Teaching About Family Science as a Discipline

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Sandra J. Bailey and Deborah B. Gentry

Throughout the chapters in this Handbook, research, theory, and methodology have been presented on marriage and family. The content provides much of the background for one to understand the study of family and family science as a discipline. In this chapter, the goal is to explore ideas around teaching family science as a discipline. We will examine the terms used to describe the science and the profession, and where the field fits among social science disciplines as primary, secondary, or tertiary. We will discuss the ethics, theories, and methodologies that many scholars believe should be included in the study of marriage and family and provide a discourse on whether or not a separate discipline of family science exists today. The seven criteria for a field to become a true discipline as described by Burr and Leigh (1983) will be explored. We will examine what "teaching" about families entails as the field prepares professionals. Finally, we will identify some emerging and futuristic topics for family science educators to consider.

Approaches to learning are often applied to teaching children, however, styles of learning are applicable across the life span from early childhood to adulthood (Conlan, Grabowski, & Smith, 2003). Pedagogy is how children learn, whereas andragogy, according to Knowles (1980), is the art and science of adult learning. Knowles claimed that the material presented to the adult learner must be learner-centered and self-directed. Andragogy is based on the following four principles: (1) adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of the learning; (2) experience is the basis for learning; (3) adult learning is most effective when it is relevant to the learner's job or personal life, and (4) the learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented (Conlan et al., 2003). Within our discussion of teaching family science, we will use andragogy as a framework to understand how professionals in the field are prepared.

Terminology

A discussion of family science as a discipline can be enhanced by first defining some relevant terms and concepts. How is family science different from other social science fields? Is it simply an area within sociology, psychology, anthropology, or social work? Most will agree that the family field is interdisciplinary (Burr & Leigh, 1983; Ganong, Coleman, & Demo, 1995; Hollinger, 2003; Leigh, 1987; Meredith & Abbott, 1988; Pearl, 1950; Smart, 2009). Works from the fields of sociology, psychology, anthropology, and social work provide a backdrop for scholars to focus on family processes or the family realm.

S.J. Bailey, PhD (✉)
Department of Health and Human Development, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT, USA
e-mail: baileys@montana.edu

D.B. Gentry, PhD
Instructional Development Center, Heartland Community College, Normal, IL, USA
e-mail: Deborah.Gentry@heartland.edu

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A recent survey of administrators of academic departments with the word "family" in the title revealed that family science was distinct in that it concentrates on specialized topics, including family and relationships, a family strengths philosophy as opposed to pathology, anomaly or deviance; a multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary approach; an emphasis on family systems; and an examination of individual development and family processes from a life span, ecosystem perspective (Hamon & Smith, 2010). Additionally, the field focuses on prevention and provides students with practical skills and a background for graduate education.

The definition of "discipline" must also be clarified. A discipline is a "field of study" (Merriam-Webster, 2010). In 1985, Kinglsey Davis published a paper in the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) *Task Force Newsletter* applying the field of family science to a typology of disciplines. Davis claimed that there are three levels of fields—primary, secondary, and tertiary. Some disciplines are considered primary and include Greco-Latin terminology such as psychology and sociology. The explanations from these sciences are independent and do not rely on other sciences. Others are considered "secondary," such as family science, as they rely on other sciences for explanations and conclusions. These sciences also reveal some independent explanations. The tertiary sciences do not have independent explanations and tend to be identified by the term "studies" (e.g., gender studies and ethnic studies).

Is family science a secondary discipline that uses the explanations of other older primary sciences? A special issue of the *Journal of Family Psychology* (Snyder & Kazak, 2005) contains a collection of articles on methodology in family science. Although it labels them a family psychology program, clearly there is a subset of psychology that examines the family in the forefront and the individual in the background. The authors acknowledge the complexity of family psychology and refer to the broader field as "family science" (Snyder & Kazak).

We must also clarify what it means to "teach" family science. According to Merriam-Webster's (2010) online dictionary, to teach is a verb that goes beyond instruction. To teach is to "cause to know something" or gain a set of skills; to "guide the studies of," which in this case is the study of families; to "impart knowledge"; and to "make known and accepted" which in this discussion is a continued discourse about whether or not the study of the family realm is indeed a distinct field and if so, where the discipline is headed. Knowles' (1980) framework for adult education aligns with this definition as students learn about the science behind marriage and family and then apply the knowledge through experiential learning. Clearly, teaching family science is more than imparting a set of theories and methodologies to students or teaching specific skills to work with families. The principles of andragogy are evident as the learner can apply what is learned to professional and personal spheres. The teaching encompasses an effort to move the discipline forward to refine the challenges that scholars in the past have presented, including a resolution of what to call the discipline.

Criteria for a Discipline

Burr and Leigh's (1983) article brought together the history behind family science and proposed that indeed, a new social science field existed. Their rationale was that

> The family institution is so different that the findings and theories in other areas, such as small groups research, communication, and learning psychology, cannot be applied without careful adaptation, because the family system has a unique composition of age, gender, functions, and roles; there are not other institutions where the life-cycle, careers, affect commitment and help patterns even begin to be similar (p. 468).

They asserted that the seven criteria necessary for an area of study to become a discipline had been met. These include a unique subject matter; an adequate body of theory; development of methodology; supporting paraphernalia; apparent utility; ability to teach and discipline; and consensus among professionals. We venture to suggest an eighth criterion also be used: an accumulating history. We will examine and apply each of these criteria, beginning with a synopsis of key historical milestones.

Accumulating History

From Schvaneveldt (1971) and Burr and Leigh (1983) to Smith, Hans, and Kimberly (2010) a number of observers have asserted that the family field has experienced an "identity problem" and mused about the nature of its origin and possible solutions. On the web site for the American Historical Association, Stearns (2010) sets about answering the question of why one should undertake studying the history of, say, a nation, religion, family, individual, or…for that matter…an academic discipline. Among the reasons he enumerates are that history helps provide identity and it furthers understanding of change and how we came to be. Whether family science is a primary or secondary discipline, studying its history could be one way of helping family science professionals solidify their sense of identity.

Based on a recent popular British Broadcasting Company (BBC) television documentary series and accompanied by a book of the same title authored by Smolenyak (2010), "Who Do You Think You Are?" successfully captured American television viewers' attention in early 2010. During each of seven episodes of this television show, different celebrities researched their families' past and, in doing so, traveled all over the world. Viewers were given a comprehensive look into famous stars' family trees and, along the way, were exposed to surprising facts and emotional encounters that served to demonstrate how connected everyone is not only to the past, but to one another (NBC Universal, 2010). Besides winning assorted awards, this documentary series has seemingly furthered everyday Americans' interest in exploring their own individual and family histories. Taking a cue from this show, one might ask, "So, *family science*, just who do you think you are?"

The history of the family field, including family science as an evolving academic discipline, begins less than a 100 years ago. By comparison to other sister disciplines (e.g., psychology, sociology, economics, law, communication, or political science), family science is relatively new. Thus, in researching such history, it is not difficult to find relevant information. Noteworthy documents and publications are reasonably well preserved and accessible. We found two comprehensive written histories particularly helpful, one written by Hollinger (2003) and the other by Smart (2009). Additionally, we considered a paper published by the NCFR Task Force on the Development of the Family Discipline (1988) a "classic," as it placed important historic milestones in the growth and development of the family field in various stages: discovery, pioneering, and maturing. Many who have played key roles in pioneering and expanding the discipline are still living, some of whom willingly report their recollections when interviewed (e.g., Day, Leigh, Settles, Keim, and others). Lastly, we consulted a creative pictorial account of the discipline's history developed by Alexander and Hamon (2010).

