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About Home Economics Victoria

Home Economics Victoria was established in 1958 as a professional association for teachers, and is the peak home economics organisation in the state of Victoria, Australia. The organisation supports educators in empowering young people to live sustainably and take responsibility for their own physical, mental and social wellbeing.

Opinions expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of Home Economics Victoria.

At the time of writing, all internet addresses included in articles were correct. Owing to the dynamic nature of the internet, however, we cannot guarantee their continued validity.

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Home Economics Victoria

605/198 Harbour Esplanade
Docklands VIC 3008 Australia

Telephone: +61 3 9642 1061
Facsimile: +61 3 9642 2418

Email: office@hev.com.au

www.homeeconomics.com.au

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Cover image: Culture, history, cuisine, health, gastronomy, food systems: Food studies curriculum in a bowl?
(Photography by Alison Peake)

Foreword

One of the main purposes of this journal is to give voice to leading scholars and practitioners in our field. Therefore we are pleased to open this first issue for 2016 with Dr Kerry Renwick as she goes boldly forward to explore ‘the relevance of home economics in the face of school change in neoliberal times’, and to pose the question: ‘In what other area of schooling might [students] develop a resourcefulness for managing with limited resources in constrained times, and in artful ways?’ It’s pretty easy to imagine the enthusiastic (yet frustrated?) chorus of ‘hear hear’ from our readers.

Then we enter the ever-interesting world of textiles and find ourselves at the intersection of knitting and computer coding. What a positive endorsement of the ingenuity and inherent precision of this art form. (Never again to be pigeon-holed as a ‘soft, warm craft’). Dr Karen Shoop’s engaging article manages to be playful and colourful while it presses the point that a knitting pattern is indeed akin to code and that knitters can readily tap into digital tools to enhance the design process.

Our next three articles take us into the realm of VCE and tertiary-level food studies. The aim is twofold: to present curriculum ideas and applications arising from our contributors’ experience and research; and to learn about the emergent academic field of Food Studies – an exciting new vocational opportunity for our students.

To assist those teaching food cultures, customs and cuisines, Judy Baxt provides insight into the Jewish faith and the role of food, highlighting Jewish festivals and rituals along with the traditional dishes that are still popular today. Alisha Owen and Thanh Nguyen, education students at Monash University, have developed digital learning objects and a learning sequence relating to their selected topic area: ‘Impact of social factors on food choice’. Their journal article explains their research findings.

Kelly Donati and two of her colleagues from William Angliss Institute provide us with insight into their brand-new Food Studies degree course. The parallels with the forthcoming VCE Food Studies curriculum (and with home economics) are uncanny – especially since the two courses were developed entirely independently. These parallels will no doubt lead to many opportunities for Home Economics Victoria and William Angliss to work together in the future.

Home economics education in a time of schooling

Dr Kerry Renwick
University of British Columbia, Canada

Abstract

At present anything that does not explicitly contribute to workplaces or cater to the bottom line has little value. However, there is an abject failure to recognise how families both contribute to workplace performance, and carry the burden of cuts to social services and the redistribution of public money to private enterprises. 'Thus we reach the ordinary notion of education: the notion which ignores its social necessity and its identity with all human association that affects conscious life' (Dewey 2004, p. 9). This article therefore explores the relevance of home economics in the face of school change in neoliberal times. Drawing on Aristotle's principles of a 'life well lived' and the 'common good' the article considers how home economics education provides possibility for students to develop practical wisdom. There is consideration of the aims of the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) and McGregor's (2010a) unique contributions to home economics to demonstrate the relevance and need for the subject in spite of its relocation to curriculum sidelines. As a curriculum area that is well able to build practical wisdom it seems out of step with contemporary positions on the purposes of schooling. However, Schwartz and Sharpe (2010) argue that the silence that surrounds any discussion about practice-orientated subjects including home economics is disempowering, both for home economics as a profession and for students who do not have any opportunity to engage with practice and build a capacity for wise judgment. Further, we are seen to be unable to perceive or act against the very circumstances that divert the need for practical wisdom.

Living in neoliberal times

The current ideology dominating all of our social institutions is called neoliberal and is described through a discourse where capitalism dominates everything – where nothing apparently has value unless it can be assessed in monetary terms. As a result, this thinking has generated a particular kind of 'common-sense' that has redefined social institutions such as schools. Schools are expected to operate as businesses in an educational market, where social division and segregation is increasing (Connell 2013) and education is not seen as a human right but about the wealthy having their children, especially their boys, educated about what matters most for those who are privileged.

Schools are no longer required to offer courses that broaden students' minds and engage them in an extensive curriculum. Rather, under the guise of addressing a crowded

curriculum, content areas have been pared down – teachers are complaining they have to do more of the same in less time; and the curriculum offerings are increasingly diminished and meagre. This reflects Freire's (1970) notion of education where teachers deposit pre-determined knowledge into the empty minds of the students who sit in their classes. Where the students are perceived as knowing nothing the teacher in comparison becomes all knowing. This notion has become entrenched in contemporary curricula and 'is more narrowly prescribed today than ever before, and despite the theoretical attractions of constructivism, Freire's recommendations for a problem-solving approach are rarely followed' (Noddings p. 91). The impact of neoliberalism in schools and its predilection for accountability and surveillance that can be seen in what Connell (2013) describes as 'an increasing technicization of knowledge and knowledge production ... (which) is partly expressed in the testing system itself' (p. 109).

Living in neoliberal times means being focused on markets and being gainfully employed as a compliant worker, as a complicit consumer of limited and reducing resources, and disconnected from community and society except for what they can offer the rugged individualist. Neoliberal policies rely on 'the assumption that unpaid domestic labour is infinitely expandable, and that household caretakers are available to take up the slack in meeting the needs of their family members when food subsidies are slashed, school fees go up, or health clinics are closed' (Young 2002, pp. 423–424). This reductionist approach to education and schooling is occurring concurrently with the depletion and degradation of the environment, and social change through economics that means more people are having to make do with less. Surely it is important for home economics as a profession with its focus on family to ask if this is the sort of schooling process that we want to be a part of?

And yet, perhaps ironically, it is the same social and environmental conditions that require the skills and understandings gained in home economics education and therefore speak to why home economics is needed in contemporary times. Currently, the neoliberal curriculum is focused on developing skills, a passive demeanour and a capacity to tolerate boredom within work-ready human capital. The focus is on what individuals need to know in order to support their life, as labour is increasingly absent in the curriculum. It is difficult to justify creative pursuits and interests as they apparently distract from the purpose of schooling. The fact that families are the spaces workers retreat to between their time on the job is apparently just incidental. As a consequence, there are some schools

where home economics – food, family or textiles – is either limited, relegated to the curriculum sidelines or has been eliminated. However, it is worth asking: in what other area of schooling might anyone be given the opportunity to develop a resourcefulness for managing with limited resources in constrained times, and in artful ways?

IFHE mission statement

The IFHE provides some guidance for us to be thinking about our work in particular ways. Of its eight aims the first four provide guidance in understanding what we as home economists may want to achieve as a profession, in ways that have education rather than schooling as a focus.

1. To promote **human rights** and the **universal values of households and families** as environments within which individuals are assisted to reach their full potential and to acknowledge their global interdependence.
2. To promote awareness that:
 - a. families and households are the **prime nurturing environments** for every human being, and
 - b. mental, physical, psychological and emotional family wellbeing is the basic infrastructure for all other forms of social and economic development.
3. To emphasise the **social, economic and environmental impact** of the management of everyday life of individuals, families and households.
4. To promote the concept of **families and households as operating within a larger social, economic and physical environment** with a myriad of exchanges between individuals and these larger environments on a daily basis (IFHE n.d).

In reviewing these statements and highlighting some of the key words, it is clear that a humanistic philosophy is being expressed where human interests, values and dignity predominate. They describe a professional position that acknowledges the importance of contexts as well as a concern for social justice and equity. By informing what home economics is and what it stands for, the aims of IFHE also generate thoughts about how the profession sees education, its pedagogical approaches and what it offers the young people we have the privilege of working with.

Home economics frames life through the decisions made in the everyday that build capacity to survive and thrive especially with regards to food, shelter, textiles and clothing. These are soft skills that have relevance in the workplace and pay particular attention to the care of relationships – between people and with the environment. I would argue that this is practical wisdom writ large. Pedagogical approaches within the field cannot be viewed as simply the teacher's 'style' of delivery, that focuses on how information is transmitted to the learner or the desiccated version put forward by neo-liberalism that is presumed to be tame, technical, outcomes-

orientated and linked to standardised testing (Lingard 2005). Rather, home economics pedagogy positions both the teacher and students as co-learners, engaging in activity where one person is actively enhancing learning in the other (Watkins & Mortimer 1999). There is intent to develop 'citizenship, higher order learning and opportunity for all' (Lingard 2005, p. 169). In claiming that home economics is essential in educating for a life well lived, knowing what is at the core of the profession's practices is needed. Developing character traits such as determination, self-control, patience, courage and kindness contributes to practical wisdom (Schwarz & Sharpe 2010). In building practical wisdom, home economics is important for how it helps our students to achieve something worthwhile, enriching and meaningful in their lives, and to be happy.

Perennial practical problems

There are a number of home economists who have argued for the worth of home economics education. They highlight the profession's focus on home and family, that this focus is both unique and significant, and they argue that the profession's contribution is over 100 years in the making, since the Lake Placid Conferences (McGregor 2007, 2010b; McGregor & Goldsmith 2011; Pendergast & McGregor 2007). It is the profession's focus on the everyday and practical perennial problems that contributes to its unique position, and it is one that is offered by no other subject or pedagogical content area. When home economics education has been eradicated from our schools it is important to consider what then happens to its life skills content and practice.

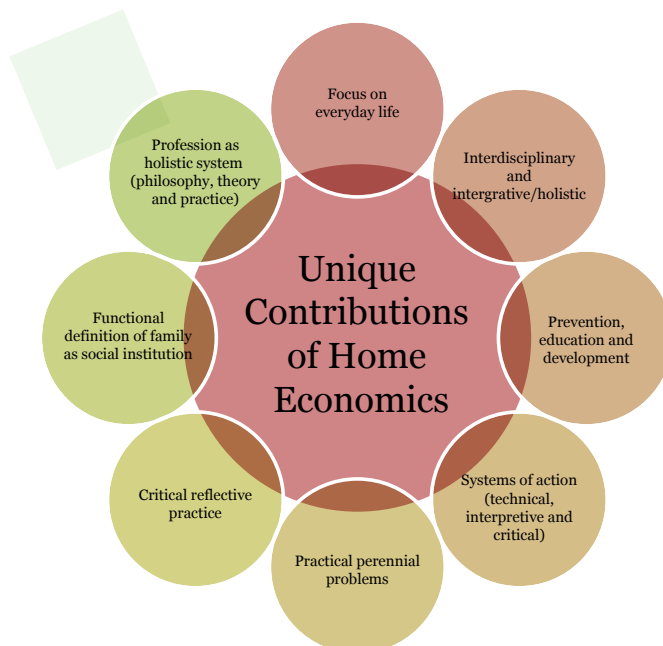


Figure 1 Unique contributions of home economics (Source: McGregor 2010a)

Home economics education in a time of schooling

Home economics holds the position that family is the basis of a functional society. As such it leads us to consider the consequences of family dysfunction due to inadequate resources for wellbeing. Is it subsequently inevitable that society becomes dysfunctional through its inability to meet the needs of the people who live within it? Considering how wealth is being distributed in neoliberal times gives us opportunity to ponder what home economics can offer through its interdisciplinary and integrative knowings and its systems of action.

