intense that it has shaped my personality to the extent that my personal and professional identities are now intertwined to where I do not really separate one from the other.

I believe fervently that the encounters that I have had with different FCS professionals have played a vital role in my professional development and the development of my passion for FCS education. After much reflection and a close examination of my own journey to FCS education, I can now answer my own question of “Why am I so passionate?” I am passionate because I embrace the mission of the profession and being a FCS educator provides me with an avenue to fulfill this mission in my professional and personal lives.

Through the process of conducting this narrative inquiry, I have come to understand more about myself as a person and professional. It was through constructing meaning with the participants that commonalities were revealed. We all possessed passion for FCS. As I
listened to their rich words and outlined themes in the data, I discovered that we also shared similar experiences along our individual journeys to FCS education. This research experience reaffirmed my own intrinsic motivation for being a FCS educator. As I entered the research field, I really did not know what to expect. Questions loomed in my mind: “Would these participants feel passion for FCS?” “If so, would they be able to express it without me pulling it out?” When the research journey was completed, I felt validated, encouraged, and gratified that three emerging professionals also possessed an intense emotion for FCS. It was an extremely rewarding experience and a professionally moving experience. For me, it has brought to the forefront the pressing need to advocate for the preservation of FCS education at the secondary and post-secondary levels. It has also made my commitment to the profession become more real in my daily practice, deepened my theoretical and philosophical understanding of the profession, and increased my own realization of my passion for the FCS profession.
APPENDIX A

APPROVAL OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
TO: Darby Stewell  
121 Inner Circle  
Moultrie, GA 31788

CC: Dr. Yvonne Gentzel  
30A MacKay

FROM: Jan Canny, IRB Administrator  
Office of Research Assurances

IRB ID: IRB-636

Approval Date: November 1, 2007  
Date for Continuing Review: October 31, 2008

The Chair of the Institutional Review Board of Iowa State University has reviewed and approved the protocol entitled: "Passion: A Narrative Journey to Family and Consumer Science Education." The protocol has been assigned the following ID Number: 07-636. Please refer to this number in all correspondence regarding the protocol.

Your study has been approved from November 1, 2007 to October 31, 2008. The continuing review date for the study is no later than October 31, 2008. Federal regulations require continuing review of ongoing projects. Please submit the form with sufficient time (e.g., three to four weeks) for the IRB to review and approve continuation of the study prior to the continuing review date.

Failure to complete and submit the continuing review form will result in expiration of IRB approval on the continuing review date and the file will be administratively closed. All research related activities involving the participants must stop on the continuing review date, until approval can be re-established, except when necessary to eliminate an immediate hazard to research participants. As a courtesy to you, we will send a reminder of the approaching review prior to this date.

Please remember that any changes in the protocol or consent form may not be implemented without prior IRB review and approval, using the "Continuing Review and/or Modification" form. Research investigators are expected to comply with the principles of the Belmont Report, and state and federal regulations regarding the involvement of humans in research. These documents are located on the Office of Research Assurances website or available by calling (515) 294-4566, www.compliance.iastate.edu.

You must promptly report any of the following to the IRB: (1) all serious and/or unexpected adverse experiences involving risks to subjects or others; and (2) any other unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

Upon completion of the project, please submit a Project Closure Form to the Office of Research Assurances, 1136 Pearson Hall, to officially close the project.
APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Study: Passion: A Narrative Journey to Family and Consumer Sciences Education

Investigators: Darby Sewell, MEd.
               Yvonne S. Gennette, PhD

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this study is to examine the development of passion in students majoring in family and consumer sciences education. The present study has three purposes. The first purpose is to ascertain an understanding of participants' identification with the major of family and consumer sciences education. The second purpose is to obtain the participants' understanding of the integrative nature of the family and consumer sciences professions. The third purpose is to identify the motivation and passion of undergraduate students choosing a major in family and consumer sciences education. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a senior majoring in Family and Consumer Sciences Education at the University of Georgia and have demonstrated characteristics that reflect leadership, academic ability, and a passion or enthusiasm for your chosen major.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation will last for six months and will involve the initial contact to secure this signed informed consent document, writing your autobiography, one 90-minute audio-taped individual interview, providing a written response to a scenario, and a group interview with the other participants. During the study you may expect the following study procedures to be followed: You will be asked open-ended guiding questions about your background, choice of major in family and consumer sciences education, understanding of the integrative nature of the family and consumer sciences profession, and your motivation and passion for the field. You may skip any question that you do not wish to answer or that makes you feel uncomfortable. Interviews will be audio-taped, transcribed, and analyzed. You will be provided copies of written transcripts and the opportunity to determine if your words were analyzed appropriately. If not, there may be a need for an additional interview to make clarifications. All audio-taped interviews and transcriptions will be erased on year after completion of the research. The written documents (autobiography and response to a scenario) will be analyzed for themes. You will be allowed the opportunity to determine if your words were analyzed appropriately.