Efforts to document the earliest developmental milestones of most disciplines are often difficult to undertake (NCFR Task Force on the Development of the Family Discipline, 1988). Evolution occurs gradually; the meaningfulness attributed to various happenings can vary; memories can fade; and records may be poorly kept and maintained. To some degree, this observation is true of family science. Nonetheless, the chronology of events given in Table 35.1 has been commonly reported. The table is separated into three sections or stages. The first section features events and outcomes representative of a stage of development Schvaneveldt (1971) and the NCFR Task Force on the Development of the Family Discipline (1988) labeled as "discovery." During its approximate two decade duration (see 1922 through 1939 in Table 35.1) there was a shift among psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, home economists, theologians, political scientists, and other scholars toward emphasizing scientific, positivistic modes of inquiry. These scholars increasingly employed more rigorous research methodologies, and attempted to maintain a professional, value-free perspective (Hollinger, 2003). Though many scholars in these disciplines were interested in systematic study of families, few claimed "family" as the organizing center or core of their discipline. Few, if any, described family "in holistic terms, as a coherent, integrated body of knowledge" (p. 629). There were, however, a number of exceptions. It is those early, family-focused trail-blazers and the fruits of their labors that are given recognition here.

Table 35.1 Chronology of historic milestones

1922	While at Boston University, Ernest Groves, sociologist, launched the first college-level course focusing on family: "The Family and its Social Functions." He later went on to launch a parent education course while at Harvard University
1925	The Family Section of the American Sociological Association began. By 1930, it was renamed the Sociology of the Family Section
1927	Groves published the first family-focused college textbook: *Social Problems of the Family*
1934	Groves cofounded the Groves Conference on Marriage and the Family, a scholarly professional organization that sponsors an annual conference and publications
1936	Robert Angell's study of effects of economic depression on the family was published: *The Family Encounters the Depression*
1938	Paul Sayre (law professor), Ernest Burgess (sociology professor), and Sidney Goldstein (a rabbi) cofounded the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR), a professional organization that sponsors an annual conference, publications, and certifications Lewis Terman's scholarly efforts to predict success and failure in marriage were published: *Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness* Willard Waller's classic analysis of the family was published: *The Family: A Dynamic Institution*
1939	Groves established the first 3-year graduate training program in marriage and family at Duke University A journal entitled *Marriage and Family Living* was launched by NCFR. Today, this journal is now titled the *Journal of Marriage and Family* Burgess and Leonard Cottrell expanded the scholarly work being done to predict success and failure in marriage in their publication titled *Predicting Success and Failure in Marriage*
1946	Ernest Groves proclaims advance beyond an era of discovery to firmly establish a science of marriage and the family in a seminal article in *Marriage and Family Living* entitled "Professional Training for Family Life Educators"
1948	Howard Becker and Reuben Hill published a family-focused anthology: *Family, Marriage, and Parenthood*
1950	In an article appearing in *Marriage and Family Living,* Lester Pearl addressed the question "Are we developing a profession?"
1952	NCFR launched a journal titled *The Coordinator*. The journal was later renamed *The Family Life Coordinator* and, currently, is read under the name *Family Relations: Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies*
1962	Another family-focused journal was launched: *Family Process*
1964	Edited by Harold Christensen, the first handbook in the family field was published: *Handbook of Marriage and the Family*
1971	In an article appearing in *The Family Coordinator*, Jay Schvaneveldt was among the first scholars to describe role and identity problems as experienced by family-focused educators and researchers
1976	*Journal of Family History: Studies in Family, Kinship, and Demography* was launched C. R. Figley and B. R. Francis author *Student Perspectives: A Resource Guide for Graduate Programs in Family Studies*
1979	Wesley Burr, Reuben Hill, F. Ivan Nye, and Ira Reiss coauthored this seminal book: *Contemporary Theories About the Family*
1982	Carolyn Love's *A Guide to Graduate Family Programs* identified 54 institutions of higher education offering doctoral and master's degrees in family science, 49 of which were offered by programs with "family" in the title Results of a survey of members conducted by NCFR indicated 79% of those who responded believed discipline-related identity ambiguity was a "serious problem"
1983	Based on an address given while serving as NCFR president, Wesley Burr co-authored an article with Geoffrey Leigh titled "Famology: A New Discipline." The authors posited the family field met seven criteria for being a discipline in its own right and that a suitable name for this new discipline was "famology"
1984	NCFR president Bert Adams appoints multiple task forces to study and promote discussion about organizational, professional and career development, and identity issues. Task Group 5 was to specifically assess the worthiness and appeal of various names for the emerging discipline: family science, famology, familiology, and family studies. A number of annual conference sessions, forums, and published essays resulted

(continued)

Table 35.1 (continued)

	NCFR published *Standards and Criteria for the Certification of Family Life Educators, College/University Curriculum Guidelines, and Content Guidelines for Family Life Education: A Framework for Planning Programs Over the Lifespan*. Similar publications are printed in subsequent years
1985	At NCFR's annual conference in Dallas, Texas, the Task Force for the Development of a Family Discipline issued a recommendation advocating the new discipline be called "family science"
	The NCFR Board of Directors changed the status of the Task Force to that of a Section within the organization. Although first called the Family Discipline Section, it is renamed the Family Science Section in 1992
	The first Certified Family Life Educators (CFLE) were approved by NCFR
1987/1988	Guided and directed by the NCFR's Family Discipline Section, the first volume of *Family Science Review* came into print featuring numerous articles defining the nature and scope of family science, justifying "family science" as preferred name for both the discipline as well as academic programs, and proposing means by which academic and training programs in family science could best be designed and evaluated
	Family Science Association (FSA) was founded and began assuming formal sponsorship for *Family Science Review* as well as an annual Teaching Family Science Conference
	Wesley Burr, Randal Day, and Kathleen Bahr published a preliminary edition of an introductory college textbook titled *Family Science*. Today, in its fifth edition and solely authored by Day, it is called *Introduction to Family Processes*
	Journal of Family Psychology is launched
1989	The University of Kentucky began hosting an international electronic discussion group or listserv for family science educators, researchers, and practitioners. It continues today
	John Touliatos edited and published *Graduate Study in Marriage and Family: A Guide to Master's and Doctoral Programs in the United States and Canada.* Subsequent editions were published in 1994, 1996, and 1999
1994	Four of five home economics professional organizations adopted new nomenclature "family and consumer sciences." Thus, the American Home Economics Association became the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences
1995	James Ponzetti provided a comparative analysis of certification programs in family science and home economics
	NCFR's Family Science Section approved *Ethical Principles and Guidelines* and discussed it widely with the entire NCFR membership. NCFR adopted *Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Family Scientists* in 1998
	Randal Day, Kathleen Gilbert, Barbara Settles, and Wesley Burr edited and published *Research and Theory in Family Science*
	Robert Keim furthered family science career awareness with his chapter in *Research and Theory in Family Science* by Day et al.
	Lawrence Ganong, Marilyn Coleman, and David Demo identified competencies a family scientist should master, core and supplemental curricula, learning experiences, training and career requirements, and future trends in an article appearing in *Family Relations*
1996	NCFR began approving college and university family degree programs for adherence to the criteria needed for CFLE designation
1998	Robert Endsley expanded upon the topic of career development in family science. In years since, others have made clear the importance of experiential learning and professional practice
2000	Capitalizing on the international emphasis on the scholarship of teaching and learning, FSA modified the focus and name of *Family Science Review* to *Journal of Teaching in Marriage and Family*: *Innovations in Family Science Education.* In 2006, the journal's name reverted back to *Family Science Review*
2002	Jason Hans edited and published *Graduate and Undergraduate Study in Marriage and Family* (*2002–2004*). Subsequent editions were published in 2005 and 2008
2004	NCFR published *Family Science: Professional Development and Career Opportunities*
2005	An entire issue of the *Journal of Family Psychology* is devoted to "methodology in family science"
	Efforts undertaken to secure formal listing of "family life educator" as a career by U. S. Department of Labor. Such efforts continue today
2010	Annual conference FS Section sessions regarding programs, names, future, etc.

