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*\*Serial\** ***Home Economics Education in Japan 7***

This serial focuses on the characteristics and current issues surrounding home economics education in Japan, while also providing a historical perspective.

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## Foundational Learning for Career and Economic Life in Home Economics Education

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### Career and Career Education

Changes in industrial structures and work environments have led to problems of increased unemployment levels and rising numbers of part-time workers. The seriousness of such employment situations is due to young people not being active and professional members of society. Another main cause is the delay in young people's mental and social independence. Education connected with society and young people's occupations once learning school has become social issues. For this reason, the terms "traditional vocational education and career guidance" have been revamped in school education to "career education."

In the Policy Report, "Future vision on career education and vocational education at school" (January 31, 2011) by the Central Council for Education, "career education" is regarded as the following : "Education which encourages career development by cultivating the abilities and attitudes needed to raise the social and vocational independence of individuals." "Career" is regarded as "a sequence of continuous efforts that allow one to recognize the value of their role, and the relationship between themselves and their role over their lifetime." That is, career is a concept that is deeply linked to independent living as a human being, and career development is understood to be education that assists one to live on one's own terms.

Starting from elementary school, career education aims to foster a desirable occupational outlook, work view, and a basic and general ability to achieve independence as a member of society and as a professional. Specifically, these goals are to be systematically promoted with a primary focus on the development of "Ability to establish relationship and community," "Ability to understand and manage oneself," "Problem-solving ability," and "Career-planning ability." Through repeated use of these abilities in daily life, young people acquire meaning in daily life and become connected to each individual's way of living.

## Home Economics Education as Foundational Learning for Career Education

Donald E. Super, a leading theorist in the field of career education, has noted that during their lifetimes, individuals adopt various social roles such as those of a professional, family person, and a member of the wider community. Human life, which is clearly complex, constitutes the target of learning within home economics education. From the perspective of how an individual lives, home economics education enables children to construct their lifestyles, based on their own values and roles. It is also an educational subject that broadens citizens' perspectives. With dramatic changes occurring in the economy and society, home economics education cultivates within children the abilities to discover, analyze, and improve on various problems that arise in their lives. Thus, the learning content in home economics education can be seen to build career foundations in children.

The associations between the learning content in home economics education and basic and general abilities relating to career education are shown in Table 1. Home economics education has been established with the goal of developing a career foundation in the curriculum from elementary school to high school. For example, communication skills relating to the ability to establish relationships and community are learned in students' everyday lives through the relationships they forge within their families and communities. Children who acquire these real-life abilities within home economics education tend to apply them in their future. Home Economics Education integrates family life, community life, and occupational life with moving toward one's own independence and future. Moreover, it gives students opportunities to learn how to create their own lifestyle through a life career, vocational career, and citizen career.

Specifically, learning how to design one's life entails all four abilities shown in Table 1, and influences important decision-making associated with an individual's future career path. It also

Table 1: Relationship between Career Education and Learning Content in Home Economics Education

Career Education Basic and General abilities	Elementary School (Home Economics)	Middle School (Technology & Home Economics)	High School (Comprehensive Home Economics)
Ability to establish relationship and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓐ Family and family life</li> <li>Ⓑ Family life and housework</li> <li>Ⓒ Relationship with family and the people in their neighborhood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓐ Family, home and child growth</li> <li>Ⓑ Home and family Relations</li> <li>Ⓒ Children's lives and their families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Human life, Family, Home</li> <li>b. Family, Home and Society</li> <li>(2) Relationship with children and elderly people, and Welfare</li> </ul>
Ability to understand and manage oneself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓐ Family and family life</li> <li>(1) Growth of pupils themselves and the importance of family members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓐ Family, home and child's growth</li> <li>(1) Growth of pupils themselves and their family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Human life, Family, Home</li> <li>a. Human life and independence in the adolescence Period</li> </ul>
Problem-solving ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓐ Family and family life</li> <li>Ⓑ Daily Meals and Basic Cooking</li> <li>Ⓒ Comfortable clothing and Housing</li> <li>Ⓓ Daily Consumption and the Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓐ Family, home and child's growth</li> <li>Ⓑ Food, cooking and Independence life</li> <li>Ⓒ Clothing, housing and independent life</li> <li>Ⓓ Daily Consumption and the Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Human life, Family, Home</li> <li>(2) Relationship with children and elderly people, and Welfare</li> <li>(3) Financial Planning and Consumption in life</li> <li>(4) Life Science and the Environment</li> <li>(5) Life Planning</li> </ul>
Career-planning ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓓ Daily Consumption and the Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓓ Daily Consumption and the Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(3) Financial Planning and Consumption in life</li> <li>(5) Life Planning</li> </ul>

Note : Prepared by the author based on the Elementary School Curriculum Guidelines (2008) Middle School Curriculum Guidelines (2008) High School Curriculum Guidelines (2009)

becomes the source of proactive behavior within society. The life learning process is developed with a considerable focus on health, safety, the environment, consumer rights and obligations, and wealth generation, based on an individual's outlook in life. This has created awareness of the relationship between family life and social problems, and supports the fostering of problem-solving abilities and the development of self-awareness regarding the responsibility to contribute to society.

Home economics education thus creates a foundation for career education through its focus on the longitudinal study of human life and the cross-sectional study of real life.

### **Learning about Economic Life through Home Economics Education**

Our professions are a major component of our lifestyles. Occupation for us has the social function, the function of growing and developing, and the economic function. The social function is to fulfil our responsibilities and to contribute to society. The function of growing and developing leads to having joy and purpose in life through gaining social approval, and is connected to self-actualization.

The economic function is to obtain an income that allows an individual to engage in life. To obtain an income for the purpose of managing one's own life, and those of one's family, is one of the conditions of becoming an independent individual.

However, children find it difficult to understand that they have a great influence on their own lives and those of their families, because they cannot, by themselves, create their future lives. Home economics education encourages children to imagine and design their own lives. Thus, they learn the importance and necessity of having a career that entails planning of their economic lives, along with deciding what incomes, abilities, environment, and other activities are necessary for their lives. They also learn how to adjust. Home economics education also enables children to learn about the challenges associated with different life stages, managing the work-life balance, and career planning. Moreover, they learn about the management of resources and risks in terms of money and time.

Humanity's common desire is for children to have hope for the future, to make efforts to live life actively, and to have few regrets.

### **Learning about Professional Life through Home Economics Education**

Career education plays a significant role in individuals' choices of rewarding careers and their attainment of professional fulfillment. In the process leading to making a career choice, the life experiences from childhood, in accord with knowledge and skills learned in Home Economics Education, become a source that provides greater occupational options.

Many professions are intrinsically linked to life and require a deep understanding of family and community life. In addition, there is a high school professional education subject that relates to home economics education. This entails a distinctive career education that assists with the development of many professions in life-related industries. This would provide the basis for hobbies and free time in the forging of an abundant life.

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