Home economics aims to build the strength of individuals as members of their families first and foremost, and in doing so contributes to the sub-unit of a democratic society. Here 'the goal of household management is self-sufficiency that makes a flourishing family life possible' (Smith 1999, p. 627). When each member of the family is valued because of what they contribute according to their capabilities and capacities then it is possible to develop a common good (Smith 1999). And when families are functional, their community and society benefit from the aggregation of that common good.

As a subject area, it can be easy for others to underestimate and/or devalue what we do. A cursory scan of television programs, magazines or websites focused on lifestyle provides plenty of evidence that there is an enduring interest in the practical perennial problems claimed by home economics. In the absence or virtual invisibility of home economics education in schools the need for knowledge, skills and products to enhance our homes, families and lives is enduring. There are plenty who are willing to fill the void. The challenge comes when the content is presented as infotainment or what is presented is actually disempowering. Information can be presented in a contradictory way. It could promulgate a myth about convenience but with a (hidden) financial cost; or it could normalise what is being presented as usual rather than being a commandeered or homogenised position. In the absence of a predisposition for critical thought, the individual is unable to be a consumer mindful of caveat emptor – let the buyer beware. By not knowing what lies behind a particular principle or rule then the individual doesn't have the practical wisdom needed to know if it is one they should or can follow (Schwartz & Sharpe 2010).


As home economists we haven't always practised our profession with a care for other people's children and life experiences that are different to our own. We therefore need to pay attention to not only what we do but also how we engage with our work. De Zwart encapsulates this concern in her reflections on Eleanor Vaines' (1997) 'two alternative views of home economics: the traditional reductive discipline that views the world as a machine in which understanding can be reduced to its simplest parts because each part represents the machine; and another view that sees the world as home, where every episode of daily life has worldwide significance' (2004, p.100).

Who is in a better position than home economists to work with and for families, to not only develop skills that can improve daily life but to do so in a way that changes their world for the better? (Renwick, in press). Through our continued work with our students they are connecting with both the content and pedagogical approaches of the subject area and so they can add their voices to the relevance of home economics education. This is expressed in what they take home from their food or textile classes, as well as the opportunity to demonstrate how their home economics learning is connected and therefore meaningful in their lives and communities. This can also mean that family and friends are also able to speak up for home economics.

Bring back 'home eco'

Home economics education is relevant when it provides students with the resources to have a life well lived. While this is something that home economists have been doing for over 100 years, the profession and its practitioners are re-inventing the field so that its core work is achieved in contemporary ways. Increasingly evident in our work is the consideration of how practitioners/teachers can make sure that more people such as principals, parents and members of the wider school community know about what students can achieve in home economics. Conveying why students (or anyone else for that matter) need such skills under neoliberal capitalism is difficult but necessary work. It is within the practice of home economics classes that students have a platform to develop and cultivate a 'practical wisdom (that) requires nuanced thinking, flexibility, creativity and empathetic engagement with others' (Schwartz & Sharpe 2010, Part II, n.p.). And of course this is dangerous territory as it runs against prevailing neoliberal ideology, since 'under neoliberal rule, education is displaced by competitive training, competition for privilege, social conformity, fear and corruption, while protest and rational alternatives are marginalised' (Connell 2013, p. 110).

There are some outside the profession who are prepared to speak out in support of home economics education. It seems they are also concerned for the lost opportunities when students are not able to access or engage in our area. For example, a piece in the *Boston Globe* argued that home economics is 'a forward-thinking new kind of class that would give a generation of young people – not just women, but everyone – the skills to shop intelligently, cook healthily, manage money, and live well' (Graham 2013). More recently, an article in *The Irish Times* (McKenna 2015) identified cookery as the only subject that should be mandatory in schools, arguing 'Call it home economics, domestic science or whatever you like, but the ability to cook for oneself and one's family is the single most enduring skill that every school-leaver should have mastered confidently before heading off to college or into the job market. And the instruction in that life-giving skill belongs in our schools'. McKenna further extolled that we should 'see cookery for the philosophical act it is, and respect the profound engagement with the world that the art of cookery delivers to everyone who understands it'.



Smith (2015) has analysed what such calls to 'bring back home economics' actually mean in popular culture. It appears that such articles lack a nuanced or full understanding of home economics and are too ready to equate it with cooking. On the other hand it is at least one way to get some people to realise that home economics is alive and well and that reports of the death of home economics have been greatly exaggerated (with apology to Mark Twain). In her book on men, women, work and family Crabb (2015) discusses how social and economic shifts have caused radical changes to how we live our lives and the resources we have at hand to do so, especially in the workplace. Nevertheless there has been a comparatively smaller, perhaps even minute shift in who actually does the work in the home. Women have more opportunity for paid work at the same time as substantial expectations of motherhood. But men seem to be stuck in an apparently halcyon era of masculinity expressed through being the breadwinner and able to be absent from the home because of the supportive wife who does everything else in the home. Perhaps it is time to redefine masculinity in ways that includes care for self and others in context of the home.

Home economics for a life well lived

There is value in understanding how to gain enough resources for daily personal living and for the welfare of the community in which we and future generations will live. It is an important aspect of education and contribution to the common good. This is achieved through the development of practical wisdom, the ability to respond to the ethical question 'What am I to do?' Not just by speculating, but by actually doing it (Smith 1999). All of which is an essential aspect of home economics. Freire's (1970) response to the banking concept of education where the teacher works on students is the idea of working with students through problem-posing. In our classes this requires a shift from our classes being focused on one way to join pieces of fabric or one way to make a sauce. Instead we work with our students to learn and discover together what ways can be used to join these two pieces of fabric; and is there only one way (i.e. the teacher's) to make sauce?

There are several challenges here. One is to avoid imposing certain kinds of learning and knowing onto students; another is striking a balance between theoretical rigour and practical relevance (Carr 2006). In claiming that home economics requires action and empowers students because it allows them to ask 'What can or should I do now/next?' it speaks to its transformative potential. Thinking about how things have turned out requires so much more than technical knowledge and action (Kemmis et al 2014).

If we are to think about home economics being education then being cognisant of what the education is for is important. What is it that we want for young people gain from their education and schooling? Teachers are survivors of the education system after all, having been students in primary, secondary and then tertiary education contexts and then

returned as teacher. We all know that there are outcomes such as friendships, stories to repeat through the rest of our lives, and the possibility of a high school qualification (at minimum). Other subject areas help to contribute to these too. However, unlike other subject areas home economics is able to offer opportunity for developing practical wisdom and resources for a life lived well that also contributes to a greater common good.

Conclusion

This article has scoped how schooling in neoliberal times is about a reduced curriculum that is focused on 'banking' pedagogies that have been described by Freire (1970) as disempowering and oppressive. The intent of the neoliberal curriculum is to deliver new labour that is workforce-ready, which ignores and works to silence the educative purposes of schools. In this context home economics education has suffered because its focus is perceived as unnecessary in contemporary times and not related to workplaces. The aims of the IFHE mission statement and McGregor's (2010a) work on the unique contributions of home economics provide a strong basis to argue for the relevance of the subject.

Engaging with the humanistic philosophy articulated in IFHE's aims for the profession is difficult in neoliberal times. The subject's capacity to contribute to the development of practical wisdom underscores its value at a time when there is not only no desire to understand the purposes and content of schooling, but any philosophical and broader democratic debates are actively shut down (Lingard 2005). The concepts found within home economics education are not unique to the field and represent what McGregor (2010a) describes as interdisciplinary and integrative. Addressing practical perennial problems and finding ways to understand why such problems exist, and how they can be ameliorated is encapsulated in Aristotle's practical wisdom (Schwartz & Sharpe 2011). Schools, among other social institutions, are meant to provide opportunity for young people to learn how to be practically wise. However, as Schwartz and Sharpe point out, schools are lacking in 'the wisdom we need to succeed in our daily life and work' (2011, Part 1, n.p.). It is apparent that home economics has a huge potential to create practical wisdom, thereby making it is an education worth having.

This article is based on a keynote presentation at the Teachers of Home Economics Specialist Association (THESA) Annual Conference, Richmond BC, Canada, in 2015.

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Author biography

Dr Kerry Renwick is an Assistant Professor – Home Economics in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of British Columbia University, Canada. Her research areas include: critical pedagogies; health education and promotion; and food and nutrition education. In an Australian context, she has served on the boards of Home Economics Victoria and the Health Education Association of Victoria (HEAV), including a term as President. Kerry was instrumental in the development and introduction of Home Economics as a secondary specialisation in the Bachelor of Education (P–12) at Victoria University, Melbourne.
kerry.renwick@ubc.ca

The intersection of knitting and coding

When knitting and coding are mentioned together, the assumption is they inhabit different worlds, extremes of our curriculum. One is associated with hard, mathematical technology, the other with soft, warm craft. However, the following should sound familiar to both knitters and coders: condensing instructions into shorter combinations of letters and numbers, or using patterns with repetition and changing conditions. There are at least two ways of thinking about the intersection of knitting and coding. One focuses on patterns, encoding, instructions/algorithms, i.e. the similarities of process. If you knit, can you code ... are knitters coders? The other is inspiration: can knitting programs inspire visual coding and vice versa? With their vast experience of patterns, what could knitters devise to write as computer code and how will they play around with this code? Figure 1 shows the output of code inspired by basic stitches, playing with colour, size, spacing and form. More experienced knitters could push this further.

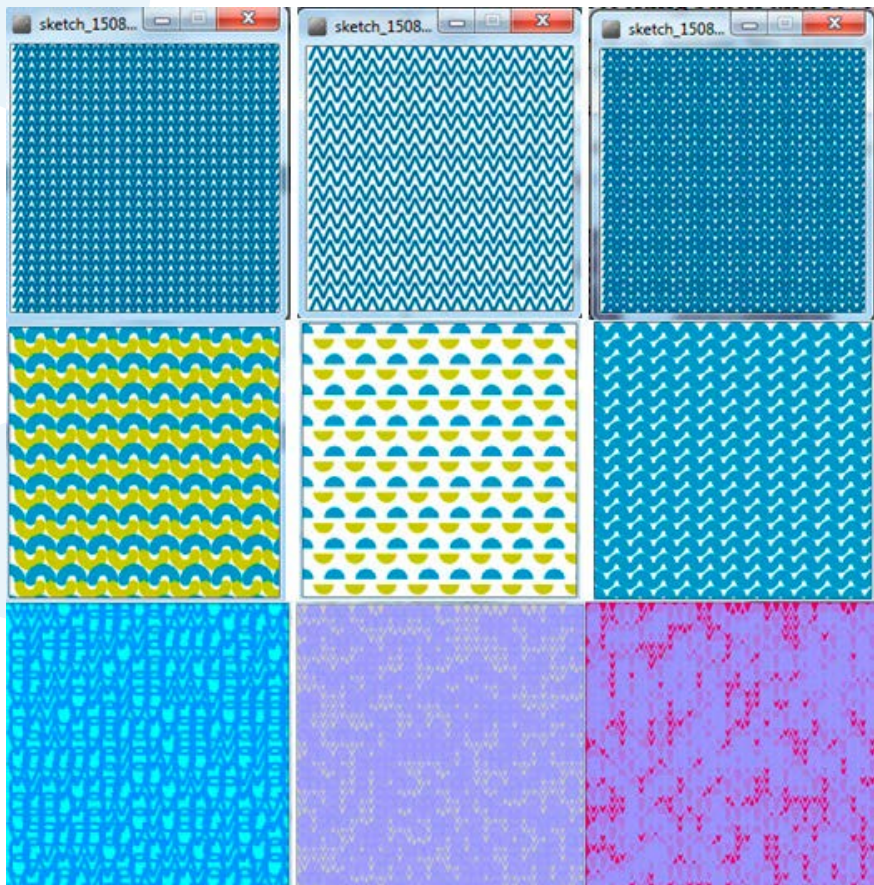


Figure 1 Using the Processing coding environment to play with simple knitting stitches

Before looking directly at code I want to explore how knitting relates to data, as data is supposed to be part of the world of code, not craft. In Charles Dickens' novel set in the French Revolution, *A tale of two cities*, the tricoteuse (one of a number of women who knitted while attending public executions), Madame Defarge, knits a pattern with the names of those intended for the guillotine. Only she knows her encoding, the combination of stitches for each name. Stitches have become data, the soft world of knits and purls creating a registry of death.