Described as an unusually creative period (see 1949 through 1982 in Table 35.1) the roughly 35-year "pioneering" stage of development came next (NCFR Task Force on the Development of the Family Discipline, 1988). Sociologist Groves (1946) kicked it off with a now well-known paper. In it, he shared an outcome he envisioned for the quickly evolving family field: a science of marriage and the family. During this stage, new theories, research methods, and intervention strategies were being developed, tested, and written about, often in newly launched journals. Three professions, family therapist, family life educator, and family extension specialist, were born. Family-focused doctoral programs and family therapy training offerings were becoming increasingly popular. The side effects of such rapid change were, however, role and identity problems among social and behavioral science academicians, scholars, and practitioners of the time (Schvaneveldt, 1971).

In the early 1980s, family science embarked on its third stage of development (see 1983 through, perhaps, 2005 in Table 35.1). Titling it the "maturing stage," the NCFR Task Force on the Development of the Family Discipline (1988) also characterized it as a time period filled with complexities. One of the intricacies they noted was that family science was an interdisciplinary field while, at the same time, having a newly emerging discipline within it. Other aspects of convolution were described as follows.

> There are several professions such as family therapy and family life education that have thousands of practitioners, and they are dealing with training standards, licensing and certification, codes of ethics and enforcement of professional standards. There are also many different schools of thought, theories, research strategies, and differences of opinion in the field (p. 90).

Task Force members also viewed this phase in development as a time of rapidly expanding knowledge. They noted the following observation:

> There are many new research findings, therapeutic strategies, educational and enrichment methods, professional organizations, conferences, and workshops. There is also an expanding realization that the family is important, and this has led to many new ways our expanding knowledge about the family can be applied (p. 90).

Differences of opinion still existed regarding whether or not the family field had indeed reached discipline status. After careful review and analysis, Burr and Leigh (1983) ventured to resolve the uncertainty in an article that resulted in much debate and controversy. On the basis of seven criteria, they concluded the family field had become a discipline in its own right. These criteria have been recounted in earlier paragraphs and serve, in part, as a means for organizing this chapter. Additionally, role and identity problems continued to persist. The remedy, many said, was to officially name the new discipline and consistently abide by such nomenclature once it was conferred. This proposal also prompted considerable debate. Among the names bantered about and assessed for their suitability were family science, family studies, famology, familology, familyology, familiaology, famistry, and famics (Burr & Leigh). The NCFR Task Force on the Development of the Family Discipline was formed to help facilitate discussion and decision making among interested parties. Though typically civil, some dialogue on these matters evidenced a degree of disciplinary snobbery, along with wounded egos and feelings. Ultimately, family science was deemed the preferred term.

Within a few short years of this decision, a section within NCFR, a separate professional organization along with its accompanying annual conference, and an introductory college textbook, utilized the new nomenclature. Within this textbook, family science was described in the following way.

> Family science is the discipline devoted to the study of the unique realm of the family. Its primary concentration focuses on the inner workings of family behavior and centers on family processes such as emotions in families, love, boundaries, rituals, paradigms, rules, routines, decision-making, and management of resources. When the family is studied from a family science perspective, researchers, practitioners, and clinicians treat information from other related disciplines (i.e., sociology, psychology, and anthropology) as vital background information. The foreground emphasis, however, is on the family system and its intimate workings (Burr, Day, & Bahr, 1993, pp. 17–18).

Buetler, Burr, Bahr, and Herrin (1989) further explained the family-realm perspective and its

unique usefulness for those researching families and family processes. In their view, it emphasized the effects of the generational, emotional, altruistic, polychromic, qualitative, and nurturing aspects of the human experience in ways other social sciences did not. Not everyone was convinced, however. Other scholars provided only modest support or critical, counterpoint views (e.g., Edwards, 1989; Jurich, 1989; Menaghan, 1989), thereby continuing the debate.

During the most recent 27 years that have passed, has family science simply continued to mature or has it, without much acknowledgement and fanfare, evolved into a fourth stage of development? If so, how should this new stage be characterized and what name would be most appropriate? In recounting the evolution of education for home and family life, Lewis-Rowley, Brasher, Moss, Duncan, and Stiles (1993) identify and label five developmental stages: coalescence, emergence, crystallization, expansion, and entrenchment. Since family science, in its most recent stage has involved considerable expansion, is "entrenchment" an equally suitable label for it? Entrench means to "place in a strong defensive position" and "to establish solidly." As Hamon and Smith (2010) observe

> Within a climate of shrinking academic budgets and threats of departmental dissolution or mergers, administrators of family science programs are discovering the need be able to articulate the distinctiveness of the discipline, the worth of the unique skills and perspectives afforded by family science programs, the challenges affecting the field, and the solutions and resources necessary to propel family science to new levels of relevance and application (p. 11).

They suggest family science is instead transitioning to an "evaluation and innovation" stage. Though adopting common nomenclature is still of importance, they additionally call for implementation of well-conceived public relations and marketing campaigns as well as advocacy and alliance-building strategies (Hamon & Smith, 2010).

To bring closure to this section, let us return to the topic around which it opened: reasons to study history, a primary one being to provide a sense of identity. Stearns (2010) also identifies three skills or abilities that historians-in-training can and should develop. These are the abilities to assess evidence, assess conflicting interpretations, and assess past examples of change. Family science students studying history of the family would have opportunity to develop and refine these skills. For that matter, studying the history of family science could afford them the same opportunity. These skills seem compatible with two of 12 competencies Ganong et al. (1995) enumerate as important for family scientists-in-training to acquire.

Ganong et al. (1995) thoughtfully address issues of training family scientists, particularly at the graduate level. Using Boyer's (1990) model of four types of scholarship (discovery, integration, application, and teaching) as a guide, they identify their 12 competencies. They also recommend educational experiences necessary to achieve these competencies. These and other recommendations will be addressed later in this chapter. Two of the 12 competencies these scholars emphasize are pertinent to this section pertaining to the history of family science, however. Family science students must master qualitative and quantitative research methods as well as excel in their ability to communicate with professional colleagues (Ganong et al., 1995; Gilgun, 2005; Snyder & Kazak, 2005). One way of honing these skills would be for students to research the history of family science and, upon uncovering the insights, complexities and controversies that inspired those who struggled to forge and establish it as a discipline, engage in dialogue with each other and their mentors regarding an answer to the question: Who do you think you are?

Distinct Subject Matter

Defining a distinct subject matter may appear to be a daunting task with the interdisciplinary nature of family science. It is our belief, however, that scholars have achieved this goal. Ganong et al. (1995) articulated what should be included in training of family scientists. These three authors claimed they are typical of family scientists in that they come from very different

backgrounds and professional identities, yet they were able to come together and identify the core elements needed for a graduate program in family science. Boyer's (1990) four elements of scholarship (discovery, integration, application, and teaching) guided their discussion. Ganong et al. (1995) asserted that doctoral students should have courses in quantitative and qualitative research methods, statistics, theory, life span development, multicultural families, interpersonal family dynamics, and a course on application. The basis for family science is the research that is conducted on the family, or in Boyer's (1990) terms "discovery." While many would claim that the study of the family is intuitive, scholars have demonstrated through empirical research that specific patterns, interactions, and processes exist within various family contexts. Graduate students need to understand how to conduct and interpret research. Family science clearly follows Boyer's (1990) scholarship of integration as the field is multidisciplinary. Students in family science programs are required to apply their knowledge in the form of internships and supervision hours fulfilling the scholarship of application. Finally, family science is a changing field, therefore the scholarship of teaching involves more than the sharing of knowledge but also an understanding of the changes facing families.

