CHAPTER 1

Introduction to Community and Family Studies

Overview

This chapter introduces students to important concepts in the study of Community and Family Studies (CAFS). The framework for the course is explained and gender construction, a theme explored in all areas of the course, is analysed. Students have the opportunity to consider graphic and textual organisers that are useful learning tools and are introduced to research skills.

Study of this chapter will enable students to:

- appreciate the ecological framework for CAFS
- critically analyse gender construction
- examine graphic and textual strategies to assist learning
- demonstrate successful research skills.

An ecological framework

Human ecology involves studying the interaction of people within their environment and forms the basis of the CAFS course. Individuals interact with other individuals, families, groups and the overall community (see Figure 1.1 below).
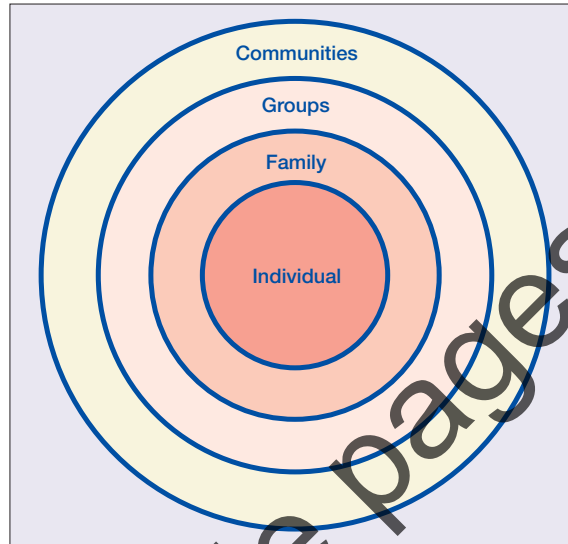

Figure 1.1 An ecological framework for CAFS

wellbeing: welfare of an individual or group, the level of which is determined by how effectively needs are met

Within this ecological model, individual and community **wellbeing** are interdependent, each relying on the other for the satisfaction of needs. Effective management of resources enables both the individual and the community to attain goals and make positive decisions.

CAFS aims to develop your ability to manage resources and actively support the needs of individuals, groups, families and communities in Australian society. The preliminary course focuses on the individual's interactions with social groups, family and community. The Higher School Certificate (HSC) course builds upon this and examines the impact of a range of social, cultural, economic, technological and political factors on the wellbeing of individuals, groups, families and communities.

Learning activities

1   Using Figure 1.1 as a guide, draw an ecological framework for yourself. Write your name in the centre circle, the names of your family members in the next circle, the groups to which you belong in the next circle, and the communities you are involved with in the outer circle.

2   Using a specific example, explain the interdependence between the individual, family, groups and communities in your own life.

Gender construction

Individuals have been separated and categorised according to whether they are female or male since the beginning of time. Tasks have been allocated as 'female' or 'male' and traditions and cultures developed that encourage individuals to meet these gender perceptions. Some social groups have challenged traditional or conservative ways of thinking about femininity and masculinity, realising that all people are capable of a range of behaviours in different situations, regardless of their sex.

The CAFS course provides opportunities to reflect on gender perceptions and analyse their significance for individuals and communities. Gender-based issues in the preliminary course include the impact of gender perceptions on an individual's development, how gender expectations influence the leadership style of an individual and how gender perceptions affect the socialisation of children. The HSC course investigates femininity and masculinity through such issues as parental expectations and roles of females and males, the significance of gender in carer relationships, and legal, political, social and cultural factors associated with gender.

The following extract from Angela Rossmanith's article provides insights into the differences between femininity and masculinity. It refers to results of the Australian Temperament Project, conducted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies. The research has followed over 2000 Victorian families since 1983, beginning when their children were babies and finishing with the last survey in 2006. It is the first large-scale longitudinal study of children in Australia.

The Australian Temperament Project

by Angela Rossmanith

BEING AWARE OF early and ongoing differences in emotion and behavioural development between boys and girls can be very helpful to parents and teachers. The Australian Temperament Project provides us with some of that information.

The main focus of the study was temperament and how it relates to the emotional and behavioural development of children from the time they are infants through to adolescence. Temperament refers to the way you behave and react to various circumstances, and while the researchers don't know to what extent it is inborn or fostered by experience, what they do know is that is of fundamental importance in how well a child adjusts to:

• family life
• school life
• the world in general.

So how do boys and girls differ?