The intersection of knitting and coding

In turn, Turkish modern-day politics has inspired knitting-based art pieces. In the News Knitter project (2007–2010), Turkish political data was analysed by the Perl scripting language, then visualised, using the Processing coding language, to create a data visualisation. This was fed into a knitting machine to generate a jumper showing the data visualisation. Just as with Madame Defarge's names of the condemned, to make a stitch you need data.

In a more speculative project, *Stitching Worlds* (2014–2016) the artists devised an FM transmitter jumper containing knitted electronic components. People wearing this jumper could wander in crowded squares transmitting information that might otherwise be suppressed. The plan was to release the electronic pattern in that most benign arena – the knitting pattern section of women's magazines – away from the eyes of possible censors.

In these examples we see a relationship between stitches and data, knitting as an agency of revolution or political record. Indeed this isn't just fantasy from fiction or art projects. In World War II knitting was associated with espionage. Patterns could not be posted from the UK, in case they contained coded messages. The Belgian resistance recruited women whose homes overlooked railway yards to encode different trains into their knitting.

All this work relies on instructions or rules. The fictional Madame Defarge created her personal rules for converting a name to a sequence of stitches. Additionally she was following other rules, for example, how many stitches to knit in each row. Furthermore, she then converted each stitch instruction to a series of wool feeds and hand-needle movements. That is, she interpreted and then ran the instructions (this could be extended further: how the body converts the desire to move a hand into nerve/muscle control). Put generically: she designed a pattern, she created a set of instructions to fulfil the task, she enacted these instructions. This sounds like my world of computing: algorithms, interpret/compile, run.

Algorithms are series of steps, followed in a specific order, to solve a problem. Or, to reword for those who cook, they are recipes. For knitters they are knitting instructions, usually encoded in a knitting pattern, largely consisting of binary knits and purls. In computing, an algorithm is written in a computer program. The human-written code then is translated (interpreted and/or compiled), to the computer's binary world of 1s and 0s. How do you tie together patterns, algorithms, knitting and coding? The knitter may deviate spontaneously from the algorithm; two different knitters may produce slightly different results depending on errors, tension etc. Unless we add randomness, or react to dynamic data or human interaction, we would expect (assuming no printing or other glitches) each run of computer code to produce identical output. If I take a basic knitting pattern, say rib, and reproduce this in computer code, my coded rib will be 'perfect', unlike my knitted rib. So that's where I'll start: knit

two, purl two. To keep this simple the rule will be as many knits as purls, or for clarity:

```
*k2, p2; repeat from * to the end of the row
```

```
Repeat this row for the rest of the knit
```

In a previous project (CS4F – Computer Science for Fun) I looked at the relationship between knitting patterns and 'regular expressions' used by computer programs to describe patterns. Here I want to show how a combination of basic coding commands can create computer swatches, knitting-inspired computer visuals.

Knitting patterns describe what bits to repeat and how many times. Before coding, I can write out a rib by hand:

```
kkppkkppkkppkkppkkpp
```

```
kkppkkppkkppkkppkkpp
```

```
kkppkkppkkppkkppkkpp
```

```
kkppkkppkkppkkppkkpp
```

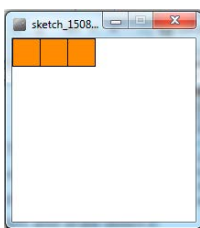
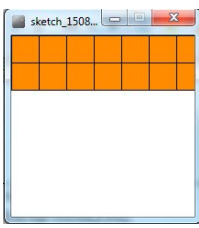
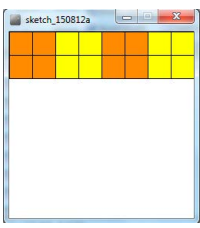
Our students are encouraged to work on paper, designing and drawing out what they want to see before they code. This helps identify patterns, work out rules etc. But it is rather boring to write more than a few lines, and it would be annoying to make alterations, for example, to change to a k3p3 rib, kkkppp, or make the ks purple.

For my visual coding I use Processing, a programming language used by the art, music, design and maker communities. It's a stripped-down version of the Java programming language, with a focus on visual coding: creating shapes, playing with images etc. In Processing the origin of the 'sketch' starts at the top left corner so shape locations are x pixels across followed by y pixels down. To draw a square I start with the general instruction `rect(x, y, width, height)`. To draw a 30x30 pixel square all I have to do is open up a new sketch and type `rect(0, 0, 30, 30)` then press the 'run' arrow.



Figure 2 A Processing square

The result, Figure 2, is unremarkable, but in other programming languages it would take multiple lines of bulkier code to draw this. Once you have one white square, you can keep playing with the code to change colours and background, as shown in Table 1.

		
<pre>size(400, 400); background(255); fill(255, 128, 0); rect(0, 0, 30, 30); rect(30, 0, 30, 30); rect(60, 0, 30, 30);</pre>	<pre>size(200, 200); background(255); fill(255, 128, 0); rect(0, 0, 30, 30); rect(30, 0, 30, 30); rect(60, 0, 30, 30); rect(90, 0, 30, 30); rect(120, 0, 30, 30); rect(150, 0, 30, 30); rect(180, 0, 30, 30); rect(0, 30, 30, 30); rect(30, 30, 30, 30); rect(60, 30, 30, 30); rect(90, 30, 30, 30); rect(120, 30, 30, 30); rect(150, 30, 30, 30); rect(180, 30, 30, 30);</pre>	<pre>size(240, 240); background(255); fill(255, 128, 0); rect(0, 0, 30, 30); rect(30, 0, 30, 30); fill(255, 255, 0); rect(60, 0, 30, 30); rect(90, 0, 30, 30); fill(255, 128, 0); rect(120, 0, 30, 30); rect(150, 0, 30, 30); fill(255, 255, 0); rect(180, 0, 30, 30); rect(210, 0, 30, 30); fill(255, 128, 0); rect(0, 30, 30, 30); rect(30, 30, 30, 30); fill(255, 255, 0); rect(60, 30, 30, 30); rect(90, 30, 30, 30); fill(255, 128, 0); rect(120, 30, 30, 30); rect(150, 30, 30, 30); fill(255, 255, 0); rect(180, 30, 30, 30); rect(210, 30, 30, 30);</pre>

How computers represent colour

Exercises for students:

- The instruction `background(255);` turned the output window white. Look up 'greyscale' in a search engine to find out the possible range of values. What would happen if you wrote `background(0);` ?
- `fill(255,128,0)` resulted in an orange rectangle. What fill values resulted in yellow? In the RGB colour space, the number 255 corresponded to the red value and 128 corresponded to green. In a search engine look up RGB colour values and find out how to make: red, green, blue, purple, pink, turquoise, grey, or any colour you choose.

Table 1

What we are seeing is the translation of the pattern by the computer, into a rib-like image. However, this code is crude compared to the knitting pattern. It's easy to make trivial errors and a bit laborious to change colours. Making larger images results in very long code. Just like the pattern instructions, it would be more elegant to not have to repeat the width of each square, not have to repeat the instruction to draw a rectangle every time you want a rectangle, that is, to code an equivalent of repeat from *. The aim would be to create, then modify, images such as Figure 3 with minimal effort.



Figure 3 Rib-inspired images

To make this scalable, I need to work out an algorithm. To simplify, I decided that the width of each colour rib was the width of one stitch (k/p) multiplied by the number of k/p s in the rib. So if a 'stitch' is 8 (pixels) wide and I want a $k2p2$ rib I can tell the computer to store this information as two variables, using 'wide' and 'kp' as the variable names:

```
int wide = 8;
int kp = 2;
```

I think of variables like ingredients in recipes, e.g. sugar = 200, eggs = 4. The word 'int' tells the computer that the wide and kp variables are whole numbers, i.e. integers. For a $k1p1$ rib, kp would be 1; for a $k3p3$ rib, kp would be 3.

Each rib in a line can now be represented as a rectangle where width is 'wide*kp', where * is the multiplication operator (instead of the 'x' used in maths), and depth is 'wide'. The first rectangle starts at (0,0), the next one starts at wide*kp along, the next one further along by another wide*kp (if this isn't clear, try drawing this on paper). So, starting at 0, the first rectangle is drawn at $0*wide*kp$, the second at $1*wide*kp$, the third at $2*wide*kp$ etc.

```
rect(0, 0, wide*kp, wide);
rect(1*wide*kp, 0, wide*kp, wide);
rect(2*wide*kp, 0, wide*kp, wide);
rect(3*wide*kp, 0, wide*kp, wide);
```

To now get the rib effect we need the first rectangle to be one colour, the second rectangle to be a different colour, the third rectangle to revert to colour one and so on. As the code is starting from 0, we can see that rectangles in ribs 0, 2, 4, 6

The intersection of knitting and coding

are colour one and rectangles in ribs 1, 3, 5, 7 are colour two i.e. even gets one colour and odd the other. Thinking of the ribs as columns, what we want to say is:

If	This condition is true	Do this	Otherwise	Do that
If	Column is even	Fill with colour1	Otherwise	Fill with colour2

Or in code:

if	(col %2==0)	fill(150, 200, 0);	else	fill(0, 200, 200);
----	-------------	--------------------	------	--------------------

To be honest, that's quite a few steps of code in one go. We need to test if the column (represented as a variable called col) is even. But computers do not understand the word 'even' or the concept 'divisible by 2'. However, they do understand the concept 'when divided by 2 there is no remainder' thanks to the modulo, %, operator. This outputs the remainder after dividing, so $5\%2 = 1$ (2 goes twice into 5, remainder 1), $8\%2 = 0$, $19\%2 = 1$. What defines an even number is that if you apply modulo 2 the result is equal to zero. To test 'is equal to' the double equals sign, ==, is used. So

```
if(col%2 == 0)
  fill(150, 200, 0);
```

states that if the column number is even then fill with a light green colour.