For undergraduate programs, Brock (1987) also articulated the identity problem inherent in family science programs. Brock claimed that in family science, the student is studying a prevention model of working with families. Students leave with knowledge of how to teach individuals and families strategies to prevent interpersonal and intrapersonal problems. According to Brock, the focus is to assist the student in becoming a skill builder rather than an interventionist. Brock's suggestions for a curriculum in skills training included theory and methods, but focused more on application than would be necessary at the graduate level. He listed 20 specific skill building areas that students could select from (e.g., parent education, family enrichment, assertiveness) and an internship requirement. The internship was critical because students need to be able to practice what was taught in the classroom in order to be effective in their profession. Again, we see that family science is a field that is interdisciplinary in nature, and yet is distinctive in that the focus is on prevention and, at the undergraduate level, the development of skills to work directly with families. The content is taught to students following the theoretical frameworks of both Knowles (1980) and Boyer (1990).

Both Ganong et al. (1995) and Brock (1987) concluded that a core curriculum across family programs has not been achieved. We, however, believe that the criteria for a distinct subject matter have been attained. Various disciplines approach the study of families uniquely, and the variety of professional backgrounds brought together to study families enriches our knowledge of this complex entity. Without this, we believe students would be relegated to study "the family" rather than family in its most diverse form. Ideally, family science as a discipline would be taught by faculty with a background in the full realm of family—e.g., faculty with doctorates in family science. Since this is not a reality at this time, one possible course of action is for departments to focus on hiring faculty from the various social sciences to bring together a more comprehensive curriculum for students.

The NCFR established the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) designation in 1985. This designation was developed for professionals with at least a bachelor's degree to work with individuals and families on issues across the life span. Within the CFLE designation, there are ten areas of competencies that can be attained—"families and individuals in societal contexts, internal dynamics of families, human growth and development across the life span, human sexuality, interpersonal relationships, family resource management, parent education and guidance, family law and public policy, professional ethics and practice, and family life education methodology," (NCFR, 2010, p. 5). See Chap. 33 in this Handbook for explanations of these competencies. A professional must be able to document proficiency in at least eight of the ten areas of competency. Today, prospective CFLEs must pass an exam to attain the certification unless they have graduated

from a CFLE approved academic program. The areas of competencies illustrate the multidisciplinary nature of family and family science. Currently, there are 121 academic departments at colleges and universities in the USA and Canada that have approved programs based on the CFLE guidelines (Dawn Cassidy, personal communication December 2, 2010). Although coursework may differ from department to department, the core resulting knowledge of a prospective CFLE will be similar. This furthers the argument for a distinct discipline. This, too, points to an agreement of a distinct discipline.

Well-Developed Theories and Methodologies

A discipline is guided by theories, frameworks, and perspectives. Is it possible to study family without imposing one's own experience and value system? How can the concept of family be studied when a variety of definitions exist? This dilemma was articulated by Christensen in the 1964 edition of the *Handbook of Marriage and Family*. In 1988, McKenry and Price visited these questions, citing that most research until that time focused on traditional White families. McKenry and Price (1988) discussed how conceptual perspectives were viewed as nonscientific if family life in traditional nuclear families were challenged. At that time, variations from this family life were viewed from a deviance perspective. Other family structures were considered problematic as they were compared to the traditional nuclear family.

More than 10 years later, the debate continued about the limitations of how families are studied (Allen, 2000; Walker, 2000). Allen argued that the study of families today continues to be more from a positivist core that does not address the diversity of families in context, structure, and racial/cultural diversity. Although a positivist approach answers some questions about family, as Allen pointed out, the field needs to continue to expand the methods by which families are studied in order to capture the diversity.

Walker (2000) asserted that family scholars need to be mindful of limitations in how families are studied. In a review of four studies from the *Journal of Marriage and Family* published during the 1990s, Walker illustrated the need for a variety of methodologies in studying family and articulated the need to examine our research methods based on the questions being asked and the population under study. She challenged family science scholars to examine data sampling, measurement issues, and interpretation of significant results. Both Walker (2000) and Allen (2000) brought attention to the need to continually examine the conduct of research on families and to acknowledge limitations.

Theoretical frameworks. With the complexity of modern families, it is not surprising that family science uses a variety of theories and methodologies. The theory and method will vary depending upon what aspect of family the research focuses on. Buetler et al. (1989) discuss the uniqueness of the family realm when conducting research on families. They point out that the "family realm" or concept has seven characteristics that, when taken together, explain family. These include "the generational nature and permanence of family relationships; concerns with 'total' persons; the simultaneous process orientation that grows out of familial caregiving; a unique and intense emotionality; an emphasis on qualitative purposes and processes; an altruistic orientation; and a nurturing form of governance" (p. 806). Buetler et al. (1989), assert that within family science, theories from other disciplines are borrowed and adapted. In using the family realm as criteria, the authors attempt to acknowledge the vast diversity in families and the difficulty in borrowing theory to explain family from other disciplines.

Burr (1995) outlined how theory should be applied in family science. He identified six aspects of theories. First, theories answer questions about what is going on within the realm of the family. Next, Burr asserts that theories are in the minds of those who are studying the family—that they are frameworks or models that help map what is studied. Third, he claims that theories give power. When scholars discover what works, they can then apply the information to work with families. The fourth aspect is that one lone theory will not

and should not be developed. Instead, a variety of theories is needed to complete the picture of the family realm. Next, Burr claims that the usefulness of a theory is vastly more important than whether or not it is true. According to Burr, "bad" theories will eventually fade away because they are not useful in explaining family. Finally, Burr states that theories provide perspective about an aspect of the family. For instance, one theory might apply to marital relationships, whereas another would be more useful in explaining a parent–child relationship. Again, this indicates the need for a variety of theories to study family.

We asked other Handbook authors to share with us the theories they used to guide their chapters and what they believed were essential frameworks for students to understand. We found a variety of theories and frameworks incorporated, based on the topic of the chapter. The responses, however, fell within five domains: (1) an examination of families over time; (2) families operating within systems; (3) the interactions and exchanges that occur in families; (4) power within families; and (5) individual family member perspectives. Theories that examine families over time included life course and family development theories. Family as studied through systems included ecological theories, cross-cultural perspectives, intersectionality, and family systems theory. Descriptions of how family members interact were framed within social exchange, conflict theory, and family stress perspectives. Finally, some study of the family focuses on the individual within the family using such frameworks as symbolic interaction, attachment theory, and identity theory. We also asked our fellow authors what theories and frameworks they believed should be taught to students studying families. Here, too, we received a variety of responses. However, the most frequent frameworks suggested included ecological/systems theories, feminist theories, exchange, symbolic interaction, and life course. This diversity would support the conclusions of Walker (2000) and Allen (2000), as the plurality of family requires the examination of family through various lenses.

We conducted a review of articles from 2008 to 2009 published in the *Journal of Marriage and Family, Family Relations*, and 2 years of *Theory Construction and Research Methodology* (TCRM) papers presented at the 2008 and 2009 NCFR conference to assess the types of theories and methods used in family science. Life span or life course perspectives were predominant, with exchange theories also frequently utilized. A variety of theories and frameworks still exist, however. According to James White (personal communication, May 7, 2010), a review of the *Journal of Marriage and Family* finds the following theories to be most predominant in the following order: (1) rational choice and exchange, (2) life course, and (3) feminist theories. White claims that although the order of the theories in terms of usage may change from time to time, these three frameworks have remained the most prominent in use. As Burr (1995) articulated, no one theory is adequate to explain family, nor should the field attempt to identify a single theory. Papers from TCRM indicate an attempt to combine theories or frameworks as scholars work toward refining theory in the study of family. Hopefully, as family science continues to evolve, scholars will adapt and develop frameworks that expand from the positivist to a post-positivist core that better explains the plurality of family.