ORA 10/06
To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: respondents will be assigned a pseudonym which will be used on all data collection materials instead of their name. Only the principal investigator and the major professor executing the research will have access to the data. The data will be stored in a locked cabinet at the principal investigator's home office in Monticello, Georgia. Computer stored data will be password protected. Audio-taped interviews and transcriptions of interviews will be erased one year after completion of the research. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact Darby Sewell, (229) 985-4917 and/or Yvonne B. Gentry, (515) 294-0533, paty@iastate.edu.
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Diane Amore, Director, Office of Research Assurance, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011, (515) 294-3115, danmore@iastate.edu

*****************************************************************************

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant's Name (printed) ____________________________________________

(Participant's Signature) __________________________ (Date) ________________

INVESTIGATOR STATEMENT

I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

(Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent) __________________________

(Date) ________________

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APPENDIX C

GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE
GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Recap purpose of the study

2. Ask each participant to write her definition of passion and then share with the group.

3. Allow time for dialogue about their individual definitions of passion.

4. I have listed some definitions I read as I wrote the review of literature for my proposal. I can provide these to stimulate conversation.
   a. Webster (2003) defines passion as “any emotion, as hate, love or fear; intense emotional excitement as rage, enthusiasm, or lust; the object of any strong desire”
   b. Anderson (1984) defined passion as an “intense emotional excitement” and as a feeling that comes to people who are “intense about some object, person, ideal, or belief” (p. 12).
   c. Passion is described as something that is intensely personal (Anderson, 1984) and as the motivation that drives people to be creative, productive, and efficient at work (Cassidy, 2000). Passion is the force that pushes individuals to accomplish goals and overcome difficult challenges (Veeck & Williams, 2005).

5. Provide quotes and statements regarding passion about family and consumer sciences and work in general and allow for dialogue. I have provided some prompts.

   a. When writing about the soul of the profession, Bower (2001) stated “Whether you see your commitment as a passion, a mission, or even a fever, it is contagious and we are carriers” (p. 20). Have you caught any passion from FCS professionals?

   b. “The heart of family and consumer sciences is demonstrated by the passion with which an individual practices” (Nickols & Anderson, 2001, p. 6). What do you think about this quote?

   c. Passions change and transform over time as individuals develop a deeper understanding of themselves (Attwood & Attwood, 2006). How has your passion for family and consumer sciences changed and transformed since you declared it as a major until now?

   d. Fairchild (2001) stated “… family and consumer sciences is one of my passions. It provides my spirit the ability to communicate with all ages, a purpose for my being, and a way to extend myself and educate others” (p. 29). How does your passion for family and consumer sciences motivate you now?
e. “Your passions are the loves of your life. They are the things which are most deeply important to you.” (Attwood & Attwood, 2006, p. xxii). Passions are also tied to one’s identity as Anderson (1984) stated “Who you are is defined by what you feel strongly about and by your capacity to take action on those feelings” (p. 12). Is your identity connected to your major in Family and Consumer Sciences Education? How would you describe it?

f. “The essence of family and consumer sciences can be summarized using three words – head, heart, and soul. The profession’s body of knowledge is the intellectual foundation or the head. The heart is the mission to improve quality of life, which reflects our passion, caring, and compassion as professionals. Soul puts us in touch with the “whys” of our being that which inspires, motivates us, and gives meaning to our work” (Nickols & Anderson, 2001, p. 2). What do you think about this description of the essence of family and consumer sciences?

g. In a letter to students in the College of Human Sciences at Florida State University, Dean Penny Ralston (2001) wrote “Finally, I hope you will find a passion in what you are doing – so much so that you will develop a deep commitment to your professional practice” (p. 28). Has your passion developed into a commitment to family and consumer sciences education?

6. Present the following situation:

All of you are aware of the recent issue regarding changing the name of the secondary family and consumer sciences program in [State] to a name other than “family and consumer sciences.” This change was being initiated and supported by the State School Superintendent. Each of you discussed your feelings about the name change in your individual interview. I want you to remember how you felt about that situation as a student majoring in family and consumer sciences education and, at this point, to think about another situation. You are teaching family and consumer sciences. You are told that family and consumer sciences courses are being eliminated from middle schools and high schools all over the United States.

- What do you think?
- How do you feel?
- What do you do?
APPENDIX D

RECOMMENDATIONS
RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the understanding gained in the present study, it is recommended that:

• Secondary FCS teachers at all levels introduce the vast array of career opportunities in FCS with a special focus on FCS education.

After analyzing the participants’ experiences with identifying the FCS education major along with their preconceived ideas about FCS, critical evaluation of the current marketing of FCS education programs is encouraged and developing strategies to improve marketing programs is recommended.

• Promote the FCS education major more thoroughly on college campuses
• Begin recruitment efforts at the secondary level
• Foster personal identification with students and encourage their retention in FCS education

Recommendations for further research include:

• Conduct a similar study with a more diverse group of students across ethnic and racial groups as well as gender
• Conduct a similar inquiry with practicing professionals within the FCS profession who have demonstrated commitment to the mission developed by Brown and Paolucci (1979)
• Explore the concepts of passion and motivation with students pursuing majors other than FCS education to investigate their passion for their chosen major and compare the findings with the results of this study
• Develop an inquiry focusing on students who withdrew from the major of FCS education analyzing the reasons given for their withdrawal and compare what they
reveal with the findings revealed in this study by participants who did select FCS education as a major and developed passion for the profession. Based on the findings revealed in this study, more emphasis needs to be placed on educating preprofessionals about the political process and the role of politics in education.

- Educate FCS students, specifically FCS education students, about democratic engagement with specific focus on involvement in public policy.
REFERENCES


Workforce Education Forum, 29(2), 50–57.


Darby Thompson Sewell was born July 31, 1978 in Moultrie, Georgia. She received the Bachelor of Science in Family and Consumer Sciences with a major in Family and Consumer Sciences Education in 2000 and the Master of Education in 2001 from the University of Georgia. She was the recipient of the Outstanding Advisor award in 2007 from the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. She was recipient of the Jewell L. Taylor National Fellowship from the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences in 2005 and received a Family and Consumer Sciences Graduate Fellowship from the Association for Career and Technical Education in 2004. She is an Assistant Professor of Family and Consumer Sciences at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton, Georgia.