Now this needs to be repeated, to move from col = 0, to col = 1, to col = 2 across the first row. This is where repeat from * would be used in a knitting pattern or {x} used in a regular expression. I've chosen a 'while (this condition is true) {do this}' statement, as this sort of looping more closely mirrors how we talk. The following code generates one row with 26 columns (26 is an arbitrary choice): 13 light green and 13 turquoise. The first time this loop runs the variable col has value 0, so the test 'while (col<26)' is true. The code within the curly brackets is then run, ending with a statement to increment col by one. Again, in the second run of the loop the test 'while (col<26)' is true, as col has value 1, so again the

code inside the curly brackets runs. This continues until col reaches 26. At this point while (col<26) is no longer true, so the code in the curly brackets is not run, and, for this example, the program terminates. Note that the computer ignores any comments after the // marks.

```
int wide = 8; // width of each 'stitch'
int kp = 1; // k1p1 rib
int col = 0; // this variable stores the column
number, starting with zero
background(255);
size(208, 208);
noStroke(); // this removes outlines
while(col<26){
  if(col%2 == 0)
    fill(150, 200, 0);
  else
    fill(0, 200, 200);
  rect(col*kp*wide, 0, kp*wide, wide);
  col = col+1;
}
```

In the next iteration the code needs to move to the next row, draw the rectangles, then move to the following row and so on. This means putting the first while loop (which generates the columns) inside another while loop that generates new rows. Processing provides a property called height to correspond to the output window's height. I've also changed the y position of the rectangle, originally set to zero, as it has to move down by 'wide' pixels for each row. So for the first row (row = 0), col starts at zero and draws rectangles until col = 26. Then row is incremented by one (previously the code terminated), the test while(row<height) is called, this is true, but col is 26. So col has to be reset to zero in order that a new row of rectangles can be drawn using the code inside the inner loop, while(col<26).


```

int wide = 8;
int kp = 1; // k1p1 rib
size(200, 200);
background(255);
noStroke(); // this removes the outlines
int col;
int row = 0;
while(row<height){
col = 0; // set col to zero to restart the 2nd row
etc.
while(col<26){
if(col%2 == 0){
fill(150, 200, 0);
}
else{
fill(0, 200, 200);
}
rect(kp*col*wide, row*wide, kp*wide, wide);
col = col+1;
}
row = row+1; // now move to the next row
}

```

This is more elegant than the original code. I could make this shorter using an alternative loop (the 'for' loop), though that notation is less intuitive. If I want to change the 'stitch' width all I have to do is modify one line: 'int wide = 8'. To change colour/s I just need to modify the fill statement/s. The key thing is to play with code – paste this into a Processing sketch and see what happens if you change values. What colours work well? How does changing the rib thickness modify the visual impact? Modify this further to generate moss/seed stitch or other stitches. Keep modifying – it's faster to do this in code than when knitting swatches. If you want the code for the Figure 1 sketches to play around with, send me an email. Have a look at the Processing website for ideas.

In England, computing at schools is often associated with words like 'mathematical', 'engineering', 'financial', 'science'. Where are 'design', 'creativity', 'imagination', 'fun'? Terms like 'problem-solving' sound dry, as do 'fulfilling a task'. But 'making things' sounds better, as does 'creating'. People write knitting patterns so that someone follows them, perhaps adapts, knits and produces something. And they enjoy this process. Coders do the same. We should be encouraged by the intersection between these worlds and see what happens as more knitters explore computer coding.

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Author biography

Karen Shoop is a Lecturer in Digital Media at the School of Economics and Computer Science, Queen Mary University of London. She runs the Multimedia and Arts Technology program, where students explore the relationship between the visual arts/music and technology. After gaining a degree in Human Sciences she went to art school for a second undergraduate degree in fine art, before learning to code and getting a PhD in Electronic Engineering. Karen is the sister of a very good knitter, Tanya, who finally understood what algorithm meant when the word recipe was used.

Food and faith

Abstract

For many religious Jews food and faith are intertwined. Kosher food guidelines are a set of biblical laws that govern what foods can be eaten and how they must be prepared. These laws are still an integral part of the Jewish community in the 21st century. This article provides insight into the Jewish faith and the role of food. Jewish festivals and rituals are highlighted along with the traditional dishes that are still popular today. This information addresses Unit 2 of the current VCE Food and Technology study design and may also be applied to the new VCE Food Studies study design (to be implemented in 2017).

Judaism – the Torah

Judaism is the mother-faith from which Christianity and Islam developed in the Middle East. All three religions date back to Abraham, who discovered the one, true, invisible G-d.* Belief in the one true G-d is the basic principle of Judaism. While it believes it is the true faith, Judaism respects other religions and upholds freedom of conscience and belief for all human beings.

At Mount Sinai, around 1200BC, Moses and the Israelites received the Torah, or teachings, in which G-d revealed the way he wished to be served. The Torah provides a way of life embodied in a set of moral and religious obligations and civil laws. It prescribes duties to G-d, especially such things as modes of worship and rituals. It also prescribes duties to fellow human beings, such as truth, justice and peace. Jews show their obedience to G-d by following these laws. The dietary laws spelled out in the Torah remain a significant aspect of modern Judaism.

*Jewish people never fully write out the name of the Divine Presence.

The dietary laws

According to the Torah's dietary laws, there are specific species that Jews can eat. There are also rules about how they are to be slaughtered, prepared and cooked so they are kosher. Jews should eat only kosher foods. While the origin of these rules is sometimes claimed to be linked to health issues relating to conditions at the time, there are some dietary laws for which the reasons are not so clear. Nevertheless, they remain laws and observant Jews follow them.

Different levels of observance

There are various levels of observance of the Torah's laws among modern Jews. Chassidim, often referred to as the 'ultra-Orthodox Jews', are those that strictly follow the laws. They live separately and dress distinctively: the men wear dark suits and on Sabbath and major festivals married men wear unusual fur hats. Women and girls dress modestly: they cover their elbows and wear long skirts or dresses covering their knees. Married women cover their hair.

Some Jews observe the laws about keeping kosher kitchens and not cooking or driving on Shabbat (Jewish Sabbath) while largely integrating into modern society. Other Jews, who would probably describe themselves as traditional, may have a Friday night Shabbat dinner with family, celebrate the festivals of Passover and Jewish New Year, but drive to synagogue and eat out in non-kosher establishments.

Reform Jews do not believe in the observance of laws such as keeping kosher. As the reform movement is the most liberal, it attracts many non-observant Jews, those in mixed marriages and converts.

The Synagogue – place of worship

In ancient Judea, the place of prayer was the temple in Jerusalem. Today the Jewish place of worship is the synagogue, where prayer takes place facing toward Jerusalem. In orthodox synagogues, men and women sit separately and the service is conducted by males. In reform or conservative synagogues, men and women sit together and the service is conducted by men and women.

The bar and bat mitzvah

Jewish coming-of-age ceremonies occur at age 12 for girls (bat mitzvahs) and at age 13 for boys (bar mitzvahs).

Perhaps you have been invited to a bar or bat mitzvah. Do you know what to do and what is expected?

- Turn off your mobile phone before entering the synagogue.
- Men and women sit separately in an Orthodox synagogue.
- The bar mitzvah boy will read his passage from the Torah from about 10.30am.
- Lollies are thrown at the bar mitzvah boy.
- The service finishes about 12 noon.
- The service is followed by a Kiddush where food and wine are blessed and then shared among the family and guests.
- Wait until the prayers on wine are recited by the rabbi.
- Expect to eat well; so don't have a big breakfast or plan to go out for lunch.

Jewish festivals and food

The Jewish Calendar

The Jewish calendar differs from the common one. It is based on the revolutions of the moon around the earth, whereas the common calendar is based on the earth's rotation around the sun. The lunar calendar comprises twelve months each of 29 or 30 days. The days of the new moon are considered important days in the Jewish calendar. Jews celebrate each new month. On the Sabbath before the new moon and on the new moon day itself, special prayers are recited.

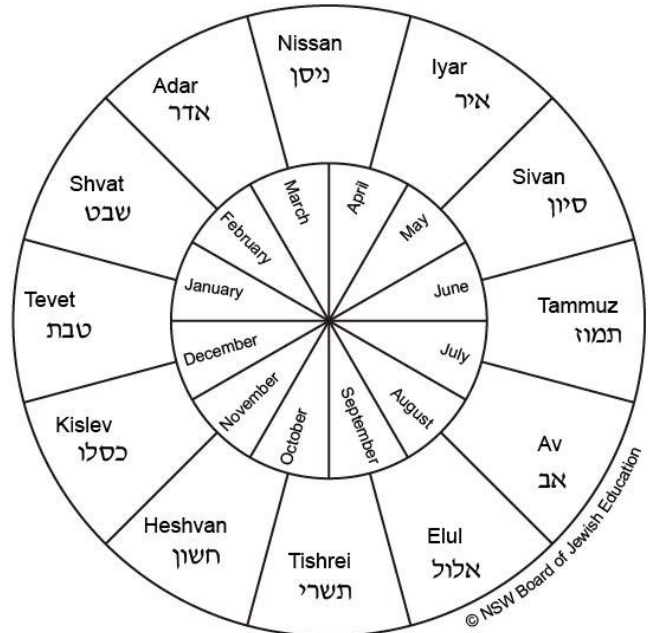


Figure 1 The Jewish year, showing the sequence of the months and when each month falls in relation to the secular months. A leap year occurs seven times in each cycle of nineteen years (Source: NSW Board of Jewish Education)

Shabbat (Sabbath) – A day of rest, time with the family

Shabbat is the only ritual observance instituted in the Ten Commandments. Primarily a day of rest and spiritual enrichment, the word 'Shabbat' means 'to cease, to end, to rest'. The injunction to 'Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy' is the fourth of the Ten Commandments recorded in the Five Books of Moses (Exodus 20:8; Deuteronomy 5:12). The Books of Moses continue: 'Six days you shall work but the seventh day is a Shabbat (Sabbath) unto the Lord'.

Shabbat is central to Jewish spiritual practice. It is a focal point for Jewish family life, which is especially important in Judaism, and is the source of inspiration for songs, poems, rabbinic teachings and esoteric wisdom. Shabbat is a time for peace, harmony, community and spirituality that is unmatched by any other day.

Shabbat begins before sunset on Friday afternoon and ends after nightfall on Saturday. During this time, observant Jews refrain from various activities including travelling, writing, commerce, kindling fire, cooking and using electricity. Activities include going to synagogue, reconnecting intimately with family members, enjoying the opportunity to rest, and sharing leisurely meals on Friday night and Saturday lunchtime.

Food and faith

Blessings on food and wine

On Friday evening, families gather to pray and eat wonderful traditional food. Prior to the onset of Shabbat, women light candles and recite a special blessing. As with other festive meals, blessings are also recited over challahs (plaited bread) and wine.

Wine is regarded as particularly sacred and has its own blessing. Wine sanctifies the Sabbath at its inception and its conclusion. A special goblet, usually made from silver, is set aside for the blessing of the wine. The wine should lull you into a state of Shabbat serenity. It symbolises joy and cheer, and therefore it is fitting to declare the sanctity of the Sabbath over the cup of wine. The prayer for wine is recited before the prayer for bread.

Challah is the traditional plaited bread specially baked for Friday night and festive holidays. These days most challah is store-bought, although some households still make their own. Since the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, a portion from the head of the braided dough is removed before it is baked. The piece is then burnt in the oven to symbolise and commemorate sacrifice as well as the destruction of the Temple.