Methodology. Research methodology in family science also appears to be varied. Carver and Teachman's (1995) chapter, *The Science of Family Science,* focused primarily on quantitative deductive methodology with a small section on ethnography. Sociologists typically use large quantitative data sets, and psychologists also use quantitative methods. During the time that the discourse on family science was taking place, there was also a movement to expand the use of qualitative methodology (Vidich & Lyman, 1998). Perhaps in an attempt to legitimize family science as a true discipline, the early work focused on this positivist quantitative framework. Many would say a quantitative positivist approach to the study of family severely limits how families are studied and what constitutes "family" (Allen, 2000; Walker, 2000). Today, a variety of methodologies are accepted in the field, depending upon the research questions being posed and the sample being assessed.

In the review we conducted of journal articles and TCRM, a range of methods were used. In the *Journal of Marriage and Family*, quantitative data sets and secondary analyses were frequently used. This is not surprising, as this journal is touted as the research journal of the NCFR and the field of family science. *Family Relations,* the applied journal of the NCFR, contained fewer studies using secondary data sets. The focus of this journal is application and implications necessary for professionals in the field.

This review indicates that family science continues to be an interdisciplinary field and by the nature of the study of families will, at least in the near future, continue to be influenced by a variety of other social sciences. Methodologies also will continue to vary, depending upon the aspect of family being studied. Family structure, culture, context, race, and ethnicity cannot be studied using a single method. Additionally, we cannot compare all families to White, middle-class families as has been done in the past. Doing so would inaccurately produce data that does not explain family interactions in a majority of families.

Our inquiry and review of theories and methodologies reveals the diversity in how families are studied. Rather than asking what theories students are exposed to in studying families, Adam Davey (personal communication, May 19, 2010) suggests that we should examine how theories are used. He asserts that while our data and methodologies have grown, the theory base for studying families has lagged behind. According to Davey, "We have pushed in several places to move from studying families in contexts to studying families as contexts and this is one place where there is precious little to guide our thinking, but the gaps continue to grow wider." Researchers need to continue to refine, expand, and develop theory that is suitable for the study of families.

Supporting Paraphernalia

If, as Burr and Leigh (1983) note, one criterion for establishing and maintaining a discipline is the existence of supporting paraphernalia, then this would appear to be a strength of family science. Among such accessories or belongings would be professional associations, conferences, electronic networks, journals, review papers, as well as academic departments featuring majors and courses of study. In combination, these offerings provide a "means of professional growth, interaction, and exchange" that enables the discipline to continue to develop and flourish (p. 469).

Professional organizations. Family scientists in the USA have four primary national professional associations to which they can belong: NCFR, Groves Conference on Marriage and Family (Groves), the Family Science Association (FSA), and the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (AAMFT). Additionally, there are other professional organizations that have a division or section that focuses specifically upon families and family processes, such as the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, the American Sociological Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Bar Association, and the Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR). These organizations, and possibly any existing state or regional affiliates of them, sponsor an annual conference where scholarly papers, symposia, and posters about families are presented. Membership and conference fees are typically reduced for students. Many family science faculty members encourage students to seek membership in such organizations and ask students to accompany them, even copresent with them, at conferences. Being engaged in these ways helps students appreciate the value of continued professional development and networking, as well as reinforces a sense of identity.

Discussion lists. In 1990, the first family science discussion list on the Internet was launched at University of Kentucky. In its earliest years, it had approximately 700 members, although today it has about 500 (G. W. Brock, personal communication, May 23, 2010). NCFR, like some other professional associations, also tries to keep members connected through multiple electronic listservs, including ones for members of the Family Science Section, the Education and Enrichment Section, the Family Therapy Section, and the CFLE group. For the most part, these discussion lists are used to accomplish two goals: Publicizing

conferences and resource materials as well as soliciting advice (e.g., which textbook might be most suitable for a particular course). Family science students and new professionals are increasingly technologically savvy. They may be more willing to venture into the world of blogs and wikis in order to promote discussion and debate among themselves than to continue using listservs.

Scholarly journals. As with other disciplines, family science evidences journals and review papers. The NCFR sponsors the *Journal of Marriage and Family* (*JMF*) and *Family Relations: Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies* (*FR*), whereas FSA sponsors *Family Science Review*. Though the Groves Conference on Marriage and Family does not support a journal, it does have publications, often evolving from conference presentations. In 1983, Burr and Leigh reported the existence of eight refereed professional journals that focused specifically on the family and yet most were not journals sponsored by sister disciplines. In addition to JMF and FR, the remaining six were *Family Process*, *Journal of Family Issues*, *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *American Journal of Family Therapy*, *Journal of Family History*, and *Journal of Family Psychology* (G. K. Leigh, personal communication, May 26, 2010). All of these journals remain active today. Over time, journals have proliferated in number. A recent search conducted of a journal/serial database called Ulrichsweb—Global Serials Directory using title keyword "family" resulted in 95 active, academic, refereed entries. Family science professors often call for their students to read, summarize, and critique journal articles and review papers. Advanced students are sometimes encouraged to author or coauthor a manuscript that is subsequently submitted for review and possible publication. There are ample journals in the family field to turn to for such purposes.

Analyses and listings of academic programs. For more than 30 years, efforts to track the number and kinds of academic family-focused programs offered at universities and colleges have been undertaken (Burr, Schvaneveldt, Roleder, & Marshall, 1988; Figley & Francis, 1976; Hans, 2002, 2005, 2008; Love, 1982; Touliatos, 1989, 1994, 1996, 1999). Until 2002, only graduate-level programs were tracked. In the early 1980s, Love reported 95 graduate programs in the family field offered at 71 institutions of higher education throughout the USA. By comparison, 12 years later, Touliatos (1994) identified 157 graduate programs offered at 134 institutions. With the passing of another 11 years, Hans (2005) reported 245 programs, both graduate and undergraduate, at 227 institutions across the nation. The names of the units (e.g., departments, centers, schools) have and continue to vary considerably, thus contributing to the previously mentioned identity problems. In her 1982 guide, Love listed 36 different academic unit names. And, just a year later, Burr and Leigh (1983) identified 53 different names. In his most recent guide to academic programs (2008), Hans lists 73 different names. Despite name variability, the terms "family studies," "family science," and "family therapy" have increasingly, and in this order, been terms used in unit names. Greater uniformity in naming academic units would be beneficial for prospective students and prospective faculty members as they search for programs to which they wish to apply.

Apparent Utility

A bona fide discipline must, according to Burr and Leigh (1983), demonstrate utility in the form of established professions or applications. A profession can be defined as "the whole body of persons engaged in a principal calling, vocation, or employment requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation" (Merriam-Webster, 2010). This whole body of persons seeks new knowledge and to apply knowledge in useful ways once realized. In Burr's and Leigh's view, two well-established family-focused professions were family life education and family therapy.

Family life education. With regard to education for family life, Lewis-Rowley et al. (1993) suggested this profession had evolved through stages of coalescence, emergence, crystallization, and expansion and was then well into a period of

entrenchment in the 1980s. Although "entrenchment" inferred at least modest stability, a number of issues continued to confront family life educators. These issues had to do with variability of preparation and training, program standards, contexts and settings, and perceptions of identity (Czaplewski & Jorgensen, 1993). To enhance further maturation of the profession, certain actions were recommended. Better standards needed to be developed and promoted. Programs of accreditation, certification, and/or licensure needed to be expanded, improved, and efficiently implemented. Rigorous, empirical evaluations of programs needed be conducted and the results publicized. And, relevant professional associations needed to assume stronger leadership and advocacy roles in an effort to market the profession to appropriate publics (e.g., consumers, students, family professionals, employers, and legislators).