This project revealed that, in infancy, there are very few differences to be found between boys and girls. But with each year, an increasing number of differences started to emerge. Most of these, the researchers report, were 'in the direction of girls being advantaged'.

However, they stress this fact: the results report average figures across a large sample of children. Averages give indications only, but no information about any individual child. They give this example: boys emerge as more aggressive on average, but this is not to say that every boy was more aggressive than every girl. It is more accurate to say that, as a group, boys tend to be more aggressive than girls as a group. This is important to bear in mind when you are considering the data.

A summary of differences and similarities

Here, in summary form, are some of the results that emerge from the Australian Temperament Project regarding differences in development between girls and boys.

• Girls tended to be more skilled at taking responsibility at younger ages than boys.

- As a group, boys were consistently reported to be less persistent and more active.
- Mothers reported more boys being slow to talk (10 per cent) than girls (3 per cent).
- At 3–4 years, 13 per cent of boys were reported to have problems in language development, compared to 4 per cent of girls.
- Between 3 and 7 years of age (in a sub sample of 300), there were no differences in cognitive and learning ability between boys and girls. However, at this age boys:
  - found it more difficult to adjust to school, according to teachers
  - found it more difficult to focus on tasks
  - were not as socially competent
  - tended to be more hyperactive and aggressive
  - were not as able to control or regulate their own behaviour.

The long-term results

At age 8, the boys and girls who had been described earlier as 'inflexible' tended to have more adjustment difficulties. Inflexibility was defined as 'difficulty in dealing with anger and frustration, and adjusting to challenges'.

Over all the years of development, it was temperamental inflexibility and poor persistence that was related to behaviour problems for boys.

For girls, the predictors were more complex. Child-rearing factors were important: for example, punishment and lower child-centeredness, suggesting that sensitivity to family variables was more likely to affect girls' psycho-social development.

Boys with persistent learning difficulties (as tested 13–14 years) had poorer vocabulary knowledge and had shown early behaviour problems.

For girls with persistent learning difficulties, the predictors did not emerge clearly. 'The pathways to reading difficulties for girls remain poorly understood,' the researchers wrote, 'and deserving of further research.'

At the end of primary school, teachers rated boys and girls evenly in academic competence.

What next?

It is important not to draw simplistic conclusions from these results. Remember that every child is an individual and the results are based on averages across whole groups. At the same time, they give some indication of the critical time periods for both boys and girls, and of the risk factors that predict later difficulties.

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Learning activities

1. Read the article 'The Australian Temperament Project'. (See pages 3–4.)
   a. What is temperament?
   b. Highlight the differences in the development between girls and boys reported by the project.
   c. What implications do these findings have for the education and socialisation of girls and boys?
2. Create poster collages that reflect perceptions of males and females in society today. In each collage include images, phrases, colours, products, song lyrics, classifieds and other chosen media.

Learning strategies

You will already have developed strategies to help you learn in your own way. Some of these strategies may include:

- graphic organisers
- textual organisers.

Graphic organisers

Graphic organisers are visual tools used to illustrate a variety of concepts. They are useful for the study of CAFS as they help you link concepts and content. Some graphic organisers that you may like to try in your learning are outlined below.

Concept maps

Concept or mind maps organise ideas and show how they relate to each other. They are helpful when organising and selecting a topic for the Independent Research Project (IRP) and revising topic areas for examinations. Figure 1.2 visually represents the scope of the CAFS course using a concept map. To develop a concept map you write down key words associated with the topic, arrange these words into logical groups and then 'map' the grouped words.
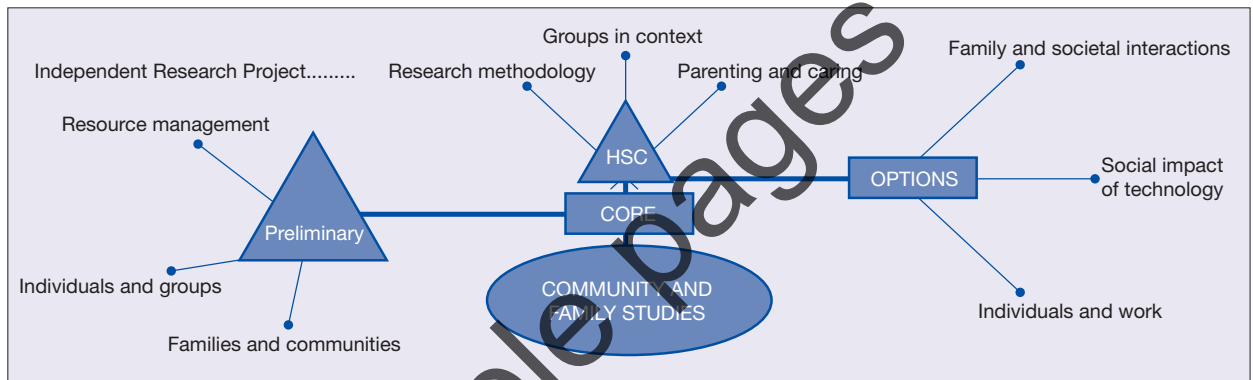