Two Challahs on Shabbat and festivals

On Friday night, two challahs are present on the dinner table. This commemorates the double portion of manna that the people of Israel in the desert received from G-d on Fridays. This double portion provided them with manna for Shabbat. Some people sprinkle sesame or poppy seeds over the challah before baking to further symbolise this manna. After the challah has been blessed it should be salted, in recognition of the ritual of the Temple sacrifices, and a reflection of Genesis 3:19: 'By the sweat of your brow shall you get bread to eat'.



The two challahs are always covered with a cloth
Image: Judy Baxt

Pesach (Passover)

Passover, or Pesach as the festival is called in Hebrew, historically commemorates the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, and recalls the mass Exodus from Egypt about 3500 years ago. The Pesach story is recounted within Exodus, chapters 1–15 and is a focal point in Jewish history.

The festival of matzahs (unleavened bread) is another name for Passover. During Pesach it is a commandment to eat matzah: 'Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread' (Exodus 12:15).

A festive meal called the Seder is the ritualised meal eaten during the first two nights of Pesach (only one night in Israel). The Pesach Seder is the most consistently maintained Jewish ritual observance in the home, regardless of the level of observance of the family.

Matzah

Matzah is an unleavened bread (i.e. bread made without yeast) that is traditionally eaten by Jews during the Passover festival, when bread and other food made with yeast is forbidden.

At the Passover Seder, it is customary to eat matzah made only of flour and water; matzah containing additional products such as eggs, wine, or fruit juice is not considered acceptable for use at the Seder. The flour can be made from the five grains mentioned in the Torah: wheat, barley, spelt, rye and oats.

Matzah dough is quickly mixed and rolled out and pricked with a fork or a similar tool to keep the finished product from puffing up. The resulting flat piece of dough is cooked at high temperature until it develops dark spots. It is then set aside to cool and, if sufficiently thin, to harden to crispness. After baking, matzah may be ground into fine crumbs, known as matzah meal, and used in the preparation of numerous dishes.

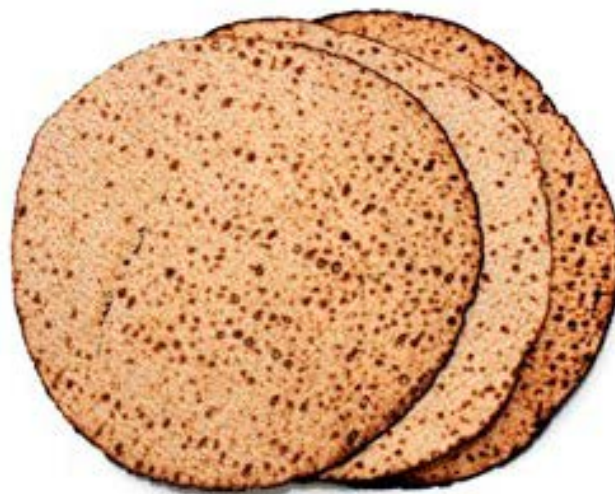



Image: Matzabakery.com

Seder Plate

This plate has six special sections in which specific items are placed, each one reminding those assembled of the Passover story.

PASSOVER SEDER PLATE SIMPLE GUIDE

PASSOVER (PESACH) is known as the "holiday of freedom," commemorating the Jewish Exodus from Egypt following 210 years of slavery. Passover is regarded as the "birth" of the Jewish nation, and its lessons of struggle and identity continue to form the basis of Jewish consciousness 3,300 years after the event.



- **Zeroah (A Roasted Bone)**
This reminds us of the Pesach offering we used to bring in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem
- **Beitzah (A hard-boiled Egg)**
This reminds us of the festival offering which was brought to the Holy Temple on Pesach
- **Maror (Horseradish Root)**
These bitter herbs symbolize the harsh suffering and bitter times we endured when we were slaves in Egypt
- **Charoset (A mixture of chopped apple, walnuts and red wine)**
Ground up together, Charoset resembles bricks and mortar, reminding us how hard we were forced to work when we were slaves in Egypt
- **Karpas (Could be slice of onion, boiled potato or sprigs of parsley)**
We dip the Karpas into salt water at the beginning of the Seder, representing the salty tears we cried when we were slaves
- **Chazeret (Romaine Lettuce)**
This is the second portion of bitter herbs which we eat during the Seder. This is eaten in a Matzah sandwich together with Maror.

The name of **Passover** derives from the fact that during the final plague «the slaying of the first born» God "passed over" the Jewish homes.

Matza is an unleavened bread, eaten by Jews during Passover. The most common reason for eating matzah is that on the morning of the Exodus, the Jews were so rushed in getting out of Egypt that the bread didn't have time to rise.

Seder means "order" because there are so many details to remember.



Figure 2 Passover Seder plate (Source: heartofwisdom.com)

Matzah balls



Image: Judy Baxt

Matzah ball dumplings (kneidelach) are traditionally served with chicken soup. They can be served with noodles, carrot, fried soup bits and croutons. Matzah balls are made from a mixture of matzah meal, eggs, water, and a fat, such as oil, margarine, or chicken fat.

The balls are dropped into a pot of salted boiling water or chicken soup, then the heat turned down to a simmer and a lid placed on the pot. Keeping one's hands wet is vital when handling the sticky balls. The balls swell during the cooking time of approximately 30 minutes.

The texture of matzah balls may be light or dense, depending on the recipe and the skill of the cook. Enthusiasts classify matzah balls as 'floaters' or 'sinkers'.

Chanukah – The Festival of Miracles

The word 'menorah' refers to the seven-branched candelabrum which stood in the Temple in ancient Jerusalem. One of the observances of Chanukah is to light the Chanukah menorah each night. The practice is to celebrate the miracle of one small crucible of oil lasting for eight days.

Food and faith

The Chanukah menorah differs from the Menorah in the Temple in that it has nine lights (one for each night of Chanukah, plus an attendant light called a shamash in Hebrew). On the first night of Chanukah, the shamash is used to light one of the other candles on the Chanakiah. On the second night, two candles are lit, and on every night thereafter the number is increased by one candle. The Chanakiah is placed near a window or a door so that it is visible to those outside so as to publicise the Chanukah miracle.

Popular Jewish dishes

- Challah for Jewish New Year.
- Apple cake for Jewish New Year.
- Apple slices dipped into honey – accompanied by a prayer asking G-d for a sweet New Year.
- Cream cheese blintzes and cheesecake for the Festival of Weeks, Shavuot, which marks the wheat harvest and commemorates the anniversary of the day G-d gave the Torah to the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai.
- Latkes and other oil-fried foods for Chanukah – the festival of the miracle of oil.
- Hamantaschen for Purim.
- Gefilte fish from Yiddish, or 'stuffed fish', is made from a poached mixture of minced, deboned fish e.g. snapper, bream or salmon. It is typically eaten as an appetiser.
- Chrein (horseradish)
- Israeli dips – hummus was adopted by the Jews from the Arab food culture and has become a mainstay in the Israeli diet. Fresh hummus is served in almost every Israeli restaurant.
- Felafel and pita and fillings.
- Israeli salad – cucumber, tomato, parsley, oil, lemon juice, served with breakfast, lunch, dinner and with felafel and pita.
- Cholent – slow cooked meat and beans (cooked overnight in a slow cooker).
- Rugelach – chocolate pastries
- Chopped liver
- Potato kugel
- Braised brisket
- Sweet lokschen pudding
- Spicy shakshuka



Braided challah



Latkes



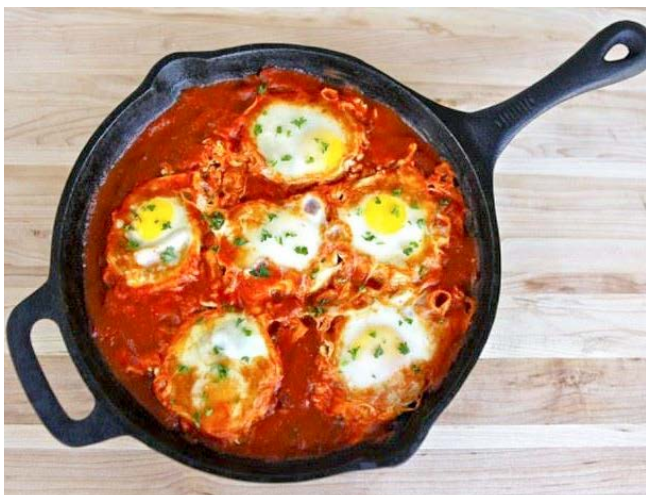
Hamantaschen



Cholent – slow cooked meat and beans



Sweet Lokschen pudding



A spicy shakshuka

Images: Judy Baxt

Kashrut (keeping kosher) – the Jewish dietary laws

Kashrut is the body of Jewish law dealing with the foods that can and cannot be eaten and how foods must be prepared. The Hebrew word 'kasher' means 'fit to be used according to Jewish law'. Laws about foods are so important that one of the first commandments ever given to human beings concerned food: Adam and Eve were told not to eat the fruit of the Tree of Life. The laws and principles of kashrut were given to the Jewish people in the Five Books of Moses section of the Torah.

Kosher red meat and poultry (fowl)

Acceptable animals are those that have cloven hooves and chew the cud. Such animals include goats, sheep (lamb), cattle (beef, veal) and deer (venison). Types of animals that comply with the requirements are known as 'kosher species'. Kosher bird species include chicken, duck, turkey and quail. Birds of prey (birds that eat other animals) are not kosher.

As the guide to kosher beef cuts shows (see Figure 3), only the chuck (shoulder, mince meat), ribs, brisket (breast, corned beef, pastrami), plate (skirt) and fore shank (shin and marrow bone), neck and offal (e.g. liver, tongue, sweet breads) are used.

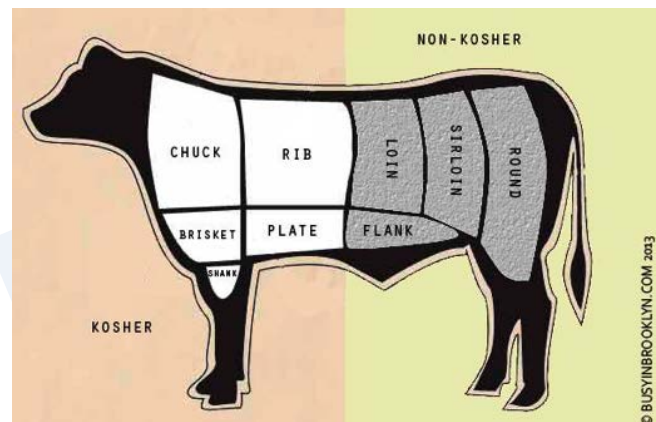


Figure 3 Kosher meat guide (Source: www.BusyinBrooklyn.com)

Forbidden fats and nerves

The sciatic nerve and its adjoining blood vessels may not be eaten. The process of removing this nerve is time-consuming and not cost-effective; kosher slaughterers simply sell the hind quarters to non-kosher butchers.

The fat that surrounds the vital organs and the liver, which is known as suet, may not be eaten. Kosher butchers remove this. Modern scientists have found biochemical differences between this type of fat and the permissible fat around the muscles and under the skin.

Food and faith

Preparing kosher meat

Kosher meat and poultry must be slaughtered by the method of Shechitah – a quick cut by a super-sharp knife, which Jews believe to be the most painless means of killing the animal. The person who performs the Shechitah is called a shohet. The shohet works under the supervision of a special rabbi who ensures that they carefully comply with what Jewish law requires.