East's (1980) framework for measuring the progress family life education has made toward full professional status consists of eight criteria. This framework has been more recently applied by Czaplewski and Jorgensen (1993) and Cassidy (2009). Over time, advancement as a profession has been incremental, yet steady and persistent (Gentry, 2004). Table 35.2 provides an appraisal of current conditions. Though more can be done to increase the number and rigor of program evaluation studies (Duncan & Goddard, 2005; Powell & Cassidy, 2007), there is evidence this aspect has been improving. Results of such studies are commonly featured in *Family Relations* and other reputable journals. That family life education programs have utility is apparent.

Marriage and family therapy. At the time that the field of family science was developing, so were the professions of marriage and family therapy (Gurman & Fraenkel, 2002; Olson, 1970). Olson, in his article in the *Journal of Marriage and the Family Decade in Review,* characterized the fields of marriage and family therapy as the "youngsters" in the sciences. At that time, the fields of marriage and family therapy were deemed separate and had not "yet developed a solid theoretical base nor tested their major assumptions or principles" (p. 501). The development of specialties in the areas of family and couples, however, were being made. Three major centers were established focusing on marriage and families in the late 1920s and 1930s. In 1942, the American Association of Marriage Counselors (AAMC) was formed, later changing its name to the American Association of Marriage and Family Counselors (AAMFC) to include both couple and family counseling. Then, the organization changed its name again to the AAMFT (Gurman & Fraenkel, 2002; Olson, 1970). These professions developed as mental health professionals realized that treating the individual was not sufficient, since the problems were within the context of the relationship and the family. Family therapy originally developed primarily out of the work of psychiatry, while marriage therapy developed from interdisciplinary programs and social workers who had additional training. Further evidence of a profession was the founding of the journal *Family Process* in 1962, *Family Therapy* in 1972, and the *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* in 1975.

In 1995, Gurman and Jacobson asserted that couple therapy had come of age as the profession had progressed in areas such as a greater understanding of couple interdependence, implementation of interventions and linkages with related professions. By 2000, Johnson and Lebow claimed the field had clearly come a long way, but was still not fully developed. More specific couple therapy training was being accessed by practitioners and new research was informing the field. Despite these advances, Johnson and Lebow (2000) claimed that couple therapy was still an "art and a science" (p. 23). In order to gain acceptance in the field of mental health, couple therapists needed to develop new models based on empirical research.

According to the AAMFT (2010), there has been a 50-fold increase in the number of marriage and family therapists since 1950, now serving an estimated 1.8+ million people at any given time. The AAMFT defines marriage and family therapy as being "brief, solution-focused, specific with attainable therapeutic goals, and designed with an 'end in mind'" (p. 1). Marriage and family therapists are now considered a core mental health profession by the federal government

Table 35.2 FLE as a profession

East's criteria (East, 1980)	Progress made	Room to grow	Criterion: 1 = no progress; 5 = criterion has been fully met
1. The activity becomes a full-time occupation	Though rarely called family life education, many professionals practice family life education on a full-time basis under such descriptions as parent education, sex education, marriage enrichment, etc.	Family life education is often only part of a family life educator's job responsibilities or employment specifically in family life education may only be available on a part-time basis	4
2. Training schools and curricula are established	Family-related degrees have been offered since 1960s. NCFR began recognizing academic programs that meet the criteria needed for the CFLE designation, beginning in 1996. To-date there are 101 NCFR approved programs	Few degrees are called *family life education* but rather Child and Family Studies, Human Development and Family Studies, Human Services, Family Studies, etc.	4
3. Those who are trained establish a professional association	Numerous family-related associations have been in existence since the early 1900s. NCFR established itself as the premier family life education association in 1985 with the establishment of the CFLE program	There are numerous other family-related associations and organizations which can cause a fragmented identity	4
4. A name, standards of admission, a core body of knowledge, and competencies for practice are developed	NCFR developed the *University and College Curriculum Guidelines* and *Standards and Criteria for the Certification of Family Life Educators* in 1984. In 2007, NCFR conducted a practice analysis and created the CFLE Exam	The results of the CFLE Practice Analysis Survey confirmed the validity of the ten family life content areas as representing the knowledge base needed for family life education	5
5. Internal conflict within the group and external conflict from other professions with similar concerns leads to a unique role definition	Numerous organizations and credentials exist with some overlapping content. Development of *University and College Curriculum Guidelines* and the *Standards and Criteria for the Certification of Family Life Educators* defined the family life education content areas	Employers and the public are still unclear on what family life education is and how family life educators differ from social workers, therapists, counselors, etc.	3
6. The public served expresses some acceptance of the expertise of those practicing the occupation	The increased popularity of parent education and marriage education programs throughout the country reflects the public's increased acceptance of education related to family issues	Participation in family life education programs including parenting education, sex education, marriage and relationship education, financial literacy programs, etc. is still not the norm	4
7. Certification and licensure are the legal signs that a group is sanctioned for a particular service to society and that it is self-regulated	The CFLE designation was developed to regulate qualifications of family life education providers. CFLEs must meet continuing education requirements in order to maintain their designation. The CFLE credential is becoming recognized as a valid credential for those working in parenting coordination		5
8. A code of ethics is developed to eliminate unethical practice and to protect the public	The Family Science Section of NCFR established *Ethical Principles and Guidelines* in 1995. In 1997, the Minnesota Council on Family Relations finalized their work on *Ethical Thinking and Practice for Parent and Family Educators,* which was adopted by NCFR for use with the CFLE program in 1997. In 2008, NCFR began the process of developing a formal code of ethics for the CFLE credential		5

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and these professionals are licensed or certified in all 50 states.

Family mediation. Defined as "the act or process of a neutral third party's intervention between conflicting parties to promote reconciliation, settlement, or compromise," mediation (Merriam-Webster, 2010) has applications in the family realm. Conflicts between romantic partners, spouses, parents (birth and adoptive), parents and children (teen and adult), and siblings over such issues as finances, postdivorce visitation with children, and elder care are suitable for family mediation (Irving & Benjamin, 1995; Taylor, 2002). According to Milne, Folberg, and Salem (2004), research indicates that mental health professionals, including marriage and family therapists, significantly outnumber lawyers in the practice of family mediation in both private and public arenas. Taylor (2002), a family mediator with marriage and family therapy training, posited this point of view:

> What is true about family mediation is that first and foremost, it is about families, and secondarily, it is about mediation and dispute resolution processes. Family mediators help families change from what does not fit to what will work better…An understanding of family law is certainly critical to an understanding of the family dispute in question…, however, this understanding is incomplete without the theory and practical implications of how families maintain themselves, change, communicate, and function on a daily basis (pp. 3–4).

While the practice of mediating disputes has a long history dating back to ancient times, the prevalence and prominence of family mediation surged in the 1970s. Pioneers of that movement who are still active practitioners today reflect upon the progress that has been made, and they conclude the professionalization of the field is well underway and still advancing (Irving & Benjamin, 1995; Milne et al., 2004). Applying East's (1980) framework and Cassidy's (2009) rating system for measuring a field's status as a profession, family mediation fares reasonably well. Nonetheless, there remains "room to grow" in several areas. In public or court-connected settings, family mediators can typically practice full-time. Contrastingly, in private settings, those who practice family mediation often find the need to supplement their income with other professional activities. Most mediators have academic degrees in disciplines such as law, marriage and family therapy, counseling, social work, or education. Many states have passed legislation mandating mediation when separating or divorcing couples have children. Though some individuals balk when being mandated to attend mediation sessions, the general public has increasingly come to accept the expertise of those who practice mediation.