Groups in context
Independent Research Project......... Research methodology Parenting and caring Family and societal interactions
Resource management
HSC
Social impact of technology
OPTIONS
Preliminary CORE
Individuals and groups
COMMUNITY AND FAMILY STUDIES
Individuals and work
Families and communities

Figure 1.2 Concept mapping CAFS

PMI charts

PMI charts help you examine the Pluses, Minuses and Interesting/ Implications about a topic. In the Plus column you identify all the positive elements of the issue, in the Minus column all the negative elements are identified, and the last column records those that cannot be classified as positive or negative (Interesting) or the possible outcomes (Implications).

Below is an example of a PMI chart about being a Facebook user.

Plus What are the positive things about being on Facebook?	Minus What are the negative things about being on Facebook?	Interesting What is interesting about being on Facebook?
• lots of fun • learnt new things about my friends • met lots of new friends from many different places • enjoy communicating with different people and keeping up-to-date with them	• a few people are a bit 'pushy' • Mum and Dad hassle me about spending too much time online • worries about internet stalking and security • some people don't answer me or accept me as a friend • being challenged to quizes and other stuff can be a waste of time and annoying • there are too many 'ad' links	• have learnt new computer skills by being on it • there are lots of things to do (e.g. poke, tagging a photo, send a card, play a game)

Figure 1.3 Being a Facebook user

Venn diagrams

Venn diagrams are used to compare and contrast characteristics. The similarities of two concepts are identified in the overlapping section of two circles, while the differences are recorded in the outer sections. They are simple and quick to develop. Figure 1.4 describes two school friends through a Venn diagram.
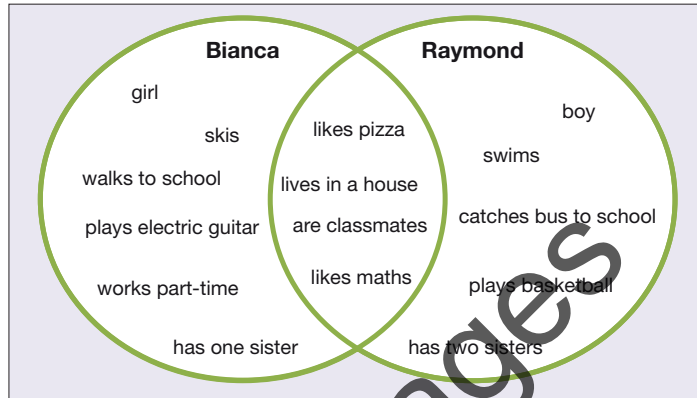
Bianca

girl

skis

walks to school

plays electric guitar

works part-time

has one sister

Raymond

boy

swims

catches bus to school

plays basketball

has two sisters

likes pizza

lives in a house

are classmates

likes maths

Figure 1.4 Raymond and Bianca are friends

Textual organisers

Textual organisers are strategies that present concepts via well–organised information. In CAFS they can expand concepts and provide useful revision resources. Several popular textual organisers are discussed here.

Six thinking hats

White hat
facts and information

What information do we have?
What information do we need?
How do we get the information we need?

Yellow hat
positives and benefits

What are the benefits?
What are the good things about it?
How will this help us?
Why will it work?

Black hat
negatives and problems

What are the possible problems?
What is wrong with this?
What are the weaknesses?
What are the risks?

Red hat
feelings and hunches

How do we feel about this?
What do we like?
What don't we like?

Green hat
creativity and suggestions

What are the alternatives or possibilities?
Are there other ways to do this?
What is interesting?

Blue hat
organisation and management

What sort of thinking is needed?
What is the next step?
What have we done so far?
How did we get to this point?

Figure 1.5 De Bono's six thinking hats strategy

The six thinking hats strategy was developed by Edward De Bono. Each hat represents a different mode of thinking for proactive learning. Figure 1.5 presents the six thinking hats with stimulus questions.

Effective note-taking

A good set of subject notes keeps your work organised and content clear. While there is no ideal method for taking notes, there are some guidelines you can follow so that you produce relevant and efficient notes.

