

The Presence of Home Economics and Culinary Arts Classes in Schools Compared to STEM Courses

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Background

Today, in the United States, STEM is an integral part of education, while home economics and culinary classes seldomly appear in school curriculums, whether required or as an elective.

Problem Statement

With high obesity rates, diabetes, malnourishment, and heart disease, it is important for individuals to know what they are consuming and how it is affecting them. This will manifest into a larger public health crisis if unaddressed. It is also true that youth are without the necessary life tools to manage their lives.

Research Question

In what ways can we incorporate culinary arts and home economics into STEM subjects so we can prepare students for whatever life path they choose?

Targeted Population

High school students attending various educational institutions and adults representing various age groups.

Race	African-American (81%)
Age	15-18 (68%)
Gender	Female (81%)
Education	9th-12th (37%)
Household status	Two-parent (56%)
Household Income	Unknown (50%)

Hypothesis

There is a relationship between the presence of culinary and home economics classes in schools and the health of the general public, considering that STEM education is prioritized.

Purpose

To explore the presence of culinary arts and home economics classes in schools compared to STEM courses, and what we as a society can do to include both in school curriculums.

Results

Most high school students do have access to home economics and culinary classes, but these classes are not a priority for their schools since STEM classes are a requirement. We can infer that most schools are focused on preparing its students solely for college. All respondents expressed a desire to take home economics and culinary classes so they can be adequately prepared for life beyond high school and college. For the adult section, more than half (53.8%) said that they were offered culinary and home economics classes, but their schools still prioritized STEM subjects. One respondent noted that low-income students were pushed to take home economics rather than STEM, which is interesting and should be considered in evaluating the school curriculum.

Discussion/Conclusion

With any study, there are limitations. I had some issues gathering data and ended up adding more questions while the survey was disseminated so this caused inconsistent data. We must find a way to combine the two areas of culinary nutrition and STEM to strengthen future generations and their skills not only in critical thinking and problem solving, but also knowledge in what helps them stay healthy and happy.

Survey Question(s)	Respondents	Total	Percentage
Does your school have a history of offering home economics/culinary course?	7 (Yes)	11	64%
Even if you did not like the idea of those classes being present in the curriculum, do you think the material taught would be beneficial to you in the future? Why?	11 (All agreed, stating various reasons why; one being able to take care of oneself.)	11	100%
Did your school have required STEM courses?	5 (Yes)	5	100%
(Adults) If you did not have them, do you feel that taking home economics classes would have prepared you for adulthood?	4 (All but one respondent agreed, citing helpfulness of culinary course)	5	80%