After slaughter, the animal must be checked very carefully to make sure it doesn't have any damage which according to Jewish law would make it non-kosher. The shohet will not process animals that have died on their own or use animals that are found to have a disease or an injury.

Soaking and salting meat

The meat must next be washed in water to remove all the blood, then it must be soaked in lukewarm water for half an hour. After soaking, the meat should be washed carefully and allowed to dry for a little while. The meat is now salted on six sides (top, bottom and four sides) and placed for an hour on a sloped board so that the blood can drain off into a sink or container. After an hour, the meat is rinsed three times to remove the salt and blood.

Why must blood not be eaten?

In the Torah, the Israelites were told they were not allowed to eat blood because blood is the soul and the life force of the animal. The prohibition of eating blood applies even to the smallest drop of blood, and thus any blood spot found in an egg renders the egg non-kosher. Each egg should be opened into a clear dish or glass and checked for blood spots before it is cooked or combined with other food. If a blood spot is found, the whole egg must be discarded, and the cup or dish should be immediately and thoroughly washed with cold water.

When boiling eggs, it is customary to boil at least three eggs at a time. Some people have a separate pot just for boiling eggs. If a blood spot is found in a boiled egg, the whole egg must be discarded. There is no problem with eating eggs cooked in the shell (boiled or roasted), even though these cannot be checked.

What is kosher salt?

Kosher salt is a variety of edible salt with a much larger grain size than some common table salt. Like common table salt, kosher salt consists of the chemical compound sodium chloride. Kosher salt typically contains no additives such as iodine, although some brands will include anti-caking agents in small amounts. The large grains make it more effective at drawing out liquid from meat during the koshering process. The biggest reason why chefs love to use kosher salt is that it is much easier to pick up between your fingers and thus gives you tighter control over your seasoning.

Fish

There are certain rules about which fish are kosher but one important rule to remember: a fish is kosher if it has both fins and scales. Examples of non-kosher fish are all shellfish including oysters, prawns, lobster, and eels, shark, monkfish and leatherjackets. Fresh or frozen fish should be bought with the skin on so that one can check if it is kosher or not.

Bread and cakes

Bread and crackers usually contain or come in contact with non-kosher oils, fats or improvers and cannot be accepted as kosher without thorough investigation and subsequent authorisation.

Milk

Only milk that comes from kosher species of animals (such as cows and goats) is kosher. Milk should be supervised from the time it is milked until it is bottled in order to make sure that it comes from a kosher animal. However, in countries where there are government authorities that guarantee the safety of milk that is sold, some Kashrut bodies rule that all milk can be considered kosher. Milk that comes from a non-kosher animal is not kosher. Chalav Yisrael (very strictly 'kosher milk') is now available in most big cities where Jewish people live.

Thickened cream and yoghurt can contain gelatin and therefore are considered not kosher.

Vegetables

All fruits and vegetables are kosher, but the insects which may be found in them are not. Before cooking or eating, all fruit and vegetables should be checked to make sure they do not contain insects. Vegetables cannot be checked for insects on Shabbat. Salads can be prepared freshly on Shabbat with pre-washed vegetables.

Cheese

The rules get stricter when dealing with cheeses. All cheese has to be certified by rabbis. This is because one of its ingredients, called rennet, often comes from an animal, usually a calf's stomach. All kosher cheese production must be supervised to ensure the rennet used does not come from an animal source, as meat and dairy cannot be eaten together.

Separating meat and milk

The laws concerning milk and meat, including poultry meat, are very strict and are written in the Torah. People who keep kosher are very careful when it comes to this rule. They have separate dishes, cutlery and other cooking utensils, separate sinks (where possible), separate draining racks and sponges, separate sections in the fridge and separate kitchen benches.

A dishwasher can be used for both meat and milk dishes, but not at the same time. Dishes should be well rinsed before being put in the dishwasher. Between meat and milk loads,

a rinse cycle should be used. Also it is preferable to have separate racks for milk and meat loads. Many people make this easier by using the dishwasher for either milk or meat, and handwashing the other.

Glass was considered non-absorbent by the rabbis. As a result glass can be used interchangeably between milk and meat as long as it is washed in hot water.

Towels that are freshly clean can be used with either milk or meat. Once they are used for one or the other, they must be washed before use with the other. It is best to have different towels for each to avoid confusion.

Neutral foods

Pareve is neutral food – neither meat nor milk e.g. vegetables, fruit, bread or fish, salad and drinks.

Eggs are considered a separate entity once they have been laid and are considered to be pareve, or neutral, so that they can be eaten with either milk or meat.

Eating meat after milk

A certain amount of time must pass between eating meat and eating foods containing milk. Most Australian rabbis say to wait about six hours for the meat to digest. In some other countries people wait less.

Milk products are digested much faster than meat products, so the wait doesn't have to be as long if eating the milk food first. The custom is to wait for half an hour.

Wine, spirits and beer

Wine and grape juice must also be supervised by rabbis to make sure that they were made by Jewish people. The reason for this goes back to Roman times, when the rabbis were worried that Jews were mixing too much with non-Jewish people. Another more modern reason for this rule is that today non-kosher ingredients often appear in non-Jewish wines, such as bull's blood for colouring. Since blood is not kosher, it is another reason to drink only Jewish-made wine.

Jewish-style food

Kosher-style or Jewish-style food usually refers to food that is not kosher, but is a type of food that could be produced as kosher. Some Jews consider themselves to be keeping kosher style: the food is not kosher but it is traditional in style. These Jews generally don't eat forbidden animals or mix milk and meat.

Bagel

A bagel is a bread product originating in Poland, traditionally shaped by hand into the form of a ring from yeasted wheat dough, roughly hand-sized, which is first boiled for a short time in water and then baked.

Corned beef and pastrami

Corned beef and pastrami are cured using a slow method, which best flavours the meat, without injecting chemicals, water, or other additives to speed up the process. The finished product can take up to a full 30 days to cure, while commercially prepared corned beef is often pressure-injected (or 'pumped') to cure in 36 hours.

Dill pickles

A 'kosher' dill pickle is not necessarily kosher in the sense that it has been prepared in accordance with Jewish dietary law. Rather, it is a pickle made in the traditional manner, with generous addition of garlic and dill to a natural salt brine.

For further information

Jewish community in Melbourne

Jewish Museum of Australia, St Kilda (closed Saturday and festival days) www.jewishmuseum.com.au

Jewish Holocaust Centre, Elsternwick
www.jhc.org.au

Jewish International Film Festival
www.jiff.com.au

The Lamm Jewish Library of Australia (the merger of Makor Jewish Community Library with the communal libraries of Kadimah, the Holocaust Centre and the Jewish Museum, as well as the archives of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society and the Australian Jewish Historical Society)
<http://lja.org.au>

Jewish culture on YouTube

Chareidim Shemurah Matzoh Bakery
www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAtnxtfUwy0

Traditional modern Jewish wedding
www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwQ13MyQ6Pk

Modern Orthodox with dessert bar at the end
www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ihD7_e_K-I

Ultra Orthodox wedding photo montage with explanations
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www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover_collections/society_art/jewish/convicts/solomon.html

Wikipedia:

Matzah ball

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matzah_ball

Milk and meat in Jewish law

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milk_and_meat_in_Jewish_law

Kosher speciality shops

Continental Kosher Butchers (suppliers to Coles supermarkets)

www.ckb.com.au/home.html

Glick's Cakes and Bagels

<http://glicks.com.au>

Lewis & Son (charcuterie, antipasto, pickles)

www.lewisandson.com.au

Beckett's Flat, Margaret River – Five Stones Wines (Kosher and vegan)

www.kosherwine.com.au/australias-finest-kosher-wine

Gefen Liquor

<http://gefenuliquor.com.au> (specialty kosher wine shop)

Kosher cafes

Daneli's Deli (New York style sandwiches)

<http://danelis.com.au>

Laffabar Charcoal Grill

www.laffabar.com.au

Shemesh Vegetarian Pizza Bar

www.shemesh.com.au

Zavdiel's

www.letseat.at/zavdiels

Milk n Honey Vegetarian & Kosher Café

www.milkhoney.com.au

Websites

Kosher Australia

www.kosher.org.au/node/29

Kashrut Authority Australia

www.ka.org.au

Nuttelex Kosher

www.nuttelex.com.au

Tofutti (Dairy-free, soy-based kosher foods)

www.tofutti.com

Author biography

Judy Baxt studied at Sydney University and qualified as a home economics and textiles teacher in 1991. She has spent time working in Jewish schools in London, Sydney and Melbourne. She has been teaching food technology and textiles at Wheelers Hill Secondary College since 2008.

Impact of social factors on food choice

Alisha Owen and Thanh Nguyen

Undergraduate students
Bachelor of Education Primary/Secondary
Faculty of Education
Monash University

Abstract

This essay was written by students Alisha Owen and Thanh Nguyen, as part of their assessment for the Food, health and wellbeing subject. They researched contemporary senior secondary curriculum in Victoria and developed digital learning objects and a learning sequence relating to their selected topic area: 'Impact of social factors on food choice' – please see <http://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/?LSQKK8>

This work relates to specific key knowledge and key skill areas of Unit 3 (Food in daily life), Area of study 2 (Food choice, health and wellbeing), as set out in the new VCE Food Studies curriculum to be implemented from 2017. Specifically, the identification and analysis of 'Ways in which social factors across Australia including education, income, location, accommodation, available time and cultural norms influence food accessibility, food choice and healthy eating'.

It should be noted that this work was carried out prior to the publication of the study design in 2016. Teachers should check the VCAA website for possible changes to the final version approved for implementation (www.vcaa.vic.edu.au).

Curriculum: VCE Food Studies

Unit 3: Food in daily life

Area of study 2: Food choice, health and wellbeing

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to explain and analyse factors affecting food access and choice, analyse the influences that shape an individual's food values, beliefs and behaviours, and apply practical skills to create a range of healthy meals for children and families.

Key knowledge

- Ways in which social factors across Australia including education, income, location, accommodation, available time and cultural norms influence food accessibility, food choice and healthy eating

Key skill

- Identify and analyse social factors that may influence healthy eating.

Introduction

Food access, food choice and healthy eating are determined by a number of factors. Education, income, location, accommodation, time pressures and cultural norms are just some of many social determinants that impact food-related behaviours in Australia. The ways in which these factors impact food access, choice and healthy eating will be discussed in detail below.

Education

Education is an important determinant in food access, choice and eating behaviours (AIHW 2012). Education provides the foundational food- and nutrition-related knowledge required to make educated food choices and live a healthy life (AIHW 2012). Therefore it is clear that having a high level of education acts as an enabler to food access, choice and consumption. Clearly displaying this association, Nestle et al (1998) note the consumption of a low-fat diet is higher among those with a higher education level. Similarly, Nestle et al (1998) found those with higher educational attainments consume more fruits and vegetables than those with lower educational attainments. It is also worth noting Nestle et al (1998) found maternal education level influences children's diets with the selection of low-fat foods among children being associated with a higher maternal education level (Nestle et al 1998). In contrast, lower educational attainment is associated with food insecurity. A lack of nutritional knowledge, as well as the knowledge required to successfully budget, plan and cook meals often predisposes people with a low level of education to eat poor quality meals that do not meet nutritional requirements (Burns 2004 as cited in AIHW 2012).