In 2002, the Institute of Government at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock undertook a study for the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service in an effort to examine the purpose and scope of mediator qualifications, lists, and certification procedures established by the judicial branch or other branches of state governments. Results of this study indicated that,

> although many states recommend qualifications for mediators, no state has requirements for the practice of mediation. In any state, a mediator can practice in private settings without being licensed, certified, or listed. Rather than regulate the practice of mediation, states have chosen to create lists of mediators meeting criteria for certain areas of practice. Statewide lists of mediators are usually maintained by the judicial branch as an extension of its responsibility for settling civil disputes. Lists or certification procedures have two general purposes: (1) to establish qualifications for mediators who receive funding from state government or who receive referrals from the courts or other agencies; and (2) to provide information about mediator qualifications for parties, attorneys, courts, and members of the public as they exercise free market choice among private mediators (p. 1).

When states (or counties/circuits within states) certify family mediators, academic degree, amount and kind of mediation-related training, and amount of post-training supervision are typically important criteria. To provide guidance to entities seeking to or actively involved in certifying mediators, the ACR has begun drafting Model Standards for Mediation Certification Programs (ACR, 2010).

Professional organizations devoted to mediation exist at the national, state, and local levels (e.g., Association of Conflict Resolution, Society

of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, and Association of Family and Conciliation Courts). Typically, these organizations have sections that focus on family mediation. They hold annual conferences and sponsor journals (e.g., *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* and *Family Court Review*) that feature articles specifically related to family mediation. These organizations also promote and publicize training. Mediator training programs vary in a number of ways: setting, content, duration, and inclusion of practicum and supervision components. There is growing consensus about basic qualifications and core competencies needed for high quality performance as a family mediator (Irving & Benjamin, 1995; Milne et al., 2004). Typically, mediation training programs seek an "approved" designation rather than to be accredited by any official entity. For example, upon reviewing an application, the ACR can render a particular training program and its trainer(s) "approved" provided certain requirements have been met.

In 2000, leaders in the field established Model Standards of Practice for Family and Divorce Mediators. Though family mediators, depending upon their academic roots (law or mental health), have pledged to abide by other ethical codes of conduct, these standards helped to provide additional guidance with regard to ethical behavior (Taylor, 2002). Academic scholars and experienced, insightful practitioners have developed conceptual frameworks and models demonstrating that mediation is a unique process. It is not arbitration, negotiation, or therapy (Milne et al., 2004; Taylor, 2002), yet many find the lines of distinction blurry. Although research on the nature and impact of family mediation has varied in quality, considerable insight has been and continues to be amassed (Beck, Sales, & Emery, 2004; Irving & Benjamin, 1995; Taylor, 2002). Returning to East's (1980) framework and Cassidy's (2009) rating system, we assess family mediation to have achieved the following levels of status as a profession: Ability to provide full-time occupation, 3 out of 5; established curricula and training programs, 3 out of 5; existence of professional organizations, 4 out of 5; existence of standards, body of knowledge, and competencies, 4 out of 5; unique role definition, 4 out of 5; public acceptance, 4 out of 5; certification and licensure, 2 out of 4; and code of ethics and censure; 4 out of 5.

Ability to Teach and Discipline

In Burr's and Leigh's (1983) view, a field of study has indeed reached "discipline" status when its devotees are sufficiently able to teach and discipline, or regulate themselves, be they scholars, educators, or practitioners. Burr and Leigh believed family science had become a discipline because, in part, it had demonstrated this criterion. With the passing of a quarter-century, this ability has been refined and strengthened. As mentioned in previous passages, the number of postsecondary family science programs of study across the USA has grown, as have opportunities for continuing professional development by way of workshops, trainings, conferences, journals, and networking. Additionally, upper level students and new professionals are mentored and coached in more structured ways (Sherif-Trask, Marotz-Baden, Settles, Gentry, & Berke, 2009).

Results of a survey of administrators of postsecondary family science programs conducted by Hamon and Smith (2010) have been highlighted in an earlier passage. The administrators were asked to enumerate the distinctive attributes and strengths of their academic offerings. Not previously mentioned, but now cited as a program asset, was the belief that their programs provided excellent preparation for a variety of career paths or advanced education. Career opportunities for family science professionals are diverse and the public and private settings (e.g., business, government, court, health care, education, community, and church) for them are varied. Yet, students and new professionals are not always well versed in the possibilities. Comprehensive coverage of career options has been provided by Keim (1995) and the NCFR (2004; 2009).

Employers of new professionals in the family field expect them to display a number of competencies. Most, if not all, of the competencies identified by Ganong et al. (1995) require

higher-level critical thinking skills associated with analysis, application, integration, and generation of new knowledge. Though several of the competencies Ganong et al. deemed important have been previously mentioned, all are listed below.

- A sophisticated understanding of family dynamics and of the interrelationships between families and other social systems
- Knowledge of interrelationships between family systems and life span human development
- A broad understanding of family theories
- A broad understanding and appreciation of marginalized, disadvantaged, and oppressed families
- An understanding of the diversity (e.g., ethnic, racial, structural) of families
- Mastery of qualitative and quantitative research methods used to study families (including evaluation research)
- Ability to communicate to lay audiences
- Ability to communicate to professional colleagues
- Leadership/administrative skills
- Ability to teach at the college level
- Ability to teach in community settings (e.g., adult education workshops)
- Knowledge of ethical standards affecting their interactions with families, as well as ethics involved in research and publishing (p. 502)

This list of competencies, coupled with the ten CFLE-based Family Life Content Areas, can and should lend guidance to university administrators and faculty as they design new programs of study or review and revise current ones. While there are differences in opinion regarding how much attention a program should direct toward a given competency, Ganong et al. have provided some recommendations with accompanying rationale. The NCFR guidelines for reviewing and certifying family science programs of study offer additional insight and direction.

Considerable consensus has been reached among family science educators regarding important learning experiences college students must have in order to optimally develop these competencies. As adult learners, college students, particularly graduate students, benefit most from a learning environment that addresses their needs for autonomy, self-direction, relevance, practicality, clear expectations, and respect (Knowles, 1980). Their retention and mastery of crucial family science content and skills will be enhanced by frequent opportunities for in- and out-of-classroom practice (e.g., research projects; collaborative learning activities; problem-solving exercises; field work; service learning endeavors; demonstrations and presentations; and internships and practicums), accompanied by helpful feedback about their performance. Some postsecondary family science educators, in both college and community settings, engage in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) or classroom action research and subsequently report their findings at family science conferences, workshops, journals, and other publications (Gentry, 2004, 2007). Their systematic analysis of, and insightful reflection about learning, gives guidance to others' efforts to design and deliver high quality, effective family science instruction.

As Table 35.1 denotes, the NCFR has a history of publishing resources helpful to family science educators. Among its current offerings are collections of syllabi and teaching strategies, a framework for curriculum design, and a handbook related to internship and practicum experiences. Also among its current publications is a booklet that addresses ethical principles and guidelines for family scientists. The drafting of these standards for conduct was initiated by the Family Science Section of the organization in the mid-1990s and eventually adopted by the organization's board in 1998. The following statement of purpose and the specifics of each principle and guideline should be taught to and impressed upon every family science student.

> These ethical principles and guidelines were developed to inspire and encourage family scientists to act ethically; provide guidance in dealing with often complex ethical issues; and provide ethical guidance in areas that family scientists may overlook; enhance the professional image and status of family scientists by increasing the level of professional consciousness….Family scientists are respectful of all individuals, do not unethically discriminate, do not develop intimate personal relationships in their role as family scientists, are sensitive to the complications of multiple role relationships, protect the confidentiality of their students or clients, and do

not engage in sexual harassment (Adams, Dollahite, Gilbert, & Keim, 2001, p. 46; as well as cited in NCFR, 2004, p. 25).

To further emphasize the valuing of ethical behavior among family science professionals, "ethics" is one of the ten CFLE-based Family Life Content Areas. In light of all these supports for teaching and promoting the professional behavior of its disciples, we believe family science has achieved this criterion for being recognized and respected as a discipline. Nonetheless, current and future family scientists must remain attentive to maintaining, even improving upon, the standards associated with these important aspects of the profession.