- Leave spaces and include wide margins so that you can add details or new information later.
- Use headings, highlighted points, diagrams, arrows to link ideas, colour-coding and other strategies to make pages memorable.
- Have only one set of notes to make it easier to find information later and to recall it during exams.
- Label and number pages, and use cross-referencing to help you organise information, for example 'See red folder, pp.12–13, Aspects of wellbeing'.
- Use abbreviations to help save time. (You can use them in your notes but not in work you submit for marking.) Figure 1.6 outlines some common abbreviations and symbols.

Useful abbreviations and symbols

Abbreviations		Symbols	
e.g.	example	& or +	and
i.e.	that is, that means	>	greater than/more than
etc.	and the rest, so on	<	smaller than/less than
NB	important	=	is the same as, equal to
p. or pp.	page or pages	∴	therefore
Ch.	chapter	∵	because
edn	edition	→	this leads to
cd	could	△	change
wd	would		
impt	important		
devt	development		
govt	government		
C20	twentieth century		

Figure 1.6   Useful abbreviations and symbols for note-taking

Mnemonics

acronym: word formed from each initial letter of a group of words

acrostic: sentence or phrase constructed from initial letters of a group of related words

A mnemonic is a memory aid like a short poem, phrase or special word that helps you remember something, for example a list. The term comes from the name of the Greek goddess for memory, Mnemosyne. There are a variety of mnemonic techniques and some that are useful in CAFS are **acronyms**, **acrostics** and rhymes or songs.

An acronym for the aspects of child development is PISCES—Physical, Intellectual, Social, Cultural, Emotional and Spiritual. Another acronym is this course itself—CAFS.

Acrostics are especially useful when you need to remember a list in a specific order, and they are sometimes easier to create than an acronym. An acrostic can help us remember the planets—Men Very Easily Make Journeys around the SUN (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune). In CAFS the types of social parents (adoption, fostering, step-parenting, surrogacy) can be represented by Aliens Fly Space Ships.

Rhymes or songs use rhythm, repetition and melody. Do you remember learning the alphabet to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star? How do you recall the number of days in each month? You could learn the groups with specific needs by putting them to a popular song!

Learning activities

1 **a** Select one of the following topics and develop a concept map for it on A4 paper:
   - bullying at school
   - the HSC
   - family holidays
   - mobile phones and teenagers.

   b Display the concept maps in the classroom and review each other's ideas.

2 Develop a Venn diagram that compares and contrasts the characteristics of you and your best friend. Use Figure 1.4 as a guide.

3 In a small group, discuss the following statement using the six thinking hat strategy.

   'The internet gives you access to a wide range of resources without having to leave your chair. It makes research easy and is very reliable.'

4 Create your own mnemonic to remember the aspects of wellbeing— physical, socio-emotional, spiritual, economic, political.

Research skills

Research is 'to make known something previously unknown to human beings. It is to advance human knowledge, to make it more certain or better fitting … The aim is … discovery'. (Elias, 1986) This means that when you research, you have to find something out!

CAFS aims to develop your research skills. In each preliminary module there are integrated research activities that introduce different aspects of research and allow you to practise valuable skills. There are further research experiences in the HSC course, culminating in the development and presentation of an IRP.

In order to become a good researcher you must be active; you need to think for yourself. The research process is covered in detail in Chapter 5 but skills to concentrate on include summarising and reorganising ideas, referencing and bibliographies, and using the internet.

Summarising ideas

Research involves finding quality information. It is important to be able to summarise the information you have found, reorganise ideas and make effective notes from what you read. This ensures that your assignment is your own work. It is perfectly acceptable to use other people's ideas but you must acknowledge them and avoid just copying what others have said. This is **plagiarism** and is unethical as well as carrying penalties both from your school and the Board of Studies. You should use other people's work to help form your own arguments.

A good way of effectively summarising is to put your pen down while you listen, watch or read so that you are not tempted to copy exactly. Then identify and sum up the main ideas from the source. Try to hear them in your own words.

plagiarism: presenting someone else's thoughts, writing or findings as your own

Referencing and bibliographies

Acknowledging sources means recognising the use of someone else's research or ideas. This is done by referencing the source in your writing and then including the full details about it in a bibliography at the end of your work. Sources may include books, websites, DVDs, emails, magazines and other written, aural or visual media.