Income

Food access, choice, purchase and consumption is also dependent upon income. Households in the highest income group spend three times more on food than those in the lowest income group (AIHW 2012). While the socioeconomically advantaged spend more on fruits and vegetables, it is worth noting that the proportion of weekly food expenditure spent on fresh produce is higher among low-income earners. That is, although high-income earners spend more on fresh produce in total, the proportion of their weekly food expenditure spent on fresh produce is lower than the proportion spent on fruits and vegetables by low-income earners (AIHW 2012). In addition, high-income households spend a higher proportion of weekly food expenditure on meals out, fast foods and alcoholic beverages than low income households.

Impact of social factors on food choice

This difference between high- and low-income households is a clear illustration of how access, choice and consumption can differ depending on income. Furthermore, Nestle et al (1998) noted that low-income earners struggle to translate information about food into food choices and are more vulnerable to food insecurity. In summary, having a high income is an enabler to food access, choice and one's ability to eat healthfully due to the plethora of foods available for purchase and consumption. Conversely, having a low income acts as a barrier to food access, choice and consumption as 'inadequate funds may limit purchase and consumption' (Nestle et al 1998, p. 52) of certain health-promoting foods such as fruits and vegetables but also of meals out, fast foods and alcohol (AIHW 2012).

Location

Geographic location affects the price and availability of foods, therefore significantly impacting people's ability to access, choose and consume healthy foods. Put simply, the cost of a healthy diet is higher in rural and remote areas compared to urban areas (AIHW 2012). Due to prices associated with transport, distribution and lack of demand and competition, the cost of basic nutritional foods is about 30 per cent higher in remote areas (AIHW 2012), with larger differences in the price of healthy foods (Queensland Health 2011 as cited in AIHW 2012), which is concerning. Fresh food is also limited, restricting food choice and 'creating a barrier to a variety of fresh produce' (AIHW 2012, p. 15). For example, foods such as fish, lean meats and fresh fruits and vegetables are less likely to be available in rural communities (Nestle et al 1998).

These price and availability differences make it harder for people to purchase nutritious foods and a correlational trend is evident among data. The ABS (2008) states that children from rural areas had lower intakes of most vitamins and minerals, and higher intakes of sugar. In contrast, those living in metropolitan areas are generally closer to supermarkets and fruit and vegetable stores and benefit from a wider variety of food, particularly healthy and fresh produce (AIHW 2012), enabling greater food access, choice and ability to consume healthy foods. In summary, the availability and quality of fresh fruits and vegetables decreases with remoteness.

Accommodation

Shelter is listed in The Ottawa Charter (1986, as cited in WHO 2013) as one of the fundamental conditions for health and can affect food choice, access and habits in Australia. However, having accommodation does not mean there is not a limit to food access and healthy food choice. Those who have problems with housing instability or high rental costs face food insecurity (King, Bellamy & Kemp 2013). A significantly large 82.5 per cent of households in New South Wales/ Australian Capital Territory that were rated food insecure were

renting, with just 6.6 per cent of homeowner households food insecure (King et al 2013). When rents are high, tenants are being asked to spend a large portion of their income on rent, causing rental stress and not leaving much money behind for food. This leads to food insecurity (King et al 2013). It was found that 42 per cent of tenants who had severe rental stress and 30 per cent of tenants with rental stress were also facing food insecurity (King et al 2013).

Indigenous Australian households also face more problems with food security (King et al 2013) as their homes are more likely to be installed with low quality equipment (Lea & Pholeros 2010). When kitchen equipment essential for hygienic preparation, storage and cooking of food is either not available or not functioning properly, food will not last as long as it should, leading to food insecurity (AIHW 2013). The homeless youth of Australia also face challenges in relation to access and choice of food (let alone nutritious food). They turn to methods such as welfare, stealing, begging, and deliberate incarceration (Booth 2006). These unorthodox methods of collecting food do not provide enough of the nutrition that these young growing adolescents need for proper development (Booth 2006).

Time pressures

Another factor that affects food choice considerably is time pressures and constraints. Contento (2011) mentions that people perceive themselves to have less time and will sacrifice time spent on preparing meals with money by buying premade food. People are also bombarded with food information that results in them taking more time deciding what brand of food to purchase (Contento 2011). Young adults face time constraints due to school, work or other demands and these time constraints are seen as a barrier to healthy food consumption (Pelletier & Laska 2012). Approximately half of the young adults in Pelletier and Laska's study believed that time pressures made it difficult for them to prepare meals, sit down and eat prepared meals, eat meals at regular times and/or shop for ingredients. The same study also found that diet-related behaviours of women and students with a low socioeconomic status were more negatively influenced by time constraints. Family, friends and relationship commitments have been found to place more time pressure on women, with women in relationships 83 per cent more likely to perceive themselves as having more time constraints, which in turn affect their healthy eating habits (Pelletier & Laska 2012). Additionally, those with a higher education also spend less time on preparing home-cooked meals and this could be due to longer working hours (Chu-Ping & Tashiro 2011). The value of time outside of work far outweighs any nutritional concerns and the preparation and consumption of home-cooked meals is reduced with dining out increased (Chu-Ping & Tashiro 2011).

Cultural norms

Eating behaviour, food choice and access to food can all be affected by cultural norms. Renzaho and Burns' (2006) study found that religion played an important role (32.4 per cent of respondents) when it came to purchasing and choosing food at the supermarket. Sixty-six per cent of Muslims who had migrated from Africa to Victoria reported that religion was the most influential factor when it comes to food choice. Fasting behaviours, for example Ramadan, also play a big role in food choice in many different religions (Green et al 2003).

Health was the second most dominant factor in relation to food choice (Renzaho & Burns 2006). However, many migrants from Renzaho and Burns' study found it difficult to find traditional food/ingredients and they were forced to use ingredients they were not entirely familiar with; this could also negatively affect their nutrition intake. For example, camel meat is being substituted with lamb, which has a higher fat content, so the migrants are consuming more fat than they normally do. There is also an increase in takeaway consumption for African migrants as they adopted the cultural norm of eating out, with 33 per cent eating takeaway at least once a week. Migrant children from Africa in Australia who were drifting away from a traditional diet were found to consume more 'obesogenic' food and become more sedentary, whereas migrant children who consumed more culturally traditional food were less sedentary and had lower body mass index (Renzaho, Swinburn & Burns 2008). Green et al (2003) also found that children of migrants persuaded their parents to incorporate traditional Australian dishes into their diets but still showed faithfulness towards their traditional cultural foods. Mums also still had a large say in food choice in the home (Green et al 2003). This shows that cultural practices in relation to what and how food is consumed can be altered when people are more exposed to a different culture.

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Cultivating the critical food artisan: the emergence of an undergraduate food studies program in Australia

Kelly Donati, Lilly Cleary, Nick Rose
Lecturers, Faculty of Higher Education
William Angliss Institute

Abstract

In early March 2016, William Angliss Institute (WAI) welcomed its first cohort of students into the Bachelor of Food Studies, the first undergraduate degree of its kind in Australia. This article shares the pedagogical rationale and reasoning behind the development of the Bachelor of Food Studies at WAI within the context of other food-related study in Australia and overseas. It calls for a pedagogical acknowledgement of and response to the need for socio-political, economic and ecological transformation within the food system more broadly. It also sketches out some preliminary reflections on the challenges of integrating food and its materiality into higher education curriculum and concludes by offering up an agenda of hope.

Introduction

In early March 2016, William Angliss Institute (WAI) welcomed its first cohort of students into the Bachelor of Food Studies, the first undergraduate degree of its kind in Australia. The group was even more diverse than expected, comprising mature-age students running their own food businesses to younger students seeking to make a difference in the world through food. As it turned out, the development for this curriculum began in 2014 alongside, but quite separately to, the review and revamping of VCE Food and Technology into Food Studies, the outcome of which has resulted in a program of study at the secondary school level that is inspired and groundbreaking for food education in Australia. This serendipitous parallel in curriculum development is indicative that food studies is indeed a field whose time has come.

Food studies: at the cutting edge of interdisciplinarity

The first food studies undergraduate program commenced at New York University in 1996, and there are now more than 20 universities and colleges offering similar degrees at the undergraduate and post-graduate level across the US and Canada. Even though it is a young field of academic inquiry and teaching, the study of food is by no means new in higher education. Food habits and dietary practices, as well as food taboos and belief systems, have long been the concern of anthropologists, sociologists and historians. Nutritionists,

food scientists, agricultural scientists and biochemists are just a few of the other scientific disciplines engaged in the study of food.

Food studies, however, aims to go beyond the study of food itself from any one particular disciplinary perspective. Instead, it uses food as a lens for understanding the world more broadly and, in particular, the relationships that sit behind food systems and that shape our social and cultural experiences of food (Miller & Deutsch 2009).

In this context, the production, transformation and consumption of food is a vantage point to make sense of how human and environmental resources are used and abused in order to sustain human appetites. At the same time, it offers a way to better address the 'wicked problems' of industrialised agriculture, convenience culture and modern food provisioning which are proving increasingly difficult to tackle using traditional linear thinking and techno-scientific approaches. Rather, we need the 'moral courage to tackle conventional wisdom' and ways of thinking that have led us to the current social and ecological impasse (Hutchison et al 2015). Or, as Einstein put it many decades earlier, 'we cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking we used when we created them'.

The methodological toolkit of food studies is necessarily interdisciplinary and, at times, eclectic. Spanning the boundaries of anthropology, sociology, history, geography, philosophy, politics, political economy, literature and cultural studies, it draws on traditional approaches such as archival research, discourse analysis, ethnography, surveys and experiments, but also more innovative and emergent methods for understanding taste, food materialities and the associated experiences. For example, Mann et al (2011) play with material methodologies through an exploration of the practices of eating with fingers. Longhurst and Johnston (2009) explore the viscosity of food and commensality to understand the socio-political relations of the table and consider what food experiences in domestic spaces might reveal for the development of social policy. And Kelley (2015) translates her research on the ethics of copyrighting food into performance art that creatively engages a public audience in questions of corporate ownership in the food system. What is striking about these examples is that they purposively seek to attend to the uncertain, complex and material pleasures of food.



Farmers market, Melbourne (Photo: Alison Peake)

The Bachelor of Food Studies at William Angliss Institute: incorporating the 'pleasure principle'

In developing the food studies curriculum at WAI, this emphasis on pleasure was a pedagogical and philosophical commitment. In our view, notions of pleasure have suffered a critical neglect within the scholarship and pedagogy of higher education institutions. Although pleasure is a primary motive in so many aspects of our lived experience – from what we eat and how we live to our chosen hobbies, careers and life partners – it is rarely taken up as a serious scholarly pursuit, particularly in the fields of health and public policy (Coveney & Santich 1997; Coveney & Bunton 2003), or indeed in Western philosophical inquiry (Heldke 2006). Yet, as Coveney and Bunton suggest, taking pleasure seriously might challenge the 'public health imperative of a disembodied experience of pleasure' and other ways in which the pleasures of food are neglected in our public understandings of health (p. 175). Or, as Heldke (2006) frames it, while the philosopher's table is replete with Platonic-inspired accounts of the meaning of human life from the perspective of the mind, philosophy itself has yet to take seriously the body and its pleasures as it relates to food and food-making.