Achieving Consensus Among Professionals

As noted earlier, family science as a discipline emerged in the late twentieth century and therefore, is relatively new among the social sciences (NCFR Task Force on the Development of the Family Discipline, 1988). Is there consensus among professionals? Although the field is interdisciplinary, and professionals from a variety of academic backgrounds are involved in studying the family, we conclude that there is a distinct field. The strength, as well as the vulnerability, of family science is its interdisciplinary nature.

Scholars and professionals use the term family science on a regular basis. We have family psychology and family sociology that focus on the study or science of the family. All are putting family in the forefront as Burr et al. (1993) claimed was a central element of family science. There has been continual agreement from many that family science is interdisciplinary (Burr & Leigh, 1983; Ganong et al., 1995; Hollinger, 2003; Leigh, 1987; Meredith & Abbott, 1988; Pearl, 1950; Smart, 2009). This complexity is what makes the discipline unique. Families are best studied through a variety of lenses. No single set of theories or methodologies appear to adequately provide the structure needed to study families.

The interdisciplinary nature of family science is also its vulnerability. As noted, students can have a difficult time locating a family science academic program or an option within a department because there is no single common name as there is with psychology and sociology. Explaining the discipline can also be difficult, as the lay person will often ask if it is sociology or psychology. The discipline has a difficult time with an "elevator," or quick, definition.

Frequently, those of us in the profession are asked, "What is the distinction between 'family science' and 'family studies'?" In order to understand the distinction, one must agree that there is a distinct discipline called "family science." Family science is the discipline that studies the concept of family, family processes, and family issues. Family becomes the object of the scientific inquiry. Family studies are the examinations of the family from the lens of the academic home where one resides. For example, a family psychologist may examine family based on human knowledge or behavior, while a family sociologist may study family from the broader lens of institutions. A graduate of an interdisciplinary family science program will often study the family from a mid-range perspective of family within the near environment.

The debate over whether or not there needs to be a common name for family science that identifies the discipline for potential students will most likely continue for two reasons. One is disciplinary "snobbery." If family scientists study families and provide a framework for applying the knowledge to professions, then some may claim that it is not really a primary science, but an applied science that is relegated to a second level. Does this matter to the social scientists studying families or the professionals in the areas of family mediation, marriage and family therapy and family life education? Our thought is probably not. The second reason is that shrinking budgets at colleges and universities have caused departments to be folded into other similar departments. Since psychology and sociology are older sciences, it may be easier to bring family science into those departments. We in family science

often do not have the longevity to hold steady in times of infrastructure changes. Therefore, the issue of the name and how to identify a family science or family studies program may continue indefinitely.

The application of knowledge learned from family science is one of the benefits of the field today. Students from family science programs are able to obtain jobs after graduation often due to the internships documenting how the knowledge gained in their academic training can translate to real-world situations. The first author of this chapter recently visited a sociology department in Europe. As an Extension Specialist in the area of Family and Human Development, I explained my role at the university was to translate the research and take it out to the people of the state to help them improve their lives. A faculty member in the department commented that this was an interesting idea. She had never thought that her work in family sociology would result in information related to findings that she could give back to participants, as is common in primary disciplines.

The area of family science continues to grow, and we assert that the need for family researchers and practitioners will grow. We need to continue to expand how we study family and how to apply what is learned from the research. While there has been an increase in the number of studies exploring families of various cultures and structures, we need to expand upon the research. Family formation, child bearing, and later life no longer follow a linear pattern (Cherlin, 2010). As families adapt to a changing world, continued study is needed. For example, during the next decade there will be a large increase in the elderly population (Cherlin) and the issues facing aging families will need to be addressed. Other demographic trends in the past decade will also need further study, including committed couples who do not live in the same household, immigration, and multiple partner fertility (Cherlin). The implications of families formed through reproductive technologies need to be examined. Public policy implications of such issues as gay marriage need continued study as well (see Chap. 27 for discussion). The study of biosocial influences on the family have assisted scholars in better understanding how nature and nurture play a role in family issues (D'Onofrio & Lahey, 2010). Understanding how human energy fields (energy that can be detected around and within the body) contribute to family communication is yet another area being explored (Leigh, 2004). Understanding these variations in families and family issues will include the need for the development of new theoretical frameworks and methodologies.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, we have acknowledged a past, and perhaps even ongoing, identity problem for family science as an academic realm of study. We have also defined the term "discipline" in several ways, as well as what it means to "teach." One possible means of resolving the identity problem, at least in part, could be to make better known to undergraduate and graduate students the seven criteria for a discipline put forward by Burr and Leigh (1983) nearly 30 years ago. In introductory and capstone courses within family science programs of study, an eighth criterion, accumulating history, could be added and evidence of progress in all eight arenas could be demonstrated. In preparation for future coursework and/or in reflecting upon completed coursework, students could develop a solid appreciation of family science that they can articulate to others. One of the noted strengths of postsecondary family science programs of study is the innovative instructional strategies and techniques faculty members employ to teach about family dynamics and processes. We are confident some already do, and many more can, design and carry out equally innovative ways of teaching their students about family science as a discipline.

Family science has a history that spans less than 100 years, but still garners much pride. As a field of study, it has progressed through multiple stages (discovery, pioneering, and maturing) to a current stage we suggest might be called "entrenchment." Family science entails a distinctively

unique subject matter for which curricular guidelines for academic programs have been established. Researchers, scholars, and practitioners conduct their work using multiple well-developed theoretical frameworks and methodologies, yet are open to testing new ones, all the while drawing implications for practical applications for families. The utility of family science is demonstrated by the evolving professions of family life education, marriage and family therapy, and family mediation.

Students and new professionals should be impressed by the ever-growing number and kinds of paraphernalia that support the discipline: professional organizations; individual and programmatic certifications; journals, handbooks, and other publications; conferences and workshops; and listservs and other means of networking and sharing ideas. Just as technological advances have impacted the delivery of some of these supports, such advances have also impacted how vital competencies in the realms of discovery, integration, application, and teaching are acquired and perfected (Boyer, 1990; Ganong et al., 1995). Family science scholars, educators, and practitioners are guided in their daily work with colleagues, students, and the families they serve by a now decade-old ethical code of conduct.

Although a total consensus in the field has not been achieved, we have documented the growing evidence that a distinct discipline of family science exists. Based on Davis's (1985) typology of disciplines, family science is, and by its interdisciplinary nature will continue to be, secondary. There is still a problem in terms of nomenclature, however, within the various disciplines (e.g., family psychology) the terminology of family science is utilized. University faculty can mentor students by helping them learn more about professional organizations such as NCFR, and where their specific niche fits within the broader department where they are studying to obtain their degrees.

Perhaps one way to view family science as a discipline is through an analogy of Maslow's hierarchy (1943). The physical sciences which were developed prior to the social sciences provided the base so that people had shelter and food that was safe and secure. Sociology came later, examining institutions. Psychology and psychiatry then evolved, working to understand the human brain and psyche. Family science or understanding couple and family dynamics has been the most recent, as now we have the framework to survive, to understand individual development and we are moving on towards a better understanding of our relationships within the context of our primary social unit. These other disciplines provide a solid base by which we can now examine relationships within the primary unit—family—where individuals live.

Family science may always be a "secondary" social science. However, we have explained that the applied nature of family science is its strength. We have highlighted some of the emerging trends in family science. We conclude we are able to have a science of family because we have reached, in Maslow's (1943) terms, "self-actualization." We also have the ability and the luxury to study relationships and families and then apply that knowledge to the field of family practitioners because of the work of other sciences. The work of family science researchers and practitioners will continue to make an impact on the lives of individuals in relationships and within their families.

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