After listening to a speaker or audio recording, watching a DVD or internet video, or reading from a text or other reference source you need to take notes. It is important to note exactly where information comes from so that you can find it again. It is advisable to copy names and quotations exactly and use a different colour as this makes them easier to locate later.

Full details about referencing and setting out a bibliography are discussed in Chapter 5.

Using the internet

The internet is a popular and widely used source for research. It can also be a valuable research tool, but because anyone can put information up, it is important to be critical in what you choose to use. Here are some guidelines to follow when researching information on the internet.

- Allow lots of time. Search results take time to follow up, especially if it is a busy time at school.
- Bookmark good sites straight away so that you can go back to them.
- Organise your bookmarks or favourites into subject folders regularly so that you can find the sites you want easily.
- Always check the credentials of writers. Locate the 'About' page and investigate which organisation, institution, company or individual has produced the website.
- Follow useful links and surf between sites, but always return to your original search and check other search results. Use the 'back' button to jump back a page or more.
- Look for names and email addresses of experts through the 'Contact us' page and send off personal enquiries to gather further information.
- Find details about titles and authors at Amazon or other book seller websites and look them up at your local or university library.

Using key words

In order to respond to exams and assessment tasks you need to understand what is expected and exactly what the question is asking you to do. The Board of Studies' glossary of key words, as defined in Figure 1.7, provides direction through a common language across all senior courses.

You need to become familiar with these and can learn more about them in Chapter 10.

A glossary of key words

Account, Account for	State reasons for, report on. Give an account of: narrate a series of events or transactions.
Analyse	Identify components and the relationship between them; draw out and relate implications
Apply	Use, utilise, employ in a particular occasion
Appreciate	Make a judgement about the value of
Assess	Make a judgement of value, quality, outcomes, results or size.
Calculate	Ascertain/determine from given facts, figures or information
Clarify	Make clear or plain
Classify	Arrange or include in classes/categories
Compare	Show how things are similar or different
Construct	Make; build; put together items or arguments
Contrast	Show how things are different or opposite
Critically (analyse/ evaluate)	Add a degree or level of accuracy, depth, knowledge and understanding, logic, questioning, reflection and quality to (analysis/evaluation)
Deduce	Draw conclusions
Define	State meaning and identify essential qualities
Demonstrate	Show by example
Describe	Provide characteristics and features
Discuss	Identify issues and provide points for and/or against
Distinguish	Recognise or note/indicate as being distinct or different from; to note differences between
Evaluate	Make a judgement based on criteria; determine the value of
Examine	Inquire into
Explain	Relate cause and effect; make the relationships between things evident; provide why and/or how
Extract	Choose relevant and/or appropriate details
Extrapolate	Infer from what is known
Identify	Recognise and name
Interpret	Draw meaning from
Investigate	Plan, inquire and draw conclusions about
Justify	Support and argument or conclusion
Outline	Sketch in general terms; indicate the main features of
Predict	Suggest what may happen based on available information
Propose	Put forward (for example a point of view, idea, argument, suggestion) for consideration or action
Recall	Present remembered ideas, facts or experiences
Recommend	Provide reasons in favour
Recount	Retell a series of events
Summarise	Express, concisely, the relevant details
Synthesise	Putting together various elements to make a whole

Figure 1.7   Board of Studies' glossary of key words

Learning activities

1 **a** Read the following paragraph.

Suddenly <u>they heard the phone ringing</u>. Katerina <u>ran to get it</u>. The rest of the family waited <u>without speaking</u>. They could barely hear her when she said, 'Franco, it's for you'. He hesitated for a few seconds and then <u>roughly took the phone out of her hand</u>. He listened for a long time. His face showed no emotion. Finally he spoke, but they could not <u>understand the words</u>. Suddenly he slammed down the receiver, grabbed his jacket and <u>departed without a word</u>.

b Replace the underlined words with other words that have the same meaning. For example, the first sentence becomes 'Suddenly the phone rang'.

2 Reference books from your school or local library are useful and available resources.

a Find a relevant book about plagiarism and research.

b Note down four interesting facts (in your own words) about this topic from the book.

c Record the bibliographic details about the book using the following example as a guide.

Northey, M., Tepperman, L. & Russell, J. 2004, *Making sense in the social sciences: A student's guide to research and writing*, 2nd edn, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

3 **a** Conduct an internet search to find out about family structures in Australia.

b In your own words, note four interesting facts about the topic from a relevant website.

c Evaluate the website by asking the following questions.

- Who owns the website?
- Who is the author?
- How recent is the data?
- What is the purpose of the website—to entertain, educate, sell?
- Is the data well written?