For this reason, while the Bachelor of Food Studies curriculum incorporates foundational subjects on food systems, agriculture and health, it also regards as equally important the topics of sensory education, fermentation and culinary artistry. Students will examine the various components of a food system and their relationship to health, environment and society, including the implications of the globalisation and industrialisation of food and agriculture in majority world (or developing) countries. They will also study the physical, social and structural determinants of food choices in the modern food system and how they have changed over time. The significant historical and technological revolutions in agriculture will be explored, as well as the current differences between various modes of production and their environmental, economic and social costs.

Supporting the emergence of 'critical food artisans'

Students will also learn to get a 'feel for food' by spending time in the kitchen, considering cuisines from the perspective of flavour profiles as well as health. They will experience working with the liveliness of yeasts and microbes and understand the role these organisms have played not only in the development of the world's most important gastronomic products but also in human evolution and biology. In the same year that they study food policy and governance, they will also be crafting their own artisanal products and understanding



The WAI Food Studies curriculum explores the 'interconnected nature of food and farming systems' (Photo: Kelly Donati)

the regulatory issues that surround these products if they were to sell them commercially. Industry experts from food media and journalism will show them how to communicate complex food issues to a popular audience. As we develop their skills in research and critical analysis, we are also encouraging them to explore how food might be used to transform the world around them for the better.

Both 'food-making' and the transformation of food systems are 'thoughtful practice[s]' that engage in 'mentally manual' and 'theoretical practical activity' (Heldke 1992, p. 203). In this sense, we take inspiration from the notion of the 'philosophic practitioner' developed by Tribe (2002) who calls for a philosophical underpinning of vocational curriculum in the sister field of tourism that 'integrates knowledge' in ways that 'encourage vocational competence balanced by ethical competence' (p. 340). Just as the food artisan applies his or her craft to the transformation of ingredients into something delicious, the critical food artisan uses food as a tool to create social, cultural, ecological or even economic transformation. When we seek to change the way that food moves through communities, we are, at the same time, transforming the relations within that community. Conversely, if we re-imagine social policy through the lens of food, then the implementation of this policy will have material effects. As Tribe reminds us, 'vocational reflection' is required here so that action in the world is accompanied by critique, along with

new ways of imagining the good life (2002, p. 343). It is here that utopian visions overlap with pedagogical intent.

The skill of the critical food artisan is to bring together the material and theoretical to the practice of food system transformation in ways that are critical, applied, creative and hopefully pleasurable.

In sum, we are seeking to support students to develop the capacity to identify points of intervention in the food system and make a difference in whatever way ignites their interests and passions. Just as they learn to make artisanal bread or transform cabbage into kimchi, we want them to find ways of crafting a better world through food. We hope that the pleasure of this theoretical craftiness is what sustains our graduates throughout their careers.

The challenges of developing a food studies curriculum

Having expressed our aims, it is important to record that the process has not been easy or free from challenge. In particular, the perspicuity of Heldke's argument – that philosophy has yet to take seriously the body and its pleasures as it relates to food and food-making – finds resonance with our experience of developing an undergraduate food studies degree within an Australian higher education institution specialising in food, hospitality,

tourism and events. Alongside the valid need to consider statutory requirements, market demand and position, academic expertise and (potential) student expectations, we found that the process foregrounded fundamental differences in pedagogic perspective and priority.

Significantly, we soon realised that we could not simply view these differences as matters 'coloured by prior disciplinary preoccupations' (Shove 2010, p. 1273), and thus something easily remediated through an enhanced commitment to interdisciplinary teaching and learning. Rather, the problem coalesced around what we believe to be the unintended consequence of efforts to establish the study of food as a robust academic discipline freed from its restrictive commercial connection with providing food, drink and/or accommodation (Scarpato 2002). In other words, in the struggle to position food studies as a credible discipline, we found ourselves constantly discussing and debating the ways in which we were adopting and absorbing a discursive template that reinforces rather than questions the Cartesian split between mind and matter.

Understood in this way, the process of developing a food studies degree revealed itself as a project that necessitated negotiations around the 'whys and hows' of incorporating the bodily and material within the curricula, *along with* surfacing commitments to approaches which readily translated food and its sister fields of hospitality and gastronomy into a conceptual framework ordered by mind/body hierarchical divides. While we recognise that this ordering is all too often imposed by external others (e.g. the need to frame curricula according to pre-determined formats and standards), historical disciplinary convention and institutional traditions, we were nevertheless left with the sense that these divides and conventions were if not entirely correct, then necessarily incontestable.

Against this background, and following Scarpato (2002) and Santich (2009) before us, we made the case therefore that food studies would benefit from embracing a gastronomic perspective which explicitly links cognate knowledge and sensual understanding, thereby escaping the neo-Platonic tendency to dismiss the lived, embodied 'hurly-burly of life' (Boisvert 2004, p. 296). Extending this line of thought, we also introduced the argument that a gastronomic approach provides an effective means for examining other hierarchies, such as the uneven agencies accorded to humans and non-humans in food and food-making (e.g. the action of microbes in cheese-making and wine production). As we conceptualise it, this gastronomic more-than-human (Donati 2014) approach not only complements emergent research in disciplines such as geography and politics, it will help to bring food studies into this lively research space as it concerns itself with wider issues of sustainability, governance and ethics, to name but a few.

Additionally, as noted above, we sought to demonstrate that, while it is our belief that food studies properly fits within

hospitality education, it is insufficient to merely acknowledge the existence of alternative disciplinary perspectives. Rather, effort needs to be directed towards institutionally re-framing these potentially disruptive alternatives as acceptable and productive. In other words, a commitment by all to conceptualising the new degree in terms of a bringing together of cognate knowledge and pleasurable practice in ways that do not by default privilege the one over the other, and which recognise each as equally productive for practically addressing the challenges facing the food industry, governments and individuals.

Parallels between home economics and food studies

Despite these challenges, we envisage that the new degree will provide new opportunities. One of these opportunities is manifest in the clear parallels between home economics and food studies. Home economics is an 'academic discipline, an arena for everyday living, a curriculum area, and a societal arena to influence and develop policy' (Pendergast 2015, p. 3). The parallels between food studies and home economics are multiple and mutually reinforcing. Both are interdisciplinary, both are concerned with everyday living at the same time as acknowledging the importance of influencing and shaping policy, both span multiple settings and contexts, and both share fundamental normative commitments to care, ethics, reflexive communication, health and wellbeing for all, and social justice.



Photo: Bill Poon

In many ways, food studies is very much the logical and even natural extension of home economics into the graduate and postgraduate arena. Just as home economics is concerned with enhancing and achieving optimal health and wellbeing at the individual, family and community level,



Butchery demonstration at Jonai Farm near Daylesford (Photo: Kelly Donati)

food studies, through its critical exploration of the interconnected nature of food and farming systems, asks what interventions are required, now and in the future, to ensure that the progressive realisation and enhancement of health and wellbeing outcomes can be achieved over the medium and long term. As with home economics, food studies seeks to support the development of students and practitioners who are capable both of understanding these complexities as well as identifying where and how they can make their unique contributions to the creation of a more healthy, sustainable, fair and delicious world.

Conclusion

Where will food studies graduates go? With the world of work changing so rapidly, and with this field just now taking its first baby steps in Australia, it's hard to know. Food studies graduates overseas have found themselves working in food media,

policy development and analysis, the community food sector, international non-governmental organisations and food entrepreneurship. In many cases, they create for themselves new food jobs in organisations and businesses where they did not previously exist. Recent advertisements for food policy, food system and urban agriculture roles at the local government level in Australia suggest that new opportunities will continue to emerge for food studies graduates in the years to come. Certainly the first graduates, from 2017 and beyond, will be the trailblazers that carve the path for those that will follow.

For the small but committed food studies staff at WAI, it is both hugely affirming and immensely exciting that the VCAA is introducing a food studies curriculum for Year 11 and 12 students as from 2017. We believe that both developments are reflective of a *zeitgeist* of change currently sweeping through schools and educational institutions around the world.

Outside the classroom, these winds of change are also blowing through paddocks and pastures, in forests and fields, down highways and lanes, to high streets, markets, offices, homes, kitchens and gardens. Food is so infused through our land, our culture, our histories and our stories that its centrality was bound to make itself felt sooner or later. With the immense social, ecological, economic, cultural and political challenges that this century, and those beyond it, present, it is on one level not surprising that so many of us should now be waking up to the reality that the pathways through our current predicament must surely be founded in food systems that nourish and enhance our own health and wellbeing, both individual and collective, together with the ecosystems that form, at the most elemental level, an indivisible whole.

At the same time, major change – transformative change, of the sort urgently required – is impossible

without challenging paradigms of the past that still pattern and condition our institutions, social relations and structures of the present. The crisis we face is as much a crisis of the imagination as it is a crisis of climate instability, dietary-related ill-health and the slow decline of rural and regional communities. Powerful vested interests benefit from the status quo and will seek to maintain it in perpetuity, trying to convince the rest of us that 'there is no alternative'. Change of the sort worth having is never easy, smooth or certain. That is why the project of food studies is both critical and utopian. It is also immensely satisfying, because it confers a sense of extraordinary meaning and self-worth, knowing that you are engaged in a hopeful project with thousands of others in this country and beyond, to imagine and bring into being a more equitable, connected and delicious future.

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Author biographies

Kelly Donati teaches food studies at William Angliss Institute and has been involved in curriculum development in food studies and gastronomy since 2007. She has previously taught within the Master of Gastronomy at the University of Adelaide where she completed her MA (2004). She also holds a Master's degree in cultural studies and critical theory from Monash University and is a PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne where she researches the relationship between agriculture and gastronomy. Kelly is a director of Melbourne Farmers Market and founding Chair of Sustain: the Australian Food Network.

Kellyd@angliss.edu.au

Lilly Cleary teaches food studies at William Angliss Institute where she played a critical role on the food studies curriculum development team. She has also taught at postgraduate level at the University of Melbourne. She graduated from the Master of Gastronomy at the University of Adelaide (2004) and recently completed her PhD at the University of Melbourne where she examined ideas of trust in alternative food networks. She has a wealth of experience working in the tourism, wine, hospitality, agriculture, health and community sectors across Australia.

Lillyc@angliss.edu.au

Dr Nick Rose teaches food studies at William Angliss Institute and is a leader in the emerging field of sustainable food systems and food sovereignty. His doctoral research at RMIT University investigated the transformative potential of the global food sovereignty movement. He co-founded the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance in 2010 and was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 2014 to investigate innovative models of urban agriculture overseas. As Executive Director of Sustain: the Australian Food Network, he supports food system policy development within local government and beyond. His book, *Fair Food: Stories from a Movement Changing the World*, was published in 2015.

Nicholasr@angliss.edu.au

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Gail Boddy
Home Economics Victoria
605/198 Harbour Esplanade
Docklands Victoria 3008 Australia
Telephone +61 3 9642 1061
Email business@hev.com.au

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Our purpose is to promote skills for life to achieve optimal and sustainable wellbeing for individuals, families and communities. By promoting wellbeing, encompassing health, we aim to prevent and/or control disease such as obesity and type 2 diabetes by providing teachers, students, parents and wider school communities with education and information.

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- Promote skills for life, including home economics, to achieve optimal and sustainable wellbeing for individuals, families and communities.
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605/198 Harbour Esplanade
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Telephone +61 3 9642 1061
Facsimile +61 3 9642